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*“The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.”
Psalm 145 v 13*

Dear Parents,

It's hard to believe that another Summer is coming to an end, but we are all looking forward to the school year ahead and all that it will bring. I hope you have all had an enjoyable break, and perhaps even had some time to relax!

The staff would like to express their thanks for all the generous gifts that were brought to us at the end of the school year. We really appreciate your gifts and gestures of support. Here in school we are looking forward to another year of working together with you for the benefit of all our children.

As a staff we aim to continue to maintain an efficient, safe, caring and happy environment for your children and wish to draw your attention to a few important details.

- Please ensure that your child wears school uniform at all times. Black shoes to be worn by both boys and girls. Trainers are only to be worn for PE lessons and sports.
- The wearing of jewellery to school is discouraged with the exception of - *one ring, one watch, one pair of stud earrings in the earlobe. No studs or rings should be worn on any other part of the body. All jewellery to be removed during all sporting activities/PE lessons for safety reasons - these items remain the responsibility of the pupils.*
- Hair decoration should be simple and practical.
Long hair should be tied up for PE, Games and Cookery Club.
- Each item of clothing **MUST** be clearly labelled with your child's name - coats, painting shirts, all PE clothing, trainers and swimming gear.
- It is the school's responsibility to ensure, as far as possible, the children's safety while on the school premises. To prevent possible accidents cars should not be driven into the school playground **AT ANY TIME**. Turning vehicles at the gate is discouraged. The minibus will continue to arrive in the school grounds at about 3.10 pm. This ensures that no vehicles are being driven into the school grounds while the children are leaving the premises.

- We have been contacted regularly by the PSNI and members of the community with ongoing concerns about safety regarding parking outside the school. The PSNI have asked me to highlight again the following specific issues:-
 - double parking
 - treble parking
 - u-turn manoeuvres

Although this is not a school responsibility, obviously the safety of our pupils is paramount. We would ask all to exercise extreme care and would thank you in anticipation of your co-operation. Could I encourage you not to park on the footpaths as this can restrict the pathway for pedestrians – children should not have to walk on the road to get to their cars.

- We would ask that pupils do not bring toys or any personal belongings to school, including mobile phones and electronic devices (unless requested by the teacher for curricular purposes).
- If pupils are taken out of school during term time for any period of time you will appreciate that teachers cannot be expected to plan work ahead. School cannot send work with children if they go on holiday during term time. In conjunction with this please read the following directive issued by The Education Authority NI concerning absences during term time.
 - *There is no provision for authorised pupil absences for holidays.*
 - *There is no legal or statutory basis for schools to enforce the issue.*

It is an undesirable practice in practical terms for schools. However there is no sanction to prevent the practice.

 - *Parents are required to provide efficient full-time education for their children. The school is under a legal requirement to deliver the Northern Ireland Curriculum. The fact that parents remove their child for holidays makes it difficult for the school to meet this requirement.*
- Teachers, as you are aware, arrive in school early to plan for the day ahead but are not on duty until 8.30 am each morning when supervision begins in the assembly hall. **As responsibility cannot be taken for children arriving before this time we would appreciate if parents do not bring their children to school until 8.30 am.**
- **This year class will commence for all pupils at 9.00 am**
- Except in extreme cases, appointments (e.g. doctor/dentist) for children should be made outside school hours so that pupils do not miss valuable learning time. A letter must be provided by parents to have their child withdrawn during the school day.
- Regular attendance is essential if a child is to make progress. Children are marked present or absent twice daily – in the morning and in the afternoon. When absence is necessary, a brief note from the parent, with the relevant date(s) inserted, giving a reason for the absence should be brought to school on return. A note is necessary for computer attendance records as required by the Education Welfare Officer. I would ask you to telephone the school office in the morning to inform us of your child's absence. CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN ILL/SICK DURING THE NIGHT SHOULD NOT BE SENT TO SCHOOL.
- Primary 1 children will finish each day at 12pm for the first two weeks (up to 16th September) and at 2pm thereafter.
- Primary 3 children will continue to go home each Wednesday and Friday at 2 pm.

