

GILNAHIRK PRIMARY SCHOOL WEEKLY UPDATE





Dear parent,

I hope you have had a good week.

Here is our latest weekly update...

IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT SCHOOL DINNERS...



Due to staffing pressures in the canteen, the EA meals service have decided to remove the choice option from the menu on a temporary basis.

When booking your child in for dinners, please now be aware that ***only main course one will be available each day*** until further notice.

The menu for the canteen can be found at this link:

<https://www.gilnahirkps.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=311&type=pdf>

TEMPORARY VACANCY IN CANTEEN...



Details below...

Catering Assistant -

Primary Location - Gilnahirk Primary School

Contract Type : Temporary

Duration of Contract/Contract End Date : N/A

Status : Part-Time

Hours per Week : 20 hours per week

Working Pattern : Monday - Friday (9.30am - 2.00pm) 30 mins unpaid lunch break

Grade/Scale : Catering Assistant | NJC pts 5 - 8 | £13.6288 - £14.2897 per hour

Additional Allowance(s) : A retainer fee is paid during school holidays

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Catering Assistant

REPORTS TO: Senior/Unit Catering Supervisor

RESPONSIBLE TO: Catering Manager through appropriate Area Catering Manager

JOB PURPOSE

To actively participate in the daily operation of the Catering Unit under the direction of the Senior/Unit Catering Supervisor.

Team participation is essential to provide an efficient hygienic service, to achieve customer satisfaction and to promote sales within the unit.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Basic preparation of food and beverages, including the preparation of vegetables and snacks using appropriate equipment.
2. Simple cooking, including the reconstitution of prepared food.
3. Organising and controlling food service points.
4. Transferring and serving meals and snacks including transported meals.
5. Assisting with the promotion of meals to pupils, parents and principal.
6. Maintaining regular contact with the central kitchen, if applicable, with regard to all aspects of service delivery.
7. Preparing the dining area:
8. **(a)** Setting out dining room tables, chairs, benches and serving points as required by the meals service.
9. **(b)** Setting tables, laying out of cutlery, water jugs, etc.
10. Completing general kitchen and dining room duties including washing up, clearing away equipment including tables, chairs and benches*.
11. Cleaning the kitchen/servery, dining room and equipment including floors and walls*.
12. Recording temperatures for control purposes as required.
13. Securing premises as required.
14. Completing duties as delegated in connection with service provision.
15. Carry out all duties to comply with:
16. **(a)** Acts of Parliament, Statutory Instruments and Regulations and other legal requirements;
17. **(b)** Codes of Practice
18. Carry out all duties in the working conditions normally inherent in the particular job.
19. Complete all necessary administration.

20. Carry out duties for jobs up to and including those in the same grade, provided such duties are within the competence of the employee.
21. Promote and adhere to the Values/ethos of the School.

If you are interested in this post, please contact Kelly Richardson on 07974716345 or Kelly.Richardson@eani.org.uk

P1-6 PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS...



P1-6 parent teacher interviews are scheduled for **Monday 19th October - Thursday 22nd October**.

Hopefully you have been able to book an interview slot for your child(ren). If you have not done this by the end of today, your child's class teacher will assign you a time and send it home on Monday.

Please note, these interviews are 10 minutes each and teachers are required to stick closely to this to accommodate everyone.

The practical arrangements for the parent teacher interview days will be:

- *School will close at 1.15pm for P1-6 children to accommodate the interviews.*
 - *School will operate as normal for P7 children.*
 - *School dinners will still be available as normal or you should send a packed lunch.*
 - *There are no after school activities the week of parent teacher interviews, except for Coding, which will meet as usual on Friday 23rd October (1.30-2.30)*
-

LEARNING SUPPORT PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS...

Mrs Newnes will offer a parent teacher slot to any P2,3 or 4 children who are currently receiving Learning Support. If this applies to you, hopefully you have returned your request for an interview slot with Mrs Newnes.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN - SUMMARY FOR PARENTS...

In your child's bag today, you should find a concise summary of our current School Development Plan (SDP). This summary details the progress made in Year 1 of the SDP (2025-2026) and sets out our main targets for Year 2 (2026-2027).

I have also attached a copy of the summary to the email containing the link to this Sway.

Do take some time to read through the summary to stay up to speed with what we're working on as a school.

