



Castle Gardens Primary School

**Parental Information Booklet
August 2021**

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Website www.castlegardens.org.uk

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Dear Parents

Another school year is about to start, and I hope you have all had an enjoyable holiday. At the outset of this new year can I again say to all parents that we at Castle Gardens Primary School have always, and will continue to put the best interests of your child as our first priority. Should you at any time during the year ahead have concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or myself.

I would take this opportunity to especially welcome all new parents and pupils to the school. I trust your association with Castle Gardens will be a long and happy one.

At the start of each school year we remind parents of some points so as to ensure that the day to day arrangements work for the benefit of all. Please take the time to read the following information in this short booklet and I ask that you retain it throughout the year for your reference.

If there is any matter you wish to discuss with me, please get in touch.

Mr J Gray
Principal

CHILD PROTECTION

In Castle Gardens the welfare and interests of the child are paramount.

The school's Pastoral Care Policy along with related safeguarding policies are available in school for inspection and can also be found on the school website. This policy deals with all the relevant areas of Child Protection in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

All members of staff refreshed their child protection training on Monday 23rd August this year.

Should you have any concerns during the school year of any child protection issues please report these to our Designated Teacher Mrs P Harbinson or the deputy Designated Teachers Mrs H Hutchinson, Mrs D Turtle & Mr J Gray.

Access NI (Child Protection)

We are grateful to those parents who regularly help us by accompanying school trips. However, all parent volunteers must complete an **Access NI Check Form** each year. Details to enable completion are available from the office.

COVID UPDATE

The last two academic years have been significantly impacted by Covid, lockdowns and restarts. Ahead of the 2021-22 school year guidance is gradually changing but we all must play a part in ensuring the impact on our school is limited as much as possible.

At time of writing (Monday 23rd August) the following procedures will be in place to ensure safety of all members of the school community. Amendments will be shared via weekly newsletters and social media.

- Classes will continue to use their own designated entry and exit points.
- Class bubbles have been extended and are now year group bubbles. This means children can play with children in the other class in their year group in resource areas and the playground.
- Positive cases will be treated slightly differently this year. Clarification re pupils taking PCR tests and being able to return to school without isolation still is being sought. At this stage, until this clarification is received, if a positive PCR result is returned, the class will be required to isolate for 10 days even if other pupils return a negative PCR test.
- Homework including reading books will be sent home this year.
- Online subscriptions to Bug Club and Accelerated Reader have been retained. Education City has been replaced by Mathletics. MyOn has not been renewed as the Accelerated Reader library will be available for pupils.
- Masks are encouraged around the school site and required to be worn by visitors entering the building.
- The earlier start time of 8.30am will continue. As this is 15 minutes earlier than the previous start time, school will finish 15 minutes earlier. P1 to P3 will finish at 1.45pm. P4 to P7 will finish at 2.45pm.
- School meals will continue to be taken in classrooms until further notice.
- Shared spaces such as the hall and ICT suite are back in use.
- Hand hygiene will continue to be encouraged with sanitiser available at all entry points.

START DATES

- P1 pupils including P1 speech pupils will start on different days, these dates and times have been communicated to parents along with appointments for induction meetings.
- P2 to P7 pupils including speech pupils will start on Wednesday 25th August.
- Doors open @ 8.30am, teaching staff will collect the children from their designated areas.
- Breakfast Club will restart @ 8am on Wednesday 25th August.
- School will finish School finishes on the 25th, 26th, 27th and 31st August for P2 to P7 pupils at the following times:
 - P2, P4 children 12pm
 - P5 to P7 children 12.15pm
 - The first full day will be Wednesday 1st September. P2 and P3 children will finish at 1.45pm. P4 to P7 children will finish at 2.45pm.

PERMISSION

Permission for things such as First Aid, internet access, walking home from school and mobiles phones can be completed via this an online form. This form can be accessed below and via the school website, newsletter and app.

[Click here to complete permission form](#)

FLU VACCINATION DATE

Please note – a team of nurses will be in school on **Wednesday 10th November** to give the vaccine to our children. Further details will be sent home nearer to this date.

ANNUAL SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

School photographer will be in school during the autumn term to take photographs of all pupils. Permission form will be sent home a week beforehand.

PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Interviews will be held week beginning Monday 18th October and Monday 28th February. School will finish at 1.00 pm for all classes during these weeks to facilitate the meetings. P7 transfer meetings will be held at the end of January. Further details relating to interviews will follow in due course.

