



The Wee Friday Note

Friday 2nd October 2020



Thought for the week ahead

"Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellence."

Vince Lombardi (NFL American Football Coach)

1. **Late Drop Offs and Late Pick Ups** – we have a growing number of children arriving to school late in the mornings and not being up on time in the afternoons. This week alone, we have had children arrive to school anywhere between 5 and 80 minutes late (for no good reason) and children left waiting to be picked up anywhere between 5 and 45 minutes late. This is unacceptable and must change.

A 'bad start' to the day very often leads to a poor day at school, as children are having to play catch-up from the moment they arrive – flustered and bothered. Being picked-up late can make children feel needlessly anxious and 'left behind' – as their friends have all been picked up and gone home.

Parents must be there when school is over for pupils, whether that's at 12noon, 2pm or 3pm. Not collecting their children on time is an unfair infringement on the teachers' time – taking them away preparing lessons, marking work, writing reports and very often, prevents them from picking their own children up. Teachers do not have to be in school beyond 3pm most days.

Of course, school recognises that the occasional mini-crisis can happen which keeps parents late and Cregagh Primary School will always be reasonable about such things – but that is not what is being talked about here. I also want to thank the 98% of parents (some of whom live quite miles away from school) who drop their children off to school and pick them up at the correct time every single day: regular as clockwork!

2. **Class Bubbles** – A 'Class Bubble' is a class grouping that "stays apart from other classes as much as possible". Without working class bubbles, primary schools especially would not have been able to reopen as social distancing is practically impossible among young children. Parents, please remember to try and keep your children from your own 'family bubble' from mixing with pupils from other classes – breaking the bubbles. We have noticed more and more families from different households walking to school together and children from different classes (not talking about brothers and sisters) mixing very closely as they come into school. We know this is difficult but parents, we cannot allow ourselves to get complacent. One positive case could close an entire Class Bubble; two or more could close the entire school!
3. **Cool for School Photography** – this went really well and the photographer was great with the girls and boys. Much laughter was enjoyed! Proofs will be sent home with the children as soon as they arrive into school and then it will be up to parents to decide whether they want to place an order (online, directly with the company) or not. I think they will be lovely photos.
4. **Healthy Eating Week** – as part of our learning about Healthy Eating this week, we all enjoyed a healthy fruit break supplied by our friends at Mount Merrion Parish Church and The Bethany Fruit and Veg shop on the Cregagh Road. **Remember: healthy breaks Monday-Thursday. Friday is treat day. Water-only to drink every day!**
5. **Teacher-Parent Interviews** – these will take place during the week starting Monday 19th October. As per the Department of Education's Guidelines for Schools, this term's teacher-parent interviews will take place by either video-conference call (Zoom) or telephone call. We will be in touch soon about appointment times. It is even more important than ever that parents take-up this offer of teacher-parent interview due to the fact that schools closed in March for three months and for parents to find out more about where their children are in terms of attainment.

6. **Lunchboxes** – remember, children are now allowed to bring their lunch to school in a lunchbox. Still **no** school bags. Lunch boxes should be carefully washed and wiped over with disinfectant before they come into school (to protect us) and when they get home (to protect you). Thank you ☺
7. **School Fund** – we have somewhere in the region of 50% of school fund paid so far. We really need and appreciate this support. School fund can be paid online. If you can't make payment online, pop your school fund in a clearly marked envelope into one of our post drop boxes (green box at school's front door or the red post box at the back gate). Thank you once again.
8. **Parents' Work with Alex** (Family Worker) – Remember, Alex our parent worker is here to help and she is brilliant! If you need advice on anything to do with family life and the challenges of raising kids, give her a call or text (07740545129). Alex is totally confidential and very easy to chat to. Check out our school Facebook page where we put details of all the different things Cregagh Primary School is offering to parents through Alex.
9. **Miss Currie Retiring** – as I explained before the summer, Miss Currie was looking forward to retiring at the end of June this year. Miss Currie willingly agreed to return in August to help the children resettle back into school following the three month Covid Lock Down. Miss Currie will now be retiring at Halloween.

Miss Currie has worked at Cregagh Primary School for over 34 years and has taught hundreds of children during that time. She will be greatly missed. I cannot say for certain who will take over the P6 class after Halloween (whether it will be a member of school's permanent staff who is currently off work for reasons connected to health) or a new temporary teacher) but I will let parents know as soon as I know. Covid has made many things very complicated and less than ideal. That said, the P6 children will continue to be well looked after and well taught.

Just as when Mr Milligan, Miss McBride and Mrs Kinnear retired, all of whom had served our school community for many years, I do not want to rob any parents or wider family members the opportunity to contribute to a gift for Miss Currie should they wish to do so. To be clear, parents should not feel in any way obligated or pressured to contribute to Miss Currie's retirement fund. I am simply making it known, that anyone who would like to may place their contribution in an envelope marked "RETIREMENT" in the green box at the front, main entrance door of school or the red letter box that stands in the middle of the Key Stage Two playground each morning.

Important Dates for your Diary

- 🌐 **Every Wednesday and Friday** – school closes at 2pm for all pupils. Please collect in good time.
- 🌐 **Monday 19th October** – Teacher-Parent Interview Week begins. Video-call or telephone call available. Appointment times for calls to be arranged early-mid. Mainstream children will go home at 1pm every day this week (as per usual during Interview Week)
- 🌐 **Friday 23rd October** – school will close at 12 noon (no lunches or dinners) on this day to facilitate staff welfare training.
- 🌐 **Monday 26th April to Friday 30th October** – Halloween holidays (5 school days)
- 🌐 **Christmas Holidays** – NOTE CHANGE OF DATE – School will now close on Friday 18th December at 12 noon not Monday 21st December (as indicated before the summer).