The images below show the version of the plan that the children have in their classrooms and an easily accessible infographic of the Year 2 summary for parents/carers





Please note, the parents' summary of the SDP includes projected budget deficits over the next three years. Whilst this information is readily available in the public domain, this is the first time we have shared it so explicitly.

Like the majority of schools across Northern Ireland, Gilnahirk is experiencing very significant financial pressures.

Our three-year financial projections indicate that, without funding that is fair, equitable or fit for purpose, this financial pressure is expected to increase over the coming years.

The Principal and Board of Governors continue to work closely with the Education Authority to monitor the school's financial position while seeking to protect the quality of education provided to our children.

A COUPLE OF OTHER IMPORTANT SUMMARIES...

Further to the Child Protection information included in the first couple of updates, please see below for a helpful summary of the policy. Also below is a summary of our Parental Complaints Procedure. Full versions of both policies can be found on the school website:



Child Protection at Gilnahirk Primary School

A summary for parents

Children
come first

At Gilnahirk Primary School, we have a responsibility to keep all our children safe. We provide a caring, supportive and secure environment where every child is valued, listened to and can learn and develop to their full potential.

1 Our commitment

We follow statutory guidance and work in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The welfare of the child is paramount in everything we do.



2 Our key safeguarding principles

- The child's welfare is paramount
- The voice of the child is heard
- Parents and families are supported
- Partnership with other agencies
- Prevention
- Responses are proportionate
- Protection
- Evidence based and informed decision making



3 Our Safeguarding Team

If you have a concern about a child, please contact one of our designated staff:

Mrs T Johnston – Designated Teacher
Mr D Corbett – Principal and Deputy Designated Teacher
Mr G Halliday – Vice Principal
Mrs L McCaffrey – SENCo
Mr Alan Morrow – Designated Governor for Child Protection



4 How we respond to concerns

1 **Listen** – we take all concerns seriously.

2 **Record** – we keep accurate and confidential records.

3 **Refer** – the Designated Teacher will decide on next steps and may seek advice from external agencies if needed.

4 **Support** – we will keep the child's welfare at the centre of all decisions.



5 Working together with parents

Parents play a vital role in keeping children safe. We will:

- Listen to and value your concerns
- Keep you informed, where appropriate
- Work in partnership to support your child and family
- Provide advice and signpost to other help if needed



6 A safe and supportive school

Safeguarding is part of everything we do, including:

- A caring and inclusive ethos
- A preventative curriculum (including online safety, relationships and wellbeing)
- Clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies
- Safe recruitment and vetting of all staff and volunteers
- A code of conduct for all adults in school
- Regular training for staff and governors
- Careful record keeping and regular policy review



7 Other related policies

Our Child Protection Policy works alongside a range of other school policies including:

- Anti-Bullying
- Attendance
- Online Safety
- Positive Behaviour Management
- Educational Visits
- Health & Safety
- Intimate Care
- Use of Mobile Phones/Cameras
- Drugs
- Relationships and Sexuality Education
- Special Educational Needs
- First Aid and Administration of Medicines
- Managing Critical Incidents
- Records Management
- Use of Reasonable Force / Safe Handling



8 Where to find more information

Our full Child Protection Policy is available from the school office or on our website:

www.gilnahirkps.org.uk

A summary of our policy and complaints procedure is provided to parents every two years.



9 Have a concern?

If you are worried about a child's safety or wellbeing, please contact the school office to speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team. **We are here to help.**



Parental Complaints Procedure

A quick guide for parents

Working
together for a
brighter future



We're here to listen

At Gilnahirk Primary School we value our strong partnership with parents and carers. If you have a concern or complaint, we want to hear from you. This guide explains how to raise a complaint and what you can expect.

Open
Communication
Stronger
Together

Our aims

Our complaints procedure aims to:

- ✓ encourage resolution by informal means wherever possible
- ✓ deal with complaints quickly and fairly
- ✓ keep you informed of progress
- ✓ ensure a full and fair investigation
- ✓ respect the rights and responsibilities of everyone involved
- ✓ maintain confidentiality
- ✓ provide an effective response and, where necessary, appropriate redress
- ✓ use feedback to help us continually improve

What to expect

When you make a complaint, you can expect:

- ✓ to be treated fairly and with courtesy
- ✓ a timely response
- ✓ accurate advice
- ✓ your privacy to be respected (confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible)
- ✓ to be kept informed of progress
- ✓ a full and fair investigation
- ✓ reasons for our decisions

Your
voice
matters

How to make a complaint

Most concerns can be resolved informally. If this is not possible, follow the steps below. (Timescales are working days.)

