



# Whitehead

Primary School  
& Nursery Unit

Friday 25 June

**'LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER'**

### Thank You Very Much

I can hardly believe that today is the last day of the school year and what a school year! It has felt like it lasted forever and yet it also feels that it has passed in the blink of an eye. It has been an absolute rollercoaster ride from the introduction of mitigations and restrictions to another lockdown and then the re-opening of school again. It has been an extremely challenging year and I want to take this opportunity to say a **"HUGE BIG THANK YOU"** for all of your support. Your understanding and patience has been greatly appreciated. Indeed, thank you for your incredible support on Rainbow Fund Day when we raised an amazing £4213 and through Gift Aid we will receive a further £844 giving us the wonderful total of £5057, allowing PTA to purchase an outdoor classroom. Thank you very much.

I would also like to pay tribute to the **ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE** staff of WPSNU who have worked tirelessly this year in very difficult and challenging circumstances in order to provide your children with an environment where they feel safe and cared for, allowing them to develop socially, emotionally and academically. The pupils, parents and staff of WPSNU make my job an awful lot easier, a job which I love very much.

No dinners will be served today and the children will finish at the following times:

**12.00 - Y1 & Y3**

**12.10 - Y2 & Y4**

**12.15 - Y5 & Y6**

**I hope that you have a great summer, that you are able to get a 'wee' break somewhere, enjoy some time with family & friends and that you keep well and stay safe.**

### Positive COVID Test Result

Should your child test positive during school hours, please inform Mrs Lowry (02893353280).

In order to ensure that we continue to track and trace, should your child test positive for COVID please contact me on 07359015420. This number will be available until Sunday, 27 June 2021 at 1.00pm (48 hours after the children have left school). After this time, you should follow the advice as set out by PHA.

### Confirmed Holiday List

I have included a copy of the confirmed holiday list. The only change to the provisional holiday list is towards the end of the year. The Staff Training Day has been moved from Tuesday, 3 May 2022 to Friday 29 April 2022 in order to facilitate the Y7 residential. If we are allowed to plan a Y7 residential it will take place from Tuesday 3 – Friday 6 May.

### Free School Meals & Uniform Grants

If you feel that you are entitled to free school meals or a uniform grant, you must apply online at <https://www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals-uniform-grants>

**If you were entitled to free school meals this year, your entitlement will cease today and you must re-apply. You will NOT receive a reminder from EA.** I would encourage you to apply as soon as possible to ensure that your free meal entitlement is in place for the start of the next school year. We cannot give free meals to any child who is not on the free meal register. **Although your child might never take up their right to free school meals because they prefer a packed lunch, it is very important for our school budget that every child who is entitled to free school meals has applied regardless of whether they take up the meal or not.**

School uniforms are available at: Cuddys, Garys, Gordons, Pebbles @ Jeanius & Squarewear. I have included some information leaflets as provided by some of the companies. It is my intention that, COVID permitting, we will return to wearing school uniform every day and PE kits should once again be brought into school. **PE kit should consist of a white T-shirt and navy shorts/leggings.**



### Wednesday 25 – Friday 27 August 2021

As we finish school we once again find ourselves with a degree of uncertainty regarding possible mitigations or restrictions that will be necessary when we return to school in August. For any of you who know me well, you will know that I find this a very difficult situation to be in, as I thrive on organisation and certainty. While it is less than ideal, I do fully understand that DE cannot provide us with information regarding how school will look in two months' time when the government are unsure what society will look like in two weeks' time. With this in mind I plan to do as I did last year. **The starting arrangements for Wednesday 25 – Friday 27 August, as set out below, will be in place regardless of any updates over the summer.** I believe that this provides pupils, parents and staff with certainty regarding our return to school in August.

- Nursery & Y1 will follow their own induction programmes.
- All Y2 – Y7 pupils will start school on Wednesday 25 August.
- **On Wednesday, 25 August, children will be encouraged to arrive at school at the following times:**  
**Y2 & Y3 – 8.45                      Y4 & Y5 – 8.50                      Y6 & Y7 – 8.55**
- On Wednesday 25 August Y2 teachers will meet their children in the Y1/Y2 playground and Y3 – Y7 teachers will meet their children in the Y5/6/7 playground.
- On Thursday 26 & Friday 27 August all children should arrive at school between 8.45 – 9.00am and should go directly to their class.
- **On Wednesday 25, Thursday 26 & Friday 27 children will finish school at the following times:**  
**Y2 & Y3 – 12.30                      Y4 & Y5 – 12.35                      Y6 & Y7 – 12.40**
- **CHILDREN SHOULD BRING A SMALL HEALTHY BREAK WITH THEM EACH DAY BUT WON'T REQUIRE A LUNCH.**

### Monday 30 August Onwards

DE, in conjunction with Department of Health, intend to provide updated advice to schools in mid-August. Once I have 'digested' the updated advice I will meet with the School Leadership Team and the Governors on Thursday, 19 August. On Friday, 20 August I will update staff and parents regarding how our school 'will look' from Monday, 30 August onwards.