VALUABLES

Pupils must not bring valuable items of any kind to school as we cannot take responsibility for any personal items or money which may go missing.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters will be available online on a Friday via our website and social media as well as the Schools NI app. Hard copies will be sent home at various times throughout the year.

ANIMALS

No animals are permitted on the school grounds without prior permission from the Principal with the exception of guide dogs.

CLOTHING LABELS

Please ensure that all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name. It is important that coats are also labelled.

LOST PROPERTY

Items of lost property will be kept in a basket in the office. Parents can call to the office and will be assisted by office staff.

AFTER-SCHOOL CLUBS

After-school clubs will return this school year. Plans are being finalised for a reduced timetable compared to previous years, but the children will once again be able to participate in a range of activities.

Clubs for P1 children will start after half-term in November.

Clubs for P1 to P3 children will run from 1.45pm to 2.45pm

Clubs for P4 to P7 children will run from 2.45pm to 3.45pm

EXCEPTIONAL CLOSURE PROCEDURES

As parents may be aware we had to close school several years ago due to the severe weather conditions. Should such a situation develop in the year ahead or should it be necessary to close the school at short notice for any reason the following procedure will apply.

- 1 Check the school website – www.castlegardens.org.uk or our social media pages. We will keep these updated at times of severe weather or other exceptional situations and we will endeavour to make a final decision by 7.30 am or earlier if at all possible.
- 2 Notifications will be sent via the school app and Class Dojo.
- 3 We will also text parents of exceptional closing. In this regard it is important that you inform the school office of changes to your mobile phone number.
- 4 Telephone school – 028 91813827. We will endeavour to have our phone lines manned from 7.30am if a late decision is taken.

Parents are asked to appreciate that we will work on the basis that school will be open every day. This basic premise means that a decision to close the school will be left as late as possible. In future on any given day we will try to take that decision before 7.30am (and earlier if possible) and communicate that decision by means of the above as soon as possible thereafter.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DROPPING OFF AND PICKING UP CHILDREN

TURNING CIRCLE

- School operates on a one-way system as a normal roundabout.
- The circle should be used only as a drop off or pick up zone.
- Should you need to park to drop a younger child to class or to speak to a teacher, park in the large car park to the right of the roundabout or alternatively outside the school.
- The small car park on the left at the main entrance is for staff.
- There are four blue badge parking spaces, please do not use these if you do not have the appropriate permission.
- Care must be taken when dropping off children or picking them up. There is a speed limit of 5 mph when in the school grounds.
- Please be aware that there will be about 350 children entering school each morning and we must avoid any behaviour that jeopardises their safety.

PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

- All pedestrians should use the crossings when crossing any road within the school grounds.
- **Cars should not park or wait on these crossings at any time.**

SUPERVISION

- Children will only be supervised from 8.30 am until classes begin at 9am. School cannot accept responsibility for children before this time unless they are attending Breakfast Club.
- All classes have their own designated entry points. Parents are not permitted to enter the school building via this entry points.
- Doors remain unlocked until 9.05 am.
- Please be aware that there will be several taxis and a bus bringing pupils in our speech classes to school each morning. Parents are asked to be accommodating towards these vehicles.

- Once you collect your child at home time you must ensure that they remain under close supervision. Pupils are not permitted to use the playground afterschool. There have been several minor accidents in the past and we wish to avoid this.

WALKING HOME FROM SCHOOL

We would advise that **P1-P4 children will not** be allowed to walk home unaccompanied due to safety concerns. They should be collected by a responsible adult.

P5 to P7 children will need permission if they are to be permitted to walk home. The permission form can be accessed via the school website and newsletter.

HOME TIMES

- P1 pupils finish at 1.45pm from October. Exact dates and times of phased starts for P1 pupils can be found in the induction booklet parents received at their orientation visit in June.
- P2 pupils finish at 1.45pm every day and should be collected in the foundation playground.
- P3 pupils finish at 1.45pm every day for the first term. After Christmas P3 children will finish at 2.45pm on Monday and Tuesday and 1.45pm the rest of the week. Pupils should be collected from their designated entry point.
- P4 to P7 pupils finish at 2.45pm. P4 pupils should be collected from their designated entry point. P5 to P7 pupils may make their own way to meet an adult from their designated entry point if permission is given.

LATE COLLECTION OF PUPILS

From time to time parents/guardians will run late when collecting children from school. Should this happen your child will be brought to the office to wait with the secretary. If the child has not been collected within 10 minutes a phone call will be made to the parent to find out how much longer the child will have to wait to reassure them.

When a parent/guardian arrives to collect the child, particularly a younger child, they will need to come to the office to collect them as children will not be sent outside to a car.