1 Speak to the teacher

In the first instance, raise your concern verbally with the teacher concerned. This gives them an opportunity to address the issue.

Informal stage

2 Speak to the Principal

If the issue remains unresolved, arrange a meeting with the Principal. They may need time to investigate and will let you know the timescale for a response.

Informal stage

3 Write to the Principal

If the matter is not resolved, or you wish to move to the formal process, write to the Principal setting out your complaint as clearly as possible.

Formal stage

You will receive an acknowledgement within 10 working days.

4 Appeal to the Board of Governors

If you are not satisfied with the response, you may appeal in writing to the Chair of the Board of Governors. Further details are available in the full Complaints Procedure (see our website).

Appeal stage

A few important points

- The procedure covers all complaints relating to the actions of school staff and the application of school procedures that affect individual pupils.
- Some matters (e.g. Child Protection, Special Educational Needs, Admissions, Suspensions and Exclusions, Bullying) have separate procedures.
- Anonymous complaints are not usually investigated, unless considered serious.
- Frivolous or vexatious complaints may not be pursued.

Your responsibilities

When making a complaint, we ask that you:

- ✓ raise issues in a timely manner
- ✓ treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- ✓ provide accurate and concise information
- ✓ use the procedure fully and engage at the appropriate levels

Rights of all parties

Everyone involved can expect:

- ✓ to be accompanied at meetings (if agreed)
- ✓ to seek advice and support (e.g. from a trade union)
- ✓ to receive full details of any allegations
- ✓ the process to be impartial and non-adversarial
- ✓ legal representation is not permitted within this procedure

Find out more

The full Parental Complaints Procedure is available on our school website or from the school office on request.

www.gilnahirkps.org.uk

If you have any questions, please contact the school office. **We are here to help.**



SMARTPHONE FREE CHILDHOOD...



In your child's school bag today, you should find a letter from the Castlereagh Primary Principals' Group, which I am part of as Principal of Gilnahirk Primary.

This letter endorses the aims and objectives of the Smart Phone Free Childhood organisation, highlighting the dangers of excessive phone use in children and encourages delaying the introduction of smart phones until the age of 14 and the introduction of social media until the age of 16. As a school, we fully support these aims.

Please see the letter for further details.

LAST DAY OF HALF TERM...



The last day of the half term is Friday 23rd October - just two weeks away! Please see below for a few reminders:

- Children may come to school in non-uniform that day - no donations necessary.
- We will have our now traditional Candy Fair to finish off the half term - further details will be provided
- School dinners are available as normal, or you should send a packed lunch.
- School will finish at 1.30pm.

DUNDONALD FOODBANK APPEAL...



If you have not yet managed to send an item (or items) from the list below for our Harvest Assembly appeal for Dundonald Foodbank, you can still do so on Monday or Tuesday.

Thank you for your support.

- Breakfast cereals
- Soup
- Pasta
- Rice
- Pasta sauce
- Tinned beans
- Tinned meat
- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned fruit
- Tea or coffee
- Sugar
- Biscuits
- Snacks
- Tins of Tuna
- Tinned Custard / Rice
- Cordial
- Sweets
- Small box of Washing Powder
- Washing up liquid

- Bleach
- Deodorant (men's & women's)
- Bars of Soap

SAMARITAN'S PURSE ANNUAL SHOEBOX APPEAL (P5-P7).



Also, As part of our Harvest Assembly next week, Barbara Marshall, from Samaritan's Purse will speak to the P5-7 children about the annual shoebox appeal.

If you wish to take part, shoeboxes can be requested from Mr Halliday.

They should then be filled with the required items and returned when filled.

DRUM LESSONS AVAILABLE...



There are a number of vacancies with our drum tutor each Monday (Ben from Belfast Drum Academy). This is open to children of any age. If your child would be interested in taking up drum tuition, the cost is £7 per lesson. To book a place, Ben can be contacted on bennydoy@gmail.com or 07344161479

PARENTS' ASSOCIATION NEWS...

Parents Association

FIRST MEETING OF THE SCHOOL YEAR...

Our parents' association met for the first time this year on Tuesday evening.

