

# NEWSLETTER

INSPIRE ~ SUPPORT ~ ACHIEVE

## Diary Dates

Ballyclare Light Switch On	Saturday, 29 <sup>th</sup> November
Primary 4 Panto Trip	Tuesday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> December
Open Day for Prospective Parents	Wednesday, 3 <sup>rd</sup> December
Senior School (P4-P7) Christmas Dinner	Thursday, 4 <sup>th</sup> December
Christmas Jumper Day (non-uniform)	Friday, 5 <sup>th</sup> December
Christmas Fair	Friday, 5 <sup>th</sup> December 5:00pm
Christmas Assembly with Ballyclare Presbyterian Church	Monday, 8 <sup>th</sup> December
Senior Christmas Concert (P5-P6)	Tuesday, 9 <sup>th</sup> December 9:30am Wednesday, 10 <sup>th</sup> December 7:00pm
Primary 6 Panto Trip	Wednesday, 10 <sup>th</sup> December
Primary 7 Panto Trip	Wednesday, 10 <sup>th</sup> December
Primary 5 Panto Trip	Thursday, 11 <sup>th</sup> December
Primary 1-3 Panto Trip	Friday, 12 <sup>th</sup> December

## Open Day

We will be hosting our Open Day next Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December. If you have friends, family or neighbours with a child ready to start Primary 1 in September 2026, please let them know this date and tell them to get booked in. A visit to walk around our school and grounds is the best way to find out what our school is all about. A final few tour places are available to book online, or by contacting the school office.

There will be a limited number of families on each tour, led by one of our staff members. We encourage you to bring your preschool child along, accompanied by a maximum of 2 adults. Please do take a look at our Facebook page and website for more details, including our amazing promotional video. We feel it showcases all that is great about Fairview! Do share the Open Day posts widely on your own social platforms so the message is seen by the whole Greater Ballyclare community...you could even add a comment to encourage some new families to join us in September 2026! It is that personal touch that makes all the difference.

## Pupils complete SEAG tests for 2025

Last Saturday, many of our P7 pupils sat their second and final SEAG test. Our pupils were well prepared having worked exceptionally hard in the build-up. Feedback seems to be very positive following a tougher test the week previous. Nothing unfamiliar came up, which is always reassuring. Regardless of outcome, we are immensely proud of all our pupils and the efforts they make.

## Hot Chocolate and Buns for Hope 365

Last Friday, Primary 6 hosted a charity bake sale for the whole school! The boys and girls provided home-baked goodies and hot chocolate for our pupils in school in their efforts to raise money for a very special, local charity, Hope 365. In total, P6 raised an incredible £550!

This money will be used to sponsor Michael Holmes, the CEO of Hope 365 and a regular visitor to our school, as he takes a plunge into icy sea water every morning in January. Michael is plunging into freezing water to help raise money for brand new toilets and showers at the Hope 365 Academy. At the minute, boys and girls share facilities. With so many pupils coming from homes without proper washing areas, new showers will bring dignity, comfort and better hygiene to their everyday lives.

Primary 6 pupils are looking forward to learning a bit more about this charity in their 'Hope for the Future' topic later in the year.





# Fairview Primary School

## OPEN DAY

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

Come and get a taste of life in  
Fairview Primary School



Book a space on one of our tours  
by scanning the QR code,  
contacting the office or visit our  
Facebook page or website



02893352094



[www.fairviewps.co.uk](http://www.fairviewps.co.uk)



### Christmas Concerts Begin...

Although it is not even December yet, our P1/P2 and P3/P4 year groups got everyone into the Christmas spirit with their wonderful performances on stage. Tuesday morning saw the first P1/P2 performance for parents, followed by an evening show on Wednesday and P3/P4 classes performed on Wednesday morning and Thursday evening. I must say a big thank you to the audience at the shows – your enthusiasm shone through and absolutely helped the pupils shine on stage! A busy week finished with the traditional grandparents' concert this morning. Well done to all the boys and girls from Primary 1 to Primary 4, and indeed the staff. A lovely way to commence the Festive season.





### **Christmas Lights Switch On – Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

Many of our senior school choir children will be taking part in the Ballyclare Light Switch On once again this year. This is always a big night for the town and it is great that we can be part of it. Our pupils will be on stage around 5pm, with the actual light switch on not too long afterwards. Please do come along and support Mrs Penney, Mrs Norris and our P6/P7 senior choir members.

### **Thanks from Royal British Legion**

We received a lovely letter of thanks from our local Royal British Legion branch earlier this week. Every year, our school supports the poppy appeal, as well as educating our pupils about what the poppy stands for and why remembrance is so important. We were delighted to have branch members with us in assembly this year to tell us a little about their work.

“It was a privilege for our members to share with your pupils the work of the Royal British Legion, the meaning of remembrance, and the ways in which we honour those who served. We were greatly encouraged by the knowledge and understanding shown by the pupils during the assembly. This speaks highly of your school’s dedication to ensuring that the values of remembrance are understood and upheld by future generations.”