COLLECTION OF PUPILS DURING THE DAY

Children will not be allowed to leave the premises during school hours unless the class teacher or office are notified. Any pupils being taken out of school early for any reason will need to be signed out using the iPad in reception.

PUPIL ATTENDANCE

I wish to remind all parents that the recording of pupil attendance is now computerised and that all absences and late arrivals will be closely monitored and analysed by the Department of Education.

Pupils are marked present for morning **and** afternoon sessions and it is therefore essential that your son/daughter's absence – whether part of/complete day – is covered by an explanatory note from you on his/her return (or, if applicable, before they leave). This applies to **all** absences from school eg: illness, appointment with dentist, doctor etc.

All pupils should be in class at 9.00am. Classes begin promptly at 9.00 am. Any pupil arriving after 9.00 am should enter school via Reception. Any child arriving after 9.00am will be marked late and any arriving after 9.30 am will be marked absent for the full morning session.

HOLIDAYS

An increasing numbers of children are being taken out of school during term-time for family holidays. We cannot sanction or 'give permission' for children to be taken from school and this is entirely the decision of parents. I would remind parents that teachers cannot provide work for children going on holiday.

A full list of school holidays and closures can be found at the end of this document.

VISITING ARRANGEMENTS

We value the opportunity to talk to parents and we will attempt to address any issues raised. Procedures changed in 2020 due to Covid meaning parents are no longer permitted to enter the school building. Parents will be able to speak with class teachers in designated area each morning in the playground.

In order to assist in the smooth running of the school, it would be appreciated that any parents that would like a longer conversation with a class teacher should contact the school office to arrange a convenient time.

I will be available at the front of school almost every morning and I would encourage parents to speak to me if they need assistance in any matter.

Visitors sign-in via the iPad in reception and they must wear visitor passes at all times when in the school building or grounds.

CONTACT DETAILS

It is vital that the class teacher and/or school secretary is informed of any changes in family circumstances, change of address, telephone numbers or contact details. This ensures that our computerised records are kept up-to-date and emergency situations dealt with effectively.

Children will be sent home with a blue data capture form, could you please complete this and return to the class teacher as soon as possible. This will update our information on our network and provide a hard copy of information should we experience a power cut or loss of connectivity.

Please notify the office as soon as possible of any changes to contact details during the year.

MONEY

This year we are continuing as a cashless school, continuing with the School Money online payment system. This will allow all payments to be completed without the need to send cash or cheques into school to pay for dinners, tuition, trips or anything else.

Please ensure that we have your most up-to-date phone number and email address. Also ensure that the phone number you wish to use to manage your child's account is listed as the primary number of the blue data collection forms.

SCHOOL DINNERS

School dinners will be paid for online this year. Class teachers will still need to record what days dinner is taken to ensure numbers are correct. Payments will be processed via the school money system. The present cost is **£2.60 per day** and **£13.00 per week**.

Parents should pay for dinners before they are taken to greatly assist with administration and banking.

Please ensure that if you are entitled to free school meals that a new online form is completed at the start of this school year. Until proof on entitlement is provided to the school, payments are expected by the Department of Education.

As part of our COVID mitigation, dinners will be taken in classrooms until further notice.

If your child or children necessitate a specialised menu due to allergies or a dietary requirement please contact the school office to arrange a meeting to discuss with Mrs Dane.

BREAKFAST CLUB

There is a Breakfast Club available in the Canteen from 8.00am to 8.45am each day. It costs £1 per pupil per day and will be processed through the school money system at the end of each week. Unfortunately, food is still not available, but we hope this will change at some stage this year. Miss Long who supervises each morning will accompany children to their class designated entry point.

BREAK TIME SNACK

Children should bring a snack break each day and we would encourage you to send one healthy item to eat and one to drink. No fizzy or sugary drinks, are permitted.

Mondays to Thursdays are the days when we highlight Healthy Eating and we would appreciate a healthy break being sent in with the children.

NUT FREE SCHOOL

All parents are asked to note that we are a **NUT FREE SCHOOL**. Over recent years we have had an increased number of children allergic to nuts and products containing elements of nuts.

Children with this condition could have a severe reaction if they come into contact with nuts, or related products. For some of these children a severe allergic reaction may be caused simply by touch or smell alone. This therefore has serious implications for all areas of the school both inside and outside of the classroom.

Consequently, I would ask that no nuts or related products are brought into school for your child's break or packed lunch. Your agreement with this and compliance could prevent a serious medical emergency developing.

I am sure you will appreciate the reasons for making this request and trust that you will give it your full co-operation.