It was great to see 18 parents in attendance - it was almost standing room only in the staff room!

There were lots of great plans formulated for the year ahead - some old favourite events and a few new ones, so do keep an eye out for information in the coming weeks about a number of events.

QUIZ SHEETS...

In your child's bag on Monday, you should find two quiz sheets - an emojis sheet for children and a TV programmes anagrams sheet for adults. Entry for each competition is £1 per sheet, which should be returned by **Thursday 22nd October**

RUNNERS WANTED...



Linked to the information above, the Parents Association traditionally puts together a team (or teams) to run the Belfast Marathon relay.

If you'd be interested in running a leg in the 2027 marathon relay, please contact Glenn Porter on 07969770258

CHRISTMAS CARDS...



Last week, you should hopefully have received some information on our annual design a Christmas card fundraiser. If you wish for your child to take part, the deadline has been extended to ***Tuesday 13th October***

Please note your child does not necessarily need to use the template provided - they can be as creative as they like!

GILLY'S GILNAHIRK VALUES...

Our School Value for the month of October is EMPATHY. In Assembly this week, we spent some time thinking about empathy and how we can apply it in school.



SCHOOL LIFE THIS WEEK...

P1 COLOUR MIXING...







P2 IPAD MATHEMATICIANS...

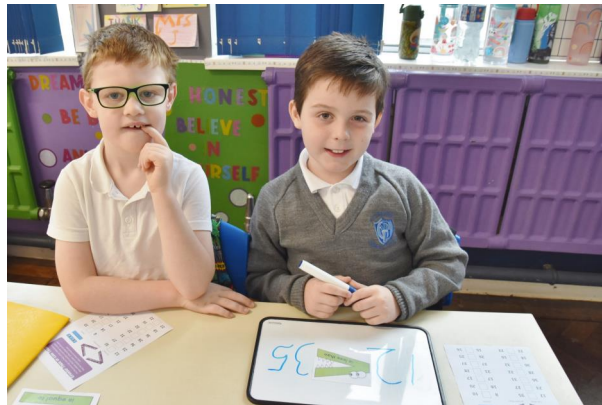






P3 GREATER THAN OR LESS THAN...







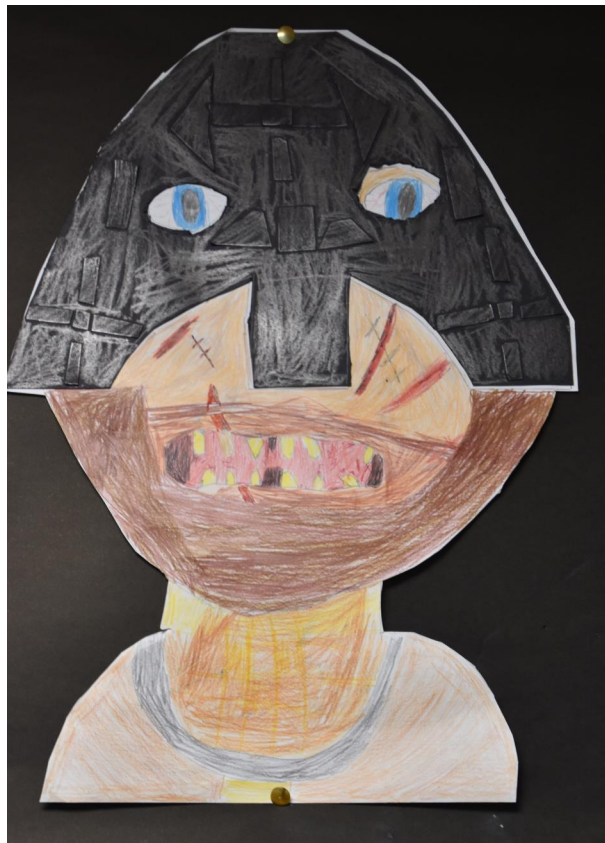
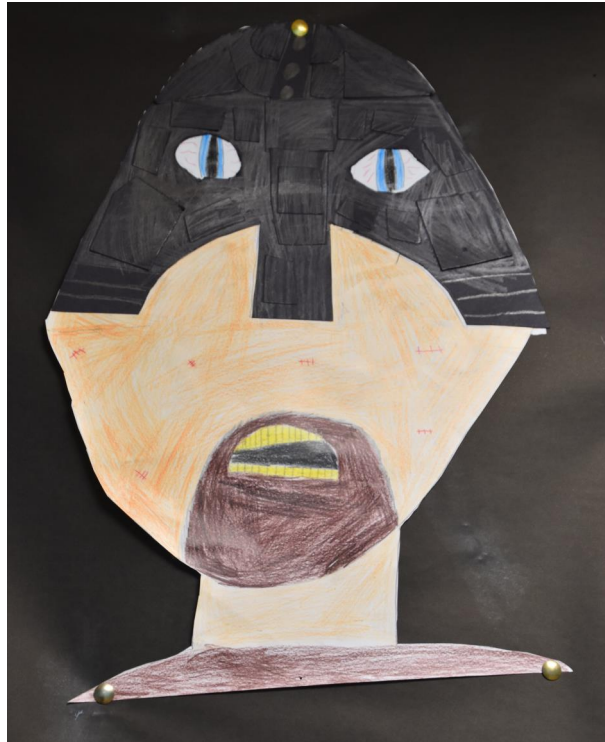
P6 BUSY BEES...