- Schools are legally required to report to parents once a year on the progress of their children. As we did last year, we intend to hold two sets of parent consultations – the first in mid-October and the second consultation held early in the spring term. We have always operated an Open Door Policy so if any parent wishes to discuss their child’s progress at any time during the year, they are invited to do so. Please telephone for an appointment. Exams will be held and reports given out at the end of each academic year.

- Permission in relation to photos and videos

All parents must complete a very short form on the school website to give permission for photos and videos of your child/children to be used for school publicity purposes, including local newspaper and school website etc. Please click this link or visit the school website (in the ‘Info’ section) to complete this form. <http://thediamondps.weebly.com/publicity-permissions.html>

- We hope to continue using Seesaw to provide updates on each child’s progress throughout the year. This proved to be a very popular element of school life last year – many parents expressed their enjoyment of the application in that they were regularly receiving pictures and updates from the school in relation to their own children. Last year, we trialled the programme and were very pleased with it. More information will follow about how Seesaw will operate this year and about the various methods of communication used by the school. To read more about Seesaw, visit the website or click here - <http://thediamondps.weebly.com/seesaw.html>
- Please ensure that your child devotes a satisfactory amount of time to complete homework - please record time taken.
- During each school year pupils go out of school for a variety of reasons - sporting activities, field trips, educational/curriculum visits etc. It is necessary to obtain parents’ permission for such activities. Please complete the form by visiting the school website – or by clicking this link <http://thediamondps.weebly.com/school-outings-permission.html>
- Prescribed Medication Policy/Administration of Medicines at School

Legally, schools are not compelled to administer medication to children. Restrictions are also placed on schools regarding the contents of First Aid Boxes. However, we do aim to be caring and sensible as we look after the children in school. Please inform us if your child should not receive a sticky plaster in school for a cut or scratch.

Ideally, the administration of medication should be undertaken by parents. From time to time parents request that staff do so and the school wishes to be helpful in this regard e.g. Calpol for minor pains or finishing a course of antibiotics. However certain conditions must be imposed; for prescribed medication parents should complete the necessary consent forms. These forms are available from the school office. Please inform the Principal/school office of any medical conditions or changes to a medical condition.

- All after school activities will begin during the week beginning 12th September. All activities take place between 3.00 and 4.00pm. Football, hockey and netball are open to P5-P7. Choir is open to P4-P7.

N.B. Boys are requested to bring their own shin guards, football boots and trainers for after-school football. Girls are requested to bring their own shin guards and gum shields for after-school hockey.

- In the interests of Health & Safety no animals or pets are to be brought into school.

- Healthy Break Policy and Use of Water Bottles

You are already aware that we implement a Healthy Break Policy. This is available in the 'school documents' section of our website, or by clicking this link.

http://thediamondps.weebly.com/uploads/6/2/4/8/6248125/healthy_break_policy_pdf.pdf.

We monitor this policy on a regular basis throughout the year, and children are rewarded accordingly. We would appreciate your support in carrying both these initiatives forward on a daily basis.

- Memory Sticks (USB) P4 - P7

All pupils from P4 - P7 should now have their own memory sticks for use in ICT classes. These will be kept in school but on occasions pupils will be allowed to take this home for homework purposes. Please attach named key ring to your child's memory stick.

- Cookery Club – All children from P4 – P7 will take part in Cookery Club on Fridays for a period of time. Please provide an apron for your child to wear during these sessions.

- School Website

The site may be viewed at www.diamondps.co.uk - All information is reviewed and updated on a regular basis as I am sure you are aware. It is a very important part of school life and activities and most certainly worth a visit.

- School Milk and Meals

Milk is available in school every day at a cost of 20p for 1/3 pint carton. Orders have already been received and payment is now due. For ease of administration and as recommended by the EANI milk money will be collected on a termly basis.