JEWELLERY

We would strongly discourage the wearing of jewellery and advise that no responsibility will be accepted for loss or damage. We would discourage children to wear earrings but should you wish for them to do so a simple stud should be worn.

Jewellery must not be worn during physical exercise because of the risk of loss or personal injury. Pupils are not permitted to wear make-up in school.

SWIMMING

Swimming lessons are hopefully due to resume this year for P4 to P7 pupils. Details including prices will be sent home with pupils prior to lessons starting.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Keep up to date with everything going on in Castle Gardens via:

- The school website www.castlegardens.org.uk
- Facebook and Twitter
- Class Dojo
- Schools NI app for smartphones and tablets downloadable via the app stores.
- The Castle Gardens app which is downloadable via the app stores. The passcode for the app is 11111

MOBILE PHONES and RECORDING DEVICES

Pupils in Key Stage 2 only are permitted to bring mobile phones to school with the following conditions applicable:

Phones must be switched off and handed to class teacher at the start of the day and will be returned at the end of school. This means:

- No phoning
- No texting
- No photographing
- No videoing
- No taking phones into the playground.
- No playing of music stored within the phone.

They are for emergency use only.

They should be clearly marked with the owner's name.

The school will take no responsibility for looking after mobile phones or their loss or damage.

Phones may be turned on after school. This allows for example, a case when parents have sent a text with a change to pick-up arrangements.

Staff reserve the right to confiscate mobile phones if they are not being used appropriately. Phones will be returned at the end of the day.

Any younger pupils will have their device confiscated and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Permission can be completed via the Form shared via Class Dojo and newsletters.

STAFFING

Teaching Staff

P1	Mrs Harbinson
P1	Mrs McLachlan
P2	Mrs Burrows
P2	Miss Martin
P3	Mrs Armstrong
P3	Miss McCluskie
P4	Mrs Hutchinson
P4	Mr Gibson
P5	Mrs Alcorn
P5	Miss Lowry
P6	Mr Adair
P6	Mr Stewart
P7	Mrs Turtle
P7	Miss Boyle

Speech 1	Miss Irvine
Speech 2	Mrs Wilson

Engage	Mrs Saunderson
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Classroom Assistants

P7	Mrs Conn, Mrs Robson, Ms McAlees, Mrs McElduff
P6	Mrs Montgomery, Mrs Hards, Mrs Dodds, Mrs Totten, Mrs Irvine
P5	Miss McDowell, Miss Blackstock, Miss Lappin, Mrs Bishop
P4	Mrs Easter, Miss Long
P3	Mrs Skimmin, Mrs Berry
P2	Mrs Prentice, Mrs Smyth, Miss Stewart, Miss Martin
P1	Mrs Tweed, Mrs Moore
Speech	Mrs Moore, Mrs McCulloch

School Secretary

Mrs J McCluskie

Caretaker

Mr H Gregory

Head Canteen Supervisor

Mrs F Dane

Holiday List 2021/22

School starts	Wednesday 25 th August 12pm finish all week. No lunches available.
Bank Holiday – School Closed	Monday 30 th August
	Tuesday 31 st August 12pm finish. No lunches available.
	Wednesday 1 st September, normal finishing times.
Last Day of Term	Friday 22 nd October – 1pm finish. Lunches available.
Half-Term	Mon 25 th October to Friday 29 th October
School Restarts	Monday 1 st November
Last Day of Term	Tuesday 21 st December – 12pm finish. No lunches available.
Christmas Holidays	Wednesday 22 nd December to Monday 3 rd January 2022
School Closed *	Tuesday 4 th January – Staff Training Day
School Restarts	Wednesday 5 th January
Last Day of Term	Friday 11 th February – 1pm finish. Lunches available.
Half-Term	Monday 14 th February to Friday 18 th February
School Restarts	Monday 21 st February
School Closed *	Wednesday 17 th March – Staff Training
Last Day of Term	Friday 8 th April – 12pm finish. No lunches available.
Easter Holidays	Monday 11 th April to Friday 22 nd April
School Restarts	Monday 25 th April
Bank Holiday – School Closed	Monday 2 nd May
School Closed *	Monday 30 th May - Staff Training Day
School Closed *	Tuesday 31 st May – Staff Training Day
School Closed *	Wednesday 1 st June – Staff Training Day
Bank Holiday – School Closed	Thursday 2 nd June
Bank Holiday – School Closed	Friday 3 rd June
Last Day of Term	Thursday 30 th June – 12pm finish. No lunches available.

Please note that changes to Staff Development Days can occur.

A regularly updated list of holidays and events can be found on the school website.