**AS MONDAY, 30 AUGUST IS A BANK HOLIDAY, ALL CHILDREN SHOULD BRING A HEALTHY BREAK AND A PACKED LUNCH ON THAT DAY. SCHOOL DINNERS WILL START ON TUESDAY, 31 AUGUST.**

Depending on the advice that we receive, arrangements could be very similar to our current arrangements

OR,

if COVID advice permits, we may be able to move towards more normal arrangements, a 'New Normal'. We may be able to implement some or all of the arrangements as outlined on the next page and this will become our 'New Normal'. However, that will very much depend on the advice that I receive from DE in August.



### A 'New Normal'

While COVID restrictions have forced us to change our school day, some of these changes have been hugely beneficial to the children. Depending on the advice of DE regarding COVID, it is my hope that:

- Breakfast Club will recommence on a daily basis 7.45 – 8.45am. (from Tuesday 31 August)
- All children will continue to have a staggered start which will now be from 8.45 – 9.00am. The school gates will open each morning at 8.45am and children will proceed directly to class. We have found this to be hugely beneficial to parents in terms of traffic congestion at the gate. Over the last year the vast majority of children have arrived at school between 8.45 and 9.00 am and as soon as they came into class they engaged in learning. The children were much more settled as they didn't have to negotiate a very busy playground and a very busy cloakroom.
- The Morning Nursery will begin at 8.45am and the Afternoon Nursery will begin at 12.15pm
- The children will continue to have staggered break and lunch. Lunch will continue to be shorter (35 minutes instead of 50 minutes). Particularly at lunchtime, the extra space in the playground and the shorter time has proved to be hugely beneficial to the children. We have had less first aid incidents and less issues to be resolved after each lunchtime. The children are, therefore, much happier in the playground and, as the teachers are dealing with less issues, they have more teaching time. While I would never have considered staggering lunchtime (as this means the teaching staff are not able to have lunch together), the staggered and shorter lunch has proved to be hugely advantageous to the children.
- With the earlier start time and shorter lunch break (as it has been this year) it is the intention that school will finish slightly earlier each day and Y4-7 will finish each Wednesday, at 1.50pm. The earlier finish time on a Wednesday for Y4-7 enables us to restructure our afternoon cover arrangements in order to provide literacy and numeracy support for children through 'Boost Groups'. Finish times are as set out below:

Nursery	Morning – 11.15am, Afternoon – 2.45pm
Y1 & Y2	1.45 pm every day
Y3	2.35 pm (Monday & Tuesday)
	1.45 pm (Wednesday – Friday)
Y4-Y7	2.45 pm (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday)
	1.50 pm Wednesday

- If bubbles are required we may be able to operate **YEAR GROUP BUBBLES** as opposed to CLASS BUBBLES, which will allow us much greater flexibility. It would also mean that After School Activities could begin again. It is my intention that activities on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday will be organised by private clubs and activities on Tuesday & Thursday will be organised by teachers.

**AS I HAVE STATED ABOVE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR WEDNESDAY 25, THURSDAY 26 & FRIDAY 27 AUGUST WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY ANY SUMMER ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

**WITH REGARD TO MONDAY 30 AUGUST ONWARDS I WILL UPDATE EVERYONE ON FRIDAY 20 AUGUST ONCE I HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION. WE WILL EITHER FOLLOW A VERY SIMILAR PATTERN TO WHAT WE HAVE DONE THIS YEAR OR WE WILL MOVE TOWARDS OUR 'NEW NORMAL'.**



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## HOLIDAY CALENDAR 2021-22

**The holiday calendar has been agreed by the Board of Governors, approved by the Education Authority and is now the confirmed holiday list for 2021-22.**

