



# The Brownlee Newsletter

November 2019

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

Dear Parents

I apologise that the Newsletter is a little late this month, however, I am sure the teachers have kept you all up to date with what is going on through Class Dojo. I trust you all had a very enjoyable half term break and I know many of you took the opportunity for a short holiday away. It is great to see all the children back again as we look forward to a busy time in the run up to Christmas.

## Harvest

I want to thank all our parents for their donations for the Harvest Service. Our harvest table was well stocked with non-perishable food and tinned produce. The members of staff at the Lisburn Food Bank were very appreciative of all the food we were able to donate. The children from P4 took the Harvest assembly and I want to thank Miss Woods and all the boys and girls for their lovely assembly presentation.

## Coats

The weather is due to turn colder after quite a mild autumn so far. Please ensure that your child has a warm coat that is **clearly labelled with their name.**

## Parent / Teacher Interviews

I hope you found the recent parent / teacher interviews helpful and informative. On behalf of the teachers I want to thank you for your continued encouragement and support during these interviews.

## PTA News

**Christmas Craft Fair Advance notice: Call for crafters**  
**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 6.00-8.00pm**

Any parent crafters or their friends are welcome to take up a stall. Please contact the PTA on [brownleepta@gmail.com](mailto:brownleepta@gmail.com) or at the school office for further details and a booking form. There will also be a PTA meeting in the school staff room on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November at 2.15pm.



### **Christmas Raffle donations**

Any parents, friends or businesses who may have suitable items to donate for the Christmas raffle - big or small, voucher or goods - all contributions will be gratefully received. Please contact the PTA as above.

### **Signed Northern Ireland Shirt**

A huge thank you to Ms Kirsty Faulkner and Mr Kyle Houston for arranging for us to get a Northern Ireland football shirt signed by Manager, Michael O'Neill. He will be shortly ending his very successful career as Northern Ireland Manager and this makes the shirt even more desirable.

We are going to carry out a separate raffle for this shirt and tickets will be sent home to each family next week. If you wish to purchase a ticket, simply complete the slips and return them along with £1 per ticket.

If you would like more tickets for extended family or work colleagues, please either call the school or pop a note into your child's folder and we can supply these.



### **PTA Contributions to the School**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Wendy Braithwaite, who has recently stepped down as Chairperson of the PTA. Mrs Braithwaite had been actively involved in the PTA throughout the 7 years that her daughter, Daisy, attended Brownlee and I want to sincerely thank her for her tireless service and enthusiasm over those years. I also want to thank Mrs Barbara Conway who has stepped down as PTA secretary. She was a tremendous support to Mrs Braithwaite and very helpful in assisting with the organisation of events. I am pleased to say that Mrs Conway is still very much involved with our PTA.

With this in mind, I want to encourage Mrs Stinson, Mrs Barron and Mrs Larmour who are respectively the new Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary of our PTA. They have really hit the ground running over the past few months and I would like to ask all parents to give them your full support and offer to help at our events, even if you cannot attend the actual PTA meetings.

Last month the PTA was able to donate £200 per class to purchase additional resources for each year group. A further £200 was donated towards Mrs Lewis' Special Needs budget so additional equipment could be bought.

Last year the school also made a substantial financial investment by rolling out the Accelerated Reader programme. This has been worth every penny and has really instilled the love for reading from P4-7. As part of the donation given to the school, the PTA were also able to give a further £2000 towards

the Accelerated Reader programme. This is over a third of the total cost of the programme and we are extremely grateful for this valuable contribution.

I think it is important for parents to see where the money raised through PTA events is spent. Every penny of profit which the PTA raises is given to the school for the purchase of resources which support every child. Unfortunately, the reality of the situation is that all our primary schools are seriously underfunded. Even with Brownlee completely full and thriving, our school is set to end up in a financial deficit to the tune of between £65-70,000 at the end of March 2020. This is the first time in 20 years as Principal that we have finished in debt. It is impossible to retrieve this money and still maintain the staffing and progressive education provision that we offer. The frightening fact is that Brownlee has a minimal debt compared to other schools in the area. Some schools are going to be running debts of between £250K - £500K. These schools are also over-subscribed and well managed but the appropriate funding is simply not there to run our schools effectively.

Despite this, I will always try to ring-fence PTA donations for specific resources so that you will know that any contribution you make is directly going to the children currently enrolled in the school.

Hopefully you will be able to mention this issue to our politicians when they come knocking on your doors over the next few weeks looking for votes.

### **Christmas Cards**

The order forms containing the children's Christmas Card designs are going home over the next few days in your child's folder. All the children's designs can also be viewed at

[www.school-fundraising.co.uk/christmas-cards-for-schools/?ID=GHIJZPTXJ](http://www.school-fundraising.co.uk/christmas-cards-for-schools/?ID=GHIJZPTXJ)

### **Poppy Appeal**

This week poppies have been on sale in all classes. We had a lovely Service of Remembrance today which was taken by P5.



### **Colds and Flu**

I would like to remind parents not to send their child to school if they are ill. This will hopefully prevent the spread of any infections throughout the school.