## Christmas Dinner

On Thursday, our P1-P3 pupils enjoyed their Christmas Dinner. The canteen put on a tremendous spread and record numbers tucked into their meal, followed by a relaxing movie afternoon. Thank you to all the parents who came along to provide table service and make the lunch a special one for all our pupils. And a big thank you to our canteen ladies for getting everyone into a festive mood. Our seniors will have their dinner next week, with a reminder to P1-P3 that there will be no canteen available for them that day (Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> December).



## Christmas Jumper Day

Have you got any outgrown Christmas jumpers at home?

We are still collecting Christmas jumper donations ahead of our Christmas jumper swap on Tuesday 2nd December. If you have any old or outgrown jumpers that you would be willing to donate, then please send them into your child's teacher by Monday 1st December.

Jumpers will then be available on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December morning 8:30-9.00am and 3:00-3:30pm in the porch outside the reception area. You don't have to donate a jumper to get a new one. If you need a new jumper, simply call during those times and grab one ahead of Christmas Jumper Day on Friday.



# Christmas Jumper Swap



Donate your old christmas jumpers and pick up a 'new to you' jumper in time for our Christmas Jumper Day

Jumper Swap Day: Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December  
Christmas Jumper Day: Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December

## House System Update

Our House System continues to inspire teamwork and friendly competition across the school! The latest points tally shows an exciting race and just how tight it is between our four Houses.

Current standings:

1<sup>st</sup> place: Ollar - 380 points

2<sup>nd</sup> place: Rashee - 358 points

Joint 3<sup>rd</sup> place: Collin and Cogry - 276 points.

Most recently we have enjoyed having House competitions within our after-school clubs of football and hockey. Congratulations to Rashee and Collin for winning the House football and hockey tournaments, respectively. Both Houses received 30 points to add to their total. Later in the school year we look forward to hosting netball and rugby House tournaments. A big thank you needs to go our House Captains and their Vices who have been hard at work keeping a tally of the points, updating the pupils on latest competitions and coming up with their own ideas for competitions!

In the lead up to Christmas, we will be having our very own Christmas themed House quiz during class. Within their Houses, pupils will go head to head in a range of general knowledge, picture and music rounds. It is great to see the healthy competition between all four houses and wonderful to see our pupils being recognised for demonstrating our Core Values within the classroom and around school.



## Baby Basics

This time of year, many people are perhaps going up to their attics to take down Christmas decorations and may come across an old Moses basket.

One of our parents is involved with the Baby Basics charity and would be grateful of any Moses baskets to assist new mothers to be. These will be collected on Fridays or left into school at any time and we will keep them safe for collection.

Baby Basics is a volunteer-led project aiming to support new mothers and families who are struggling to meet the financial and practical burden of looking after their new babies.

Baby Basics provides much needed essentials and equipment to mothers and families who are unable to provide these items for themselves; including but not limited to teenage mums, people seeking asylum and women fleeing domestic abuse and trafficking.

Baby Basics volunteers lovingly collect, sort and package a 'Moses Basket' of clothing, toiletries and essential baby equipment as a supportive gift to new mothers.

### **Primary 6 Forest School Programme**

P6 have thoroughly enjoyed taking part in a range of activities as part of their Forest School programme. We walked down to the Sixmilewater and War Memorial Parks each week and spent time studying the trees and leaves in depth. We learnt the names and properties of different types of leaves, and tried to find some of each, along with hunting for different coloured leaves as 'Dulux Detectives'. We also put our knowledge of parts of speech to the test in our 'Literacy Logs' session, where we used leaves to spell out our chosen nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in a series of challenges. We visited the different war memorials and made some beautiful remembrance artwork using leaves. We also measured the height and age of trees!

"I liked how we made poppies and crosses using the leaves." Charlotte

"I liked how we discovered how old the trees were by using teamwork skills." Cerys

" I enjoyed taking on the challenge of identifying how old and tall the trees are." Adam

" The walk down was great as you got out into the fresh air with your class." Olivia

"I was surprised that the smallest tree was 2 years old." Sadie



# GIVE BLOOD Save Lives

Book now for your local community  
blood donation session!

## VENUE

Presbyterian Church Hall  
Ballyclare

## DATE & TIME

Wednesday 17 December  
12:30 - 19:30

Northern Ireland needs 1200  
blood donations per week.

That's 1 every 8 minutes.



 [www.NIBTS.org](http://www.NIBTS.org)

Northern Ireland  
Blood Transfusion Service 





## Ballyclare Nursery School 'Open Afternoon' 25

Monday 8th December 3:30-4:30pm

Come and have a look at our beautiful new school building!

If your child will be 3 on or before 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026 then you need to apply online for their pre-school nursery place this coming January!

Online applications will open at the beginning of January- keep an eye on our website and Facebook page for updated information!

Doagh Road

Tir na nOg

Ballyclare

Tel: 028 9335 2982

W: [www.ballyclarenurseryschool.co.uk](http://www.ballyclarenurseryschool.co.uk)

E: [info@ballyclarens.ballyclare.ni.sch.uk](mailto:info@ballyclarens.ballyclare.ni.sch.uk)

Have a look on our website for information about applying for a place in our school.

Go to the 'Parents and Carers' tab- and click 'Admissions Information'.

For more information on the Education Authority website and to apply online