SCHOOL BEGINS	SCHOOL CLOSES	HOLIDAY (dates are inclusive)
Wednesday, 25 August 2021	Thursday, 23 September 2021	<b>School Development Day</b> Friday, 24 September 2021 (1 staff training day)
Monday, 27 September 2021	Friday, 22 October 2021	<b>Halloween Half Term</b> Monday, 25 October - Friday, 29 October 2021 (4 days + 1 staff training day)
Monday, 1 November 2021	Tuesday, 21 December 2021 No school dinners	<b>Christmas</b> Wednesday, 22 December 2021 – Tuesday, 4 January 2022 (10 days)
Wednesday, 5 January 2022	Friday, 11 February 2022	<b>Winter Half Term</b> Monday, 14 February – Friday, 18 February 2022 (4 days + 1 staff training day)
Monday, 21 February 2022	Friday, 8 April 2022 No school dinners	<b>Easter</b> Monday, 11 April – Friday, 22 April 2022 (10 days)
Monday, 25 April 2022	Thursday, 28 April 2022	<b>May Day</b> Friday, 29 April - Monday, 2 May (1 day & 1 staff training day)
Wednesday, 4 May 2022	Friday, 27 May 2022	<b>Spring Bank Holiday</b> Monday, 30 May – Friday, 3 June 2022 (4 days + 1 staff training day)
Monday, 6 June 2022	Thursday, 30 June 2022 No school dinners	<b>Summer Holiday 2022</b>



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- Oakfield
- Victoria
- Whitehead

### **PRIMARY**

- Acorn
- Central
- Model
- Oakfield
- St Nicholas
- Sunnylands
- Victoria
- Whitehead
- Woodburn
- Woodlawn

### **SECONDARY**

- Belfast High
- Carrick Academy
- Carrick Grammar
- Ulidia Integrated

## **CUDDYS QUALITY SUPPLIERS...**

- Club 1880
- Trutex
- Beau Brummel
- Rowlinson
- G Force
- Charles Kirk
- A F White

## **CUDDYS SCHOOL SAVINGS CLUB**

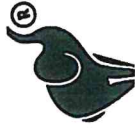
Want to take the hassle out of buying school uniform this year AND save money? Choose early when all sizes are in stock, reserve in our savings club and receive 10% discount. We will store your uniform until the end of the summer holidays. If your child has grown simply swap to a larger size.



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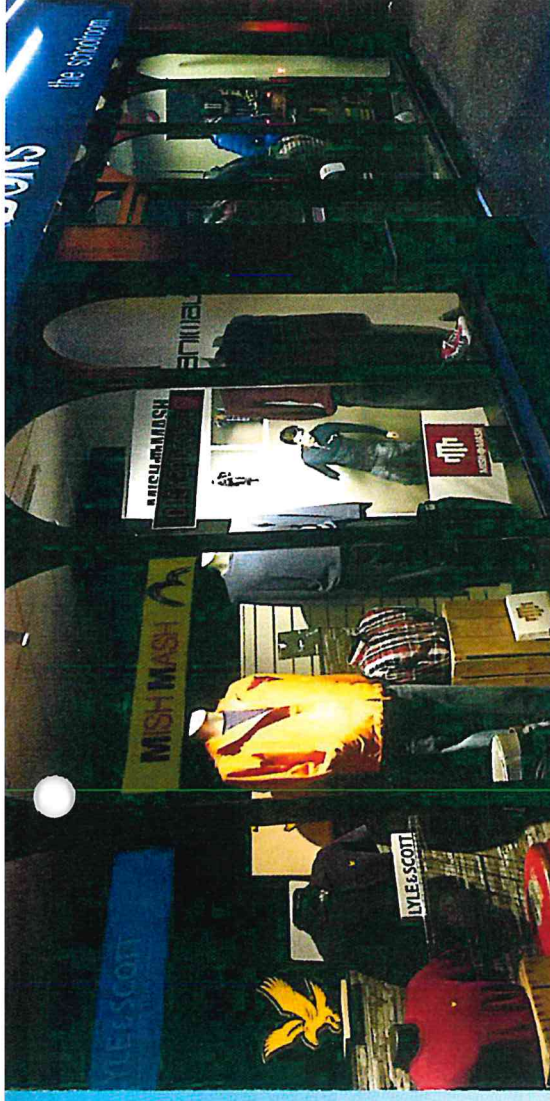
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We stock school uniforms for all the local schools listed. Schoolwear brands include:- Banner, Trutex, 1880 Club, Beau Brummel, GForce and Charles Kirk.

Our friendly staff will be very happy to help you. After all you are the customer – The reason we have been here so long.

See you soon in Carrickfergus.

Ivan Gordon

- All Local Primary Schools**
- ACORN
  - BALLYCARRY
  - EDEN
  - GREENISLAND
  - HILLCROFT
  - KING'S PARK
  - LITTLE ACORNS NURSERY
  - MODEL
  - OAKFIELD PRIMARY & NURSERY
  - RODDENSVALE
  - ROSSTULLA
  - SILVERSTREAM & NURSERY
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  - VICTORIA & NURSERY
  - WHITEABBEY
  - WHITEHEAD & NURSERY
  - WOODBURN
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