

February/March Parent Newsletter



Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope everyone is well and is keeping safe at present. We have had a very busy few weeks in school with some exciting events taking place. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed about some changes that have happened in school as well as an update on all of the goings on in Finaghy Primary.

Mr Mackay's Retirement

It is with much sadness that we had confirmation of Mr Alastair Mackay's retirement in February. Mr Mackay has been Principal of Finaghy Primary for 24 years and he has made so many positive changes to the school and community. While we understand the need for Mr Mackay to retire and focus on his own health and wellbeing, we will all miss his presence in school. There will be some information coming to parents in the next few weeks from our PTA about a retirement gift on behalf of the parents and pupils of the school. The staff and governors of the school wish Mr Mackay and his family an enjoyable retirement with a firm focus on his hobbies, interests, health and wellbeing.

Lord Mayor's Visit

We had the pleasure of welcoming the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Kate Nicholl, to school recently. She visited the school to see the work of the Shared Education Project. This is a project where boys and girls from Finaghy are twinned with children from St John the Baptist School for learning and sports activities. During the morning the pupils enjoyed icebreaker activities as well as games and a final focus on basketball. The Lord Mayor took part in a number of the activities with the boys and girls and she reported that she loved her time with the children in school. Go to Twitter to see photos of the visit.

World Book Day

There was much enjoyment and excitement around school on World Book Day last week. The children and staff dressed up as book characters and showed off their costumes to the local community during our Daily Dander. The pupils also worked on fun activities related to reading and books. A highlight for me was getting in to read a story to every class during the day. Thank you to parents for supporting our day and as another way to encourage our pupils to foster a love of reading. Again, lots of brilliant photos are available to see on Twitter and on Google Classroom.

Covid Guidance and Update

The local government relaxed the rules around Covid in February from legislation to guidance. However, our advice from the Department of Education is that there is very little change to rules in schools. There have been consistent case numbers of positive cases in our school community. Until now, I have kept every class in school and no whole classes have moved to remote learning. At times, this has been challenging as finding substitute teachers is difficult because of the demands from all schools. I am hopeful that I will be able to keep classes in school. However, it would be a

good idea to have plans in place in the event that I do not have enough staff in school to teach all classes safely. If that happens, parents will be notified via Google Classroom. So please keep checking Google Classroom to ensure you do not miss important notifications and updates.

Communication – New e mail address and Teacher Contact

The new school e mail address is info@finaghyprimaryschool.co.uk. This has been in use for a number of weeks, but some e mails are still going to the old e mail address which was used by Mr Mackay. Please ensure that if you have an e mail for my attention that it is sent to the new address above. I will do my best to respond in a timely manner. If you wish to discuss any issues with your child's teacher the best method is by contacting the school by telephone. The teacher can speak with you then, or telephone back at a suitable time. Alternatively, you can use the private messaging facility on Google Classroom. Could I politely request that unless there is an urgent message, teachers are not contacted in the evenings or at weekends to ensure their time away from school is not disturbed by school issues. Your co-operation with this is greatly appreciated.

Ukraine Donations

I have been overwhelmed by the amount and generosity of donations for our Ukraine appeal. I want to thank all of those families and friends of the school who have donated so many items for this most worthwhile appeal. It is heartening to know that our collection will bring some help support and comfort to those refugees who are in desperate need of these items. Teachers are addressing the issues around the conflict with pupils as they arise. This is done in a sensitive manner appropriate to the age and understanding of the children.

Outdoor Learning

Thanks to all of those parents who have donated equipment for our Outdoor Learning Development. These have been received gratefully as we have been trying to integrate more Outdoor Learning opportunities into the curriculum. In the coming weeks we will be in need of some practical help in this area. So if you are a joiner, gardener, painter or have general handy skills and you would be willing to help us out around the grounds, please ring into the school office and leave your contact details. It would be greatly appreciated as we improve this area of learning for the children.



Best wishes for now,

Mrs Corbett

Acting Principal