

# Principal's Newsletter

November 2023

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome back to the start of a new half term. From September to now time has flown and together we have achieved so much. A new selection of After-school clubs is available, Breakfast Club is open for business every morning, and we have met with our Shared Education Partners from Oakfield. We have also enjoyed several community events. Who could forget our beautiful Harvest assembly and of course our Halloween disco! We also had our very first Pumpkin Patch at Acorn. I think everyone would agree that our friendly scarecrow will have to become a full-time pupil at Acorn! (I wonder which class should he go to?)

This half term is set to be equally busy as, dare I say it, we are in the run up to Christmas. (Only 7 weeks away) Rumour has it we are singing Christmas songs in Praise Time this week. We have lots of lovely events planned for Christmas. We have nativity plays to look forward to and even Supper with Santa.

Things to look out for this month include: The Big Bedtime Read for children in Nursery to P4, an author visit for P3 and P4 children, a trip to the Ulster Museum for P6, and the arrival of the Travelling Book Fair.

We are also delighted to announce the opening of a new after school club - Acorn Stay and Play. We know that parents and carers lead very busy lives, and it is our wish to provide a service where children can stay in school a little later each day. This club will provide curriculum-based activities, homework supervision and of course lots of fun!

I hope everyone has an enjoyable month. If you have any questions or queries, as always please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kind Regards,

Jennifer Fuller (Principal)

## Dates for your Diary

### Key Events in November

9.11.23	P1 Shared Education visit to Oakfield PS
10.11.23	Nursery Shared Education visit to Oakfield PS
11.11.23	Primary 7 SEAG test 1
14.11.23	P3 Shared Education visit to Oakfield PS
14.11.23	Sophy Henn author visit for P3 and P 4 children
16.11.23	6:30pm- Big Bedtime Read for nursery -P4
25.11.23	Primary 7 SEAG test 2
27.11.23	P6 trip to see the Ulster Orchestra
1.12.23	Acorn's Open Day

## SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Principal

Mrs. J. Fuller

### Vice Principal, Head of Key Stage 2 and Assessment Co-ordinator

Mrs C. Hamilton

### Head of Foundation & Key Stage 1 and Deputy Designated Teacher

Mrs S. McIlmail

## I'M WORRIED ABOUT A CHILD IN SCHOOL.



If you are concerned about the welfare of a pupil in school, please speak with Mrs Rolloos (Designated Teacher for Child Protection and Pastoral Lead).

## Buddy Update

All our Primary 7 children have completed their first half term as a Lunch Time buddy. They have been exceptional when it comes to helping our younger children. This month we would like to give special recognition to Riley Deignan who is our buddy of the month. Riley helps always has a smile and a friendly word for all our younger children. Well done, Riley!



## Poetry Workshop

We are extremely proud of all our P4-P7 children who took part in a poetry workshop entitled, **The Voice is Children**. Pupils were tasked with the challenge of writing a poem on a topic of their choice. Their work will be exhibited at the Carrickfergus Museum. After the exhibition, selected poems will be set to music by composers and songwriters in the Carrickfergus area. The new compositions will be premiered live in a concert around May 2024.

With a bit of luck some of the work of the children from Acorn will feature in the concert!



## Clubs in November

This half term, all clubs except for Clayrazy, Breakfast club and Stay and Play will be finished by Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November. If your child would like to join a club that they have not previously attended, please email Mrs Christian to the following address: [acornips110@gmail.com](mailto:acornips110@gmail.com)



All clubs can be paid for through our school money app. Please note that Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> December will be our Open Day so we have had to cancel P1-P3 football club. Any money already paid has been added to credit.

## Young Enterprise

All children from P2 to P7 will be taking part in the Young Enterprise programme. Through this programme children have the opportunity to learn about jobs, money matters, marketing and how businesses are run. I am very hopefully that some of our children will be Entrepreneurs of the future! Watch this space.



## The Big Bedtime Read

Have your pyjamas, slippers and dressing gowns at the ready, we are hosting a Big Bedtime Read on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November at 6:30pm**. This event is open to all children from Nursery to P4. Children can come to school dressed in their Pyjamas and listen to some bedtime stories read by staff from Acorn. I have also heard a rumour that hot chocolate and marshmallows will be served at this cosy event! Booking details will be sent out shortly.



## Book Bags for Nursery

Our nursery children were very excited to receive their very own book bags. Each bag contains 7 bedtime stories. One for each night of the week. Every Friday the children swap their books and collect a new set for the week ahead! Happy reading everyone!