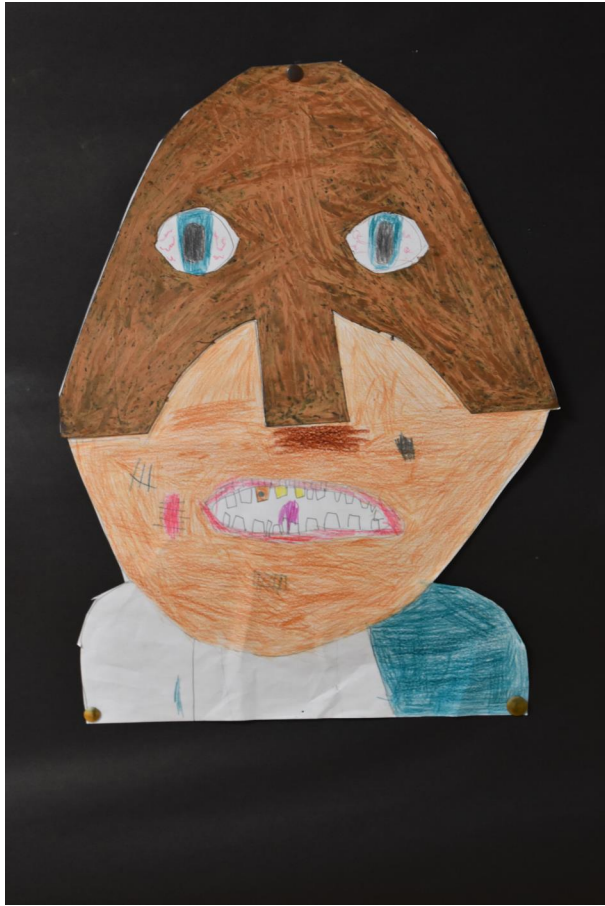


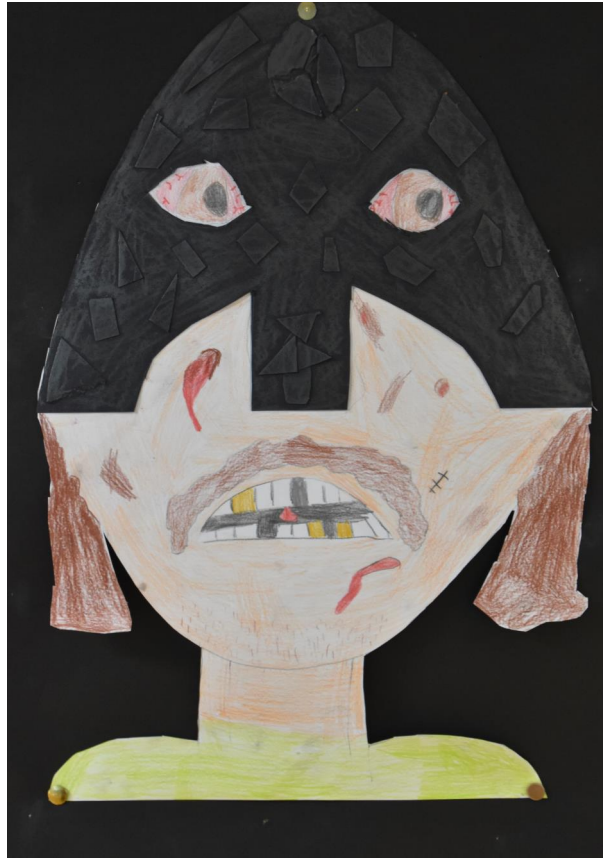


P6 FEARSOME VIKINGS...









