



The Wee Friday Note

Friday 2nd February 2024



“Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.” – Thomas Edison

1. **Cregagh Primary School is a ‘Controlled School’ – what does this mean ?**

It means we are open to everybody! Anyone who wants to attend our school, can. We are organically integrated and fully inclusive. Everyone is welcome.

The controlled education sector of today is the largest, most diverse education sector in Northern Ireland comprising 49% of all schools across all phases: nursery, special, primary, secondary, grammar, integrated and Irish medium schools.

The origins of the controlled sector began in the early 20th century when schools were transferred to the state. From these beginnings of a historic faith context and a commitment to free public education, today's controlled schools provide for a more pluralist society through a diversity of schools with individual characteristics, but with Christian core values and principles.

The modern controlled sector is therefore a large, diverse and distinctive education system which is:

- diverse in provision and governance
- inclusive in making provision for children and young people from all backgrounds
- aspirational in seeking to provide the best possible education

Cregagh Primary School has faithfully served its local community and welcomed families from further afield since 1939. We are proud to be a modern diverse school with a long history and we look to the future with optimism.

2. **Developing Wrap-Around Care at Cregagh Primary School**

We are looking into different ways of providing extended “wrap-around childcare” from September 2024 onwards. Wrap-around care hasn’t been available at our school up until now, not because we don’t want to provide it – but because in the past we haven’t had enough working parents who were able to pay for such a service. In fact, I have looked into developing wrap-around childcare 3 times before in the past 10 years! However, I now think that with more working families than ever being part of our school, we **may** have enough children to make such a service possible. We really need a minimum of 10 children coming every day.

- We are investigating different ways to provide wrap-around care: outside providers vs in-house provision;
- Childcare is never cheap, but we hope to offer a reasonably-priced option for parents who need it to consider;
- Ideally, we would like to provide wrap-around care options for working parents to use up until 5pm or even 6pm Monday through to Friday;
- It may be possible to offer a form of wrap-around childcare during school holidays too;

- Wraparound childcare is not part of school. It happens after school is over. It is a service that parents pay for. There are no 'free places'. It is aimed at working parents whose jobs do not enable them to pick their children up at normal school closing times.
- We will also be looking at how we can 'stretch' the Preschool day and perhaps offer paid-for wrap-around childcare for those parents too.

3.



4. **Safer Internet Day**

Tuesday 6th February 2024 is *Safer Internet Day*. On this day, our entire school will be having lots of fun learning about the benefits and dangers of using computers and the internet.

5. **“Cregagh is Changing”**

This isn't just a fact, it's the name of a special meeting that the Board of Governors and I intend to hold on an afternoon or evening in the coming weeks (certainly before Easter). At this meeting, we will hear just how the Cregagh area has changed and continues to change; as well as more information about such things as our plans to develop wrap-around care in our school. Once a suitable date is agreed upon, more details will be shared in good time to allow parents to plan to attend.

***** IMPORTANT FUTURE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY / CALENDAR *****

Tuesday 30th January at 12 noon EA Connect opens for online applications for Post Primary

Tuesday 6th February Safer Internet Day

Thursday 15th to Monday 19th February Cregagh PS closes for Half-Term Break
School reopens Tuesday 20th February

Thursday 22 February at 12 noon. EA Connect closes for online applications for Post Primary

Monday 19th February School closed to pupils: School Development Day 3

Monday 18th March School closed: St. Patrick's Day (now a set EA holiday)

Monday 25th March to Monday 8th April Easter Holidays
School reopens Tuesday 9th April



Wednesday 22nd to Friday 24th May P7 3-day residential trip to Castlewellan Castle & Outdoor Pursuits Centre

Thursday 20th June Final Assembly & Prize Distribution

Friday 21st June Foundation Stage (P1 & P2) Prize Morning

Tuesday 25th June P7 final day of school (normal 3pm finish)

Wednesday 26th June P7 Awards Evening at Mount Merrion Parish Church

Friday 28th June Final day of school. Uniform-free day
12 noon finish