## Open Day

Acorn's Open Day will take place on Friday the 1<sup>st</sup> of December from 1pm - 3pm. Any parent who has a child starting Nursery or P1 in September 2024 is welcome to attend. Please spread the word as we



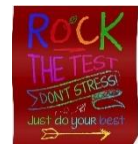
## AGM – parent nomination

On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November, our Annual General Meeting will take place at 7:00pm in the school assembly hall. At this meeting Mrs. Fuller will read a summary of our school's Annual Report 2022-23. This report will be emailed to all parents and published on our school's website.



## Good Luck P7

This month, some of our P7 pupils will be sitting their AQE and GL Transfer Tests. We wish them the best of luck and we want them to know that we are very proud of them. No test can define a young person, every individual has talents that cannot be measured by a grade or number. Our message to you all is... **"Rock the test, don't stress, just do your best!"**



# Top Tips and Shout out!

## Safer Schools App

## Thank you Mags!

**My Child's First Device**  
5 Steps to Make Phones, Tablets, and Laptops Safer

**Remember!**  
This is an exciting time in your child's life. You want to be a part of that in a positive way that encourages them to share with you and trust you. If you take the time to teach them, they will be empowered in their online actions and behaviours for the better.

- 1 Do your homework**  
Make sure your home environment is secure and ready for your child to be online. Many major household providers offer age restriction settings so check with your provider to ensure these restrictions are put in place. Many retailers offer free Parental Controls to their customers. You can find Parental Control walkthroughs on most popular provider websites. Check the device's brand website for specific walkthroughs or advice to find privacy settings on your child's specific device.
- 2 Set up the device with your child**  
Taking the time to sit down with your child and set up the device together will help you both get to know how the device works. Allow your child to experiment with different search engines, and set up in-app purchase restrictions. You can use the device settings to set up agreed upon restrictions, like Screen Time and App Limits. Explain why these settings are important to protect children and young people from online risks and that these restrictions will be lifted when they are old enough to make their own choices. If you are not sure, contact your provider for support.
- 3 Discuss and agree on healthy digital and online habits**  
Once the device has been set up, take the time to agree on some healthy rules and boundaries for how they will use the device. This can include rules like when and where they can use their device, screen time allowance and which apps are allowed to be used. Be realistic on what will work in your household. If your child has friends with devices, remind them that their online for one family might not work for another. As the parent or carer, you are responsible for the way your child uses their device and they will need guidance, especially if they are your child's first independent responsibility.
- 4 Check-in with your child**  
Check in with your child about their device use. It doesn't have to be a big sit-down conversation! Informal chats over the dinner table, in the car or while watching television as a family can have the biggest impact. Ask questions like, "Did you get your favourite app? Why do you like it the most?" or "How has your device helped you today?" Online safety is never a one-off conversation - it's a continuing dialogue. Open your child to your interest in their responses and thoughts to foster an environment of openness and trust between you and the child in your care.
- 5 Keep Yourself Informed**  
We live in a digital world that changes daily. The most responsible thing you can do in keeping your child's device safe is to keep yourself informed. Stay alert to trends and threats that they may be exposed to. With many companies beginning to offer "soft" versions of their products, knowing when it's safe and when it's not is the best solution for your child. Luckily, we have some excellent resources to assist you that are reliable and relevant. Visit our website and social media pages.

SAFER SCHOOLS NI | saferschoolsni.co.uk

OUR SAFETY CENTRE | oursafetycentre.co.uk



Maggie, our cook from Ulidia has visited Acorn and asked for suggestion to add to the dinner menu. While lots of healthy dishes have been added, the rainbow cookies are a big hit! Thank you, Mags, for all your hard work!

We know some of our children may have a tablet or device of some description on their Christmas list. We thought it would be useful to share with you 5 top tips to make phones, tablets, and laptops safer. This information has come from our Safer Schools App.



Well done Mrs Thoburn. Your gardening talents are second to none! We are very proud of your latest achievement! Mrs Thoburn was runner up in Best Kept allotment in Mid and East Antrim in Bloom



## Reminders:

- Please use our "Park and Stride," facility at Downshire Church. This system helps reduce the amount of traffic around school at drop off and pick up times
- The next Parent Council meeting is on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm.** We look forward to welcoming our new members
- Apart from Assistance Dogs, our school site is a dog free area