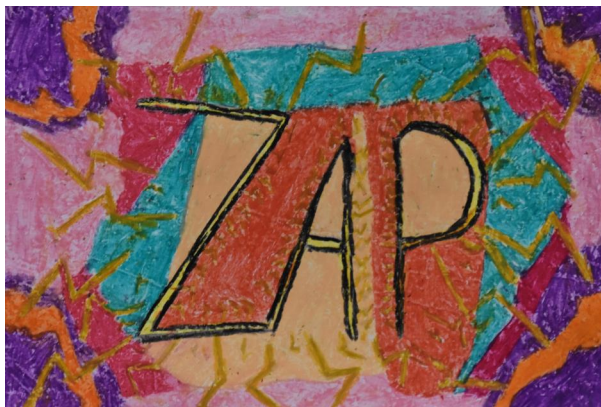
P7 FOX ART...

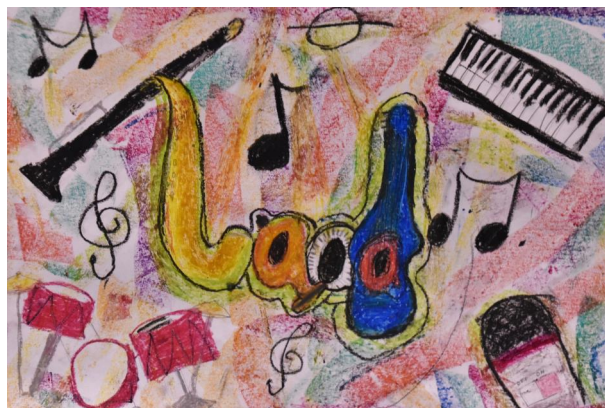






P7 ONOMATOPOEIA POSTERS...







[MORE BOOK CLUB PHOTOS...](#)









LEGO CLUB...









THE GILNAHIRK GALLERY OF GREATNESS...





1 - Player of the Match!!



2 - Super 'Big Write Week' rhyming poetry in P4!



3 - More brilliant rhyming poetry in P4.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS...

*Community
Connections*

If you are involved in any community linked activities and would like to promote them through our weekly update, please feel free to send to me via email

dcorbett546@c2kni.net



Engage with Age

It's back! By Popular Demand

Featuring! Swing Gals & DJ RHYTHM BANDIT

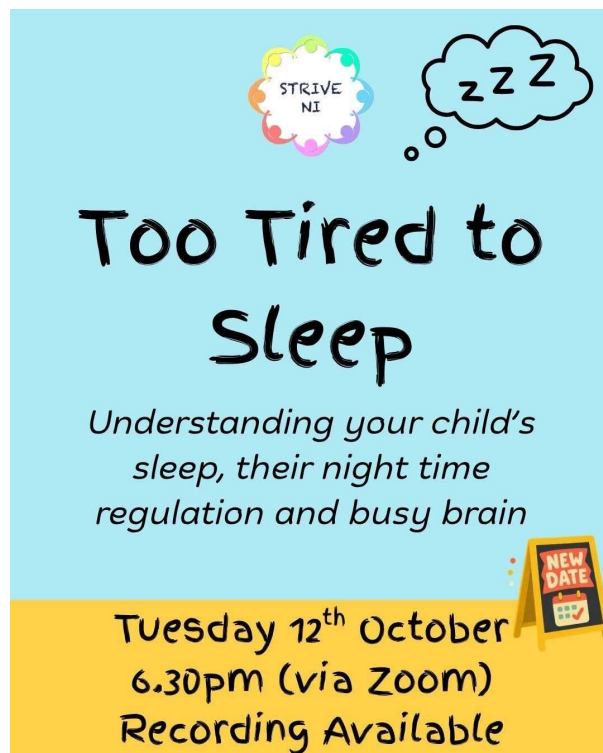
Slipped DISCO

THE CLAYTON HOTEL
ORMEAU AVENUE | BELFAST
WEDNESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER
2PM - 5PM

Great music-great prizes! Raffle tickets will be sold on the day!

