



The Brownlee Newsletter

September 2020

"A school where the individual is valued in a supportive and safe environment, where everyone's learning experience is celebrated."

Dear Parents

I know that so much of our communication is now mainly through ClassDojo and the Brownlee App, however, the extended family of some pupils and friends of Brownlee like to keep up to date with what is going on. I feel it is therefore still worthwhile sending out a newsletter each month.

First of all may I take this opportunity to welcome everyone back to school, after what has been a very unusual and difficult time. It is really great to see all the children back again and it is amazing to see how much they have all grown in the past 6 months. I especially welcome the new families who are joining us in P1 and in other classes. I hope that everyone will quickly feel part of the Brownlee school community and make lots of new friends in the days and weeks that lie ahead.

OUR AIM

The overall aim of Brownlee Primary School is to see each child develop to his / her optimum potential in all aspects of their education whether this is academic, physical, social or spiritual. I am always aware that our success as a school is very dependent on the support that each teacher receives from every child and the home from which they come. We very much appreciate the input from parents and trust that this will continue to develop as we work together throughout the year ahead.

THANK YOU

Thank you once again for all your help by following our new procedures, especially regarding set down and pick up times. This has helped the school day to begin in a safe and orderly fashion with everyone entering by different doors and the risk of overcrowding in the cloakrooms and corridors kept to an absolute minimum.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PHOTOGRAPHS, COLLECTION AND CONTACT INFORMATION

All new parents can download a Data Collection Form from the school website, which we would ask you to complete and return to school. It details all contact and medical information as well as when we can use your child's photograph in school. The vast majority of parents are quite happy for their child to appear in the local newspaper, Class Dojo, television, video, school website etc, however, others have extenuating circumstances whereby they wish to limit where their child's image is used. On our website you will also find Safeguarding policies and a form for you to inform us of who will normally be collecting your child.



Thank you for taking the time to complete these forms and returning them promptly.

PTA

As parents you are all automatically members of the Parent Teacher Association and I would like to encourage as many as possible to become involved in the various events that the association organises. At present any events will be 'virtual' and then parents can donate using the button on the homepage of the school's website.

SCHOOL MEALS

Hot school meals will be available to everyone from Monday 28th September. These will be able to be paid for using the Brownlee App and we will confirm the price per day closer to the time.

If you feel that you are eligible for free school meals, please contact reception as soon as possible for an application form. There is a backlog at the Education Authority for processing the applications for Free School meals so please contact Mrs Oliver in Reception if your application has not been processed.



HEALTHY BREAK / LUNCH



Brownlee Primary School operates a healthy eating policy. Children should bring a piece of fruit, yoghurt, sandwich or cereal bar (*not chocolate*) for break and a healthy lunch. Crisps, fruitwinders, chocolate bars and sweets are **not** part of our healthy eating policy and children should drink milk or water. Children are also encouraged to drink water during class. Water should be brought to school in bottles with 'sports tops' to prevent spills. If necessary, these can be topped up during the day.

MILK

School Milk will be available from Monday 14th September. This will cost £14.74 for the term up until Christmas. Again this will be paid through the Brownlee App.

EARLY BIRD CLUB / AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB

All bookings for the Early Bird Club and Breakfast Club have to be made through the Brownlee App. We would really appreciate it if bookings could be made at least a day in advance to ensure that we are aware that your child is attending.

PRE-SCHOOL

Once again we are very pleased to welcome the children and leaders from the Brownlee Playgroup. This pre-school provision is organised by Little Rays and we are delighted that they will have a full compliment of children for this September. We want children, parents and staff to continue to feel very much part of the Brownlee family and we look forward to integrating them into many of our activities throughout the school year.

SCHOOL EVACUATION

In the event of a whole school evacuation, all children and staff will proceed to the grounds of Railway Street Presbyterian Church. Using this evacuation point will ensure that children are a safe distance from the school building and we have access to indoor facilities and the internet so we can message parents.