- The amount is £14.20 for this term, to be paid to the school office by 16th September.

- Parents please note milk can only be cancelled or ordered at the end of a term.

- Milk ordered must be paid for.

School Dinners – at the moment the price of a school dinner is £2.50 per day (£12.50 per week) commencing 1 September 2015.

It would be appreciated if the correct monies could be sent for dinners, milk etc. as change is obviously not always available in school.

- Please ensure that your child has a pencil case with pencils, rubbers, pens (if appropriate), sharpener, colouring pencils, glue stick and felt tipped pens.

- A directive from the EANI states that:-

- 'visitors are not permitted to enter classrooms or interview members of staff without the Principal's permission'

Parents wishing to discuss ANY matter with a class teacher must contact the Principal and may not enter the mobile classroom or classrooms in the main building for any reason without first contacting the Principal. Please use MAIN ENTRANCE.

- Primary Records of Achievement

The requirements to provide a summative ROA to Parents in year 7 came into effect in 1997/98. A ROA has two interrelated elements:

- the ongoing formative record of each child's progress and skills in the field of education and elsewhere and the final summative document, the ROA. Transfer between primary and post primary is a time of major importance to the pupils. The ROA will provide a valuable summary of each pupil's achievements and accomplishments both within and outside school, during the primary phase. Parents can help by making sure the school is kept informed of their children's out-of-school achievements, membership of church organisations etc. Such information may be given to the school office by letter. Please note that this information is necessary for all pupils P1 - P7.

- School Library (P4-P7)

The Library will feature a collection of books which are included in the Accelerated Reader scheme. These books are catalogued and labelled to show the points available for completing the appropriate quiz.

Until Accelerated Reader gets under way, children should select a 'Home Read' book or they may read a book of their own for their individual reading at home. It is important that parents sign the Home Read diary as usual; this diary will continue to be used for the Accelerated Reader programme.

- Fundraising

Thank you so much for your support for all our fundraising events in school last year. With your help and generosity, we have been able to purchase ten additional iPads and a new whole school maths scheme. These are valuable resources which will help the children to engage in their work and improve over time.

As always, we will continue to organise schemes and events to raise money for our school funds. This money is always used to benefit the children through new and beneficial resources. A letter will follow shortly about our Smarties scheme for September.

- Foodbank

The Foodbank in Ballymena is a very worthwhile charity and supplies those in need with essential everyday food and grocery supplies. Our school continues to be a collection point for items donated to this charity.

There is a container in the main school corridor which you can contribute to at any time, but we will have one week each half term when we focus on foodbank and try to gather as much as we can. Please feel free to send non-perishable items from the shopping list – visit the website or click this link <http://thediamondps.weebly.com/foodbank.html>. Foodbank also collects toiletries such as shampoo, shower gel, toilet rolls etc.

The items will then be distributed to the Foodbank and used to help support local people in a time of crisis. Thank you for your co-operation.

- Recycling

We will continue to collect;

- Dead batteries for recycling
- Bags of old clothes, shoes, bags, belts, and bed clothes for recycling (please put clothes and shoes in separate bags).

We hope that your child settles back into the school environment and that he/she is happy in the classroom situation. We would encourage you to leave your child after the first morning at the outside door or main gate. In this way you will help to further develop your child's confidence and independence. If you have any concerns or require information regarding your child please contact me directly as is school policy.

For our new pupils in Primary 1 we would encourage you to bring your child into the school for the first two full weeks. If you are arriving to school between 8.30am and 8.45am, the children should go to the assembly hall on arrival, where a teacher will supervise until the bell rings. From Monday 14th September we would encourage you to leave your child at the outside door or at the main gate but please do not be concerned if your child still wishes you to accompany them. Their happiness is our main concern.

I appreciate that this is a comprehensive news sheet and will take some time to digest. Your co-operation in all the matters outlined would be appreciated and we thank you in anticipation of your support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Beattie
PRINCIPAL