BOOK YOUR TICKETS NOW!
<https://slippeddisco.eventbrite.co.uk>

Booking is essential - Tickets £7 (includes refreshments) - Over 55's
For any ticket enquires please contact sarah.gordon@engagewithage.org.uk
or call 02890735696



STRIVE NI

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Too Tired to Sleep

Understanding your child's sleep, their night time regulation and busy brain

Tuesday 12th October
6.30pm (via Zoom)
Recording Available

NEW DATE



Online Workshops



October 2026

Oct 1st	7:30PM - 8:30PM Stop, Think & Act: Helping Children Manage Impulsivity	
Oct 6th	7.30-8.30pm Attention HQ - Helping Kids Tune In and Stay On Track	
Oct 8th	10:30AM - 11.30AM Calm & Connected Helping kids understand and manage emotions	
Oct 13th	10:30AM - 11.30AM Thinking Outside the Box How Different Brains Learn & Grow	
Oct 14th	7:30PM - 8:30PM Calm & Connected Helping Kids Tune in and Stay On Track	



A project supported by the PEACEPLUS Programme, managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).
Delivered by Colin Neighbourhood Partnership as part of The Changing Lives Initiative: Flourish & Thrive



4 - Ridgeway Rovers - players born in 2015 wanted!

MAIN DATES FOR THE REST OF TERM 1...



- **Monday 19th October - Thursday 22nd October** - P1-6 parent teacher interviews (see details above)
- **Friday 23rd October** - last day of half term - early finish (1.30) - see further details above
- **Monday 26th October - Friday 30th October** - school closed for half term break

- **Monday 2nd November** - school resumes for new half term
- **Thursday 3 December** - Flu vaccination day
- **Friday 4 December** - Open morning for new P1 parents of children due to start school in September 2027.
- **Saturday 5 December** - Christmas tree sale and fair (details to be confirmed)
- **Tuesday 8/Wednesday 9 December** - P1-3 Nativities (further details will be provided)
- **Wednesday 16 December** - Carol Service in Our Lady and St Pat's College Hall (7pm)

KEY PARENT ACTIONS BASED ON THIS WEEK'S SWAY...

Here are the main actions parents should consider from this week's update:

-  **School dinners:** Be aware that, temporarily, **only Main Course 1** will be available each day when booking dinners.
-  **Parent-teacher interviews:** If you have a child in **P1–P6**, ensure you have booked an interview for **19–22 October**. If not booked by the end of today, the teacher will allocate a time. Interviews last **10 minutes**.
-  **Early collection:** During parent-teacher interview week, **P1–P6 finish at 1.15pm**. P7 operates normally. There are **no after-school activities**, apart from Coding on **Friday 23 October, 1.30–2.30pm**.
-  **Learning Support:** Parents of participating **P2–P4** pupils should return their request if they would like an interview with Mrs Newnes.
-  **School Development Plan:** Read the parent-friendly SDP summary sent home in your child's bag or attached to the Sway email.
-  **Smartphone Free Childhood:** Read the letter sent home and consider its recommendation to delay **smartphones until age 14** and **social media until age 16**.

-  **Foodbank Appeal:** If you haven't already contributed, send donations for **Dundonald Foodbank on Monday or Tuesday**. Food, toiletries and household items are requested.
 -  **Shoebox Appeal, P5–P7:** If your child wishes to participate, **request a shoebox from Mr Halliday**, fill it with the required items and return it as instructed.
 -  **Christmas Card Fundraiser:** If taking part, return your child's Christmas card design by **Tuesday 13 October**.
 -  **Parents' Association quizzes:** Look out for the two quiz sheets coming home on Monday. Entries cost **£1 per sheet** and should be returned by **Thursday 22 October**.
 -  **Friday 23 October:** Children may wear **non-uniform**, with **no donation required**. Dinners remain available, the Candy Fair takes place and **school finishes at 1.30pm**.
 -  **Half-term:** School is closed **Monday 26–Friday 30 October** and reopens **Monday 2 November**.
 - **The most time-sensitive actions are:** book/check the parent-teacher interview, return the Christmas card design by **13 October**, send Foodbank donations on **Monday/Tuesday**, and plan for the **1.15pm P1–P6 finishes during interview week**.
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Enjoy your weekend.

With kind regards

D Corbett

Principal.

