Hollybush Primary and Nursery School

September/October 2025 Newsletter

Dear Parent/Guardian

This newsletter is intended to give you an overview of things that are happening here at the school, and to highlight important events and activities that are planned for the near future. Please keep an eye on our app and Facebook page for other day-to-day events/information.

Primary 1 and Nursery Pupils:

We extend a very warm welcome to all of our new pupils in Nursery and Primary 1. We also welcome the new pupils who have joined us in the other year groups.

Chaplain Changes:

As you are no doubt aware, Fr Mc Devitt has moved to the parish of Clonmany and Culdaff in the recent clerical changes. During his tenure in Steelstown and Culmore, he gave faithful and dedicated service to the school. We are deeply grateful for Fr. Mc Devitt's ministry here, and wish him every success in his new parish. We welcome to the parish and to the school, Fr Declan Mc Geehan. Fr Mc Geehan, a Derry man, was curate in Cappagh prior to taking up his new duties in Steelstown and Culmore. We welcome Fr Declan, and look forward to working with him here at the school.

First Communion/Confirmation:

First Communion takes place on Saturday, May 23rd at 12.00 noon in Our Lady of Lourdes, Steelstown.

Confirmation date to follow shortly.

Housekeeping:

You will receive, via the school app, a substantial amount of information regarding routines at the school etc. Please take particular note of the aspects which are pertinent to Safeguarding. Mr O'Connor is our Designated Teacher for Safeguarding, and Mrs Mc Gurren is the Deputy Designated Teacher. Anyone with a concern for the safety of a child can contact any of the above, or any other adult at the school. Just to clarify one of the items on the list; children in the year groups below P.6. can cycle/scoot to school if accompanied by an adult. Don't forget helmets!

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Nature/Gardening Club:

This year, Mrs Mc Cormack will be taking groups of pupils for nature study/gardening. This will be done during the school day, generally on Thursday or Friday afternoons. If rough clothes/boots are required, classes will be informed beforehand.

Ms Sutherland's P.6. Gardening Club runs from 3.00 – 4.00 p.m., beginning Monday, September 22nd. Ms Sutherland will be discussing the arrangements with the P.6s. P.5. Gardening Club takes place next term.

Drama Club:

Drama for P.5. begins on Monday, September 29nd from 3.00 – 4.00 p.m. Details from Ms Sutherland to follow.

Swimming Club:

The after-school swimming club for P5,6 and 7 begins on Thursday, September 18th.

Cross Country:

Cross Country training has begun.

Safeguarding:

For the purposes of ensuring that safeguarding regulations are adhered to, all visitors to the school must report first to reception.

NSPCC:

This year, the NSPCC's 'Speak out, Stay safe' programme will be delivered to all classes face to face. We appreciate very much the work of the NSPCC with our pupils.

Irish Classes:

Irish language classes for all Primary 5-7 pupils recommence on the first week of October. We are very indebted to the volunteers who make this possible.

Friends of Hollybush:

The Friends of Hollybush will have their first meeting in late September. Mr Friel will be in touch with the members.

Uniform:

Please mark clearly your child's name on his/her uniform items. Each year, we end up with a considerable amount of unclaimed uniform items due to the fact that names are not clearly marked. The school also has a fund for those parents who may need some assistance in buying uniforms, especially P.E. uniforms – please contact office and ask for Mr Friel. This will be a confidential arrangement, and no one else will be aware of any requests except Mr Friel.

Medical Register:

We are currently updating the school's medical register. It is very important that the school is informed if your child develops a medical condition/allergy. This information is particularly important for canteen services. Please remember, we are a nut-free school, and this includes chocolate spreads containing nuts.

Child Protection Summary Leaflet:

The summary of the Child Protection policy is available on the school's website. We will also distribute a copy to the eldest child in the family in the coming weeks.

Outdoor Play:

Our storage shed for the newly acquired outdoor play equipment arrives next week. Some of our outdoor equipment has been delivered and assembled – another positive development. Staff will receive training on the delivery of outdoor play at the end of the month.

Poets' Corner:

Lots of our children happen to be very good little poets. We now have a display board for showing off their work. The poems will be photographed and put up on Facebook as well. We will be entering the Foyle Schools' Poetry Competition again this year. We have had huge success in this competition in the past three years. Here's hoping this year's entries are as successful.

Student Council:

Our first Student Council meeting takes place on Friday, September 19th at 1.15 p.m. The work of the council is important in involving our children fully in some of the decision-making processes in the school.

Primary 6 Numeracy/Literacy Club:

The after-school Numeracy/Literacy club for our Primary 7 pupils have resumed. Attendance at these is particularly important this term.

Family Hub:

As you know, the school often relies on the support of the Culmore Hub to assist some of our families, and to look after things like the uniform exchange programme, especially in the context of funding cuts etc. As the Hub has developed, new services have become available. Please make use of the Hub, which is an excellent development for our area. Please note also that the Hub hold a homework club after school. Pupils are collected from the school and brought to the Hub. Again, another excellent service!

World Mental Health Day:

This year, World Mental Health Day takes place on Friday, October 10th. All pupils are invited to wear something yellow on that day to mark the occasion.

Breakfast Club/Siblings' Club:

Primary 1 pupils can attend breakfast club after the Hallowe'en break. Primary 1 pupils can also join Siblings' Club in October.

School Holidays:

Please see school holiday list on the school app.

Kind regards

Mr Friel

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