AQE

News just in today that the AQE Transfer Test has been postponed until the new year. The new dates will be Saturday 9th, 16th and 23rd January 2021. This decision has been made following a challenge in the High Court and will move the tests from the original dates in November / December 2020. Local Principals are all very against this decision as it will cause additional stress for the children over the Christmas period and provide us with only a few days teaching following our return from the Christmas / New Year holidays.

The closing date for applying for the test has also been extended to **Friday 9th October**. Application forms can be downloaded from; <http://www.aqe.org.uk>

MUSIC LESSONS / INSTRUMENTAL TUITION

We are hoping that music tuition will be able to start in school again over the next several weeks. We will keep parents informed of what will be involved and how children and tutors will be kept safe during lessons.



ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

If your child has been absent from school, i.e. due to illness etc. we require a message of notification and explanation to be sent to your child's teacher on the first day of your child's absence. This can be done through ClassDojo. Schools now have their attendance checked each day by the Department of Education.

To have a minimum disruption to your child's education, it is expected that holidays will not be taken during term time. However, if it is necessary to do so for exceptional reasons, a '*Request to remove a Child from School During Term Time*' form should be completed and forwarded to the school at least two weeks in advance. This form is available from the school secretary.

CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

From the responses from our parental survey back in February we were very pleased to note that parents felt confident that any concerns they brought to the attention of Brownlee staff would be dealt with appropriately. We value the views and opinions of all our parents and have a procedure in place if you find you have a concern relating to your child. This is detailed below.



- 1) The first point of contact is with your child's class teacher.
- 2) If the matter remains unresolved you can meet with the Vice- Principal and / or the Principal.
- 3) In the unlikely event of the issue still not being resolved any parental concerns / complaints should be made in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Governors at the address below;

Mr Gordon Lindsay, 54 Lombard Park, Lisburn. BT28 2UJ

- 4) Should the complaint remain unresolved, parents can contact the Ombudsman for Public Service.

The full policy for parental complaints is on our school's website.

SAFEGUARDING POLICIES

On our school website, we have quite a number of policies detailing our school's approach to Safeguarding. These include; Child Protection, Pastoral Care,

Positive Discipline, Anti-Bullying, Attendance, Internet Safety, Use of Social Media, Mobile Phone Policy, RSE Policy etc. All of these policies are extremely important and we would like parents to take some time to read them and be aware of their contents. These policies are regularly updated by the Board of Governors in light of new circulars from the Department of Education and subsequent updates will be placed on the school's website. We also have the overview of our Child Protection procedures in several different languages for your convenience.

We value parental opinions on such policies and if you have any suggestions or concerns that you would like to raise, please do not hesitate in either completing the response form through the website or alternatively write to us and mark your letter for the attention of the Principal.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

There is a list of school holidays published on the school website. As the school started two days earlier than originally planned, we will have to take these days at another time. At the moment we have not decided when we will take these additional days, however, we will give parents plenty of notice in advance.

ClassDojo

Each class teacher will be providing parents with information about ClassDojo and how to register to receive messages from the school. This has proved to be an extremely useful resource during the lockdown period and the main way we keep in contact with parents. I would encourage all parents to ensure they have downloaded the ClassDojo app and registered using the information provided by your child's teacher.



The Brownlee App

Our new Brownlee App is now live and being used to pay for Early Bird Club, After-School Club and other payments. This will also be used for paying for school meals and milk in the weeks ahead. We would encourage all parents to download the Brownlee App from the App Store. The initial code is 11111 and you only need to enter this once.

Google Classroom

Your child's teacher will soon be in contact with you regarding the use of Google Classroom. This will soon be used to set and return homework electronically. For most classes, this platform will replace ClassDojo for setting online work and will be a better application in the event of a child or a class having to isolate and be tested for COVID-19.



Please remember to check our website and ClassDojo for updates, photographs and general information. All newsletters are also published on the website and can be downloaded. The school website address is www.brownleepimary.org

Yours sincerely,

Colin Elliott

Principal