### **Fancy Dress Party and Disco**

I want to thank the PTA and all parents and staff who helped to make the fancy dress parties such a success. The children had a wonderful time and everyone looked very impressive in their costumes. The standard of the Pumpkin Decoration Competition was also of an extremely high standard and very difficult to judge.

### **Extreme Weather Plan**

In the event of us experiencing extreme weather during the winter period and the school needing to close, a notice will be posted on the school's website prior to 8am of the morning in question. The text messaging service and Class Dojo will also be used in such



circumstances. It is a huge decision to close the school and it is very much a last resort, however, on such occasions a full risk assessment has to be carried out as to how safe it is for staff and pupils to travel to and from school. We also need to consider if the school can be safely evacuated in the event of an emergency and if the rescue services can safely access the school grounds. If imminent severe weather is forecast, we will give parents prior warning the day before and advice regarding notification of a possible closure.

### **General Election**

I often joke that I can never guarantee an annual 'snow day' in Northern Ireland, however, I can usually guarantee an election day at some point in the year. As I am sure you are aware, there will be a General Election on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December and Brownlee will be used as a Polling Station. School will therefore be closed to pupils and staff on this day.

### **Christmas Carol Service**

We are going to run one Carol Service in Railway Street Presbyterian Church, The date is **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December** beginning at 9.45am and finishing around 11.00am. We would ask that parents help us by arriving no sooner than 9.25am to allow us to bring the children across and set up the necessary props and equipment.

### **School Photographs**

School photographs will be taken by Opus Digital this year and they will be coming to the school on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November. Families can be taken from 8.30am. I believe separate forms have been sent out regarding this but they did not contain a date.

### **Telephone Calls to and from School**

We recently had a call recording system installed in school so all incoming and outgoing calls are now recorded for lawful business reasons and training purposes.

### **Dublin Residential**

Children from P6 will be going to Dublin for a residential visit from Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November. We know they will have a very enjoyable time as well as learning a lot about some key events in Anglo-Irish history.

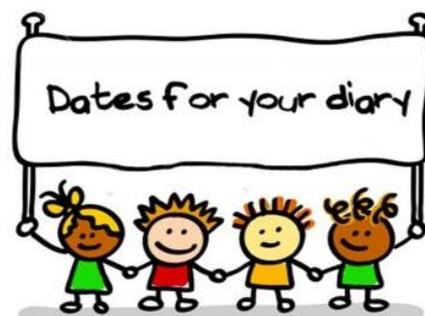
Below are some dates for your diary for this month.

### **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November**

P5 presented our Remembrance Assembly.

### **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November - AQE and GL Entrance Exams**

Children in P7 sit their first AQE entrance test. We would prefer if children wear their Brownlee school uniform on the days of the tests. May I also take this opportunity to wish all who are taking part every success and trust they will feel comfortable in whichever school they have been allocated to take the test in. The dates of the other AQE tests are Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November and Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November. The GL entrance exams will take place on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November and a supplementary test will take place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. The results for all entrance tests will be published on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2020.



**Monday 11<sup>th</sup> November**

Burns Soccer School will be doing a PDMU lesson with P6.

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> November**

P2 will be doing a clay workshop with Mrs Andrea Alderdice from the Island Arts Centre.

P5 will have an RE lesson with representatives from Railway Street Presbyterian Church and Scripture Union.

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November**

P6 will be having a Shared Education visit from the P6 class from Fort Hill Integrated Primary.

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> – Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November**

P6 Residential Visit to Dublin.

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November**

Burns Soccer School will be doing a PDMU lesson with P6.

The school will be having an Attendance Audit by Mrs Louise Smith, the Education Welfare Officer for this area.

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November**

P5 will have an RE lesson with representatives from Railway Street Presbyterian Church and Scripture Union.

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> November**

School photos will be taken today.

Burns Soccer School will be doing a PDMU lesson with P6.

P7 will be visiting the Linen Museum to do a workshop on the Victorians.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November**

PTA meeting at 2.15pm in the staff room.

**Preliminary December Dates****Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

Open Day – Tours of the school at 11.00am and 1.15pm. This is for prospective P1 parents for September 2020.

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

PTA Christmas Fair – 6.00 – 8.00pm.

**Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

P4-7 will be going to see a pantomime presented by Crown Jesus Ministries entitled, 'The Tree That Saved Christmas.'

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December**

P7 will be visiting the Christmas Markets in Belfast.

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

This is the day the children are due to receive their flu vaccinations, however, I believe this may be postponed due to a shortage in supplies at the moment.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

P5-7 will have an interactive presentation of the Christmas story entitled 'The Amazing Journey to Bethlehem.'

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December**

Our Carol Service in Railway Street Presbyterian Church.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

School closes for the Christmas holidays at **12:00 noon for P1-3 children and older siblings. The remainder of the school will leave at 12.30pm.** There will be no school dinners or after-school club on this day. Please inform any person who may be collecting your child of these arrangements. **School reopens on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020.**

We will keep you informed of any additional information as the month progresses.

Please check out our school website for photos and updates.

**[www.brownleeprimary.org](http://www.brownleeprimary.org)**

Yours sincerely

*Colin Elliott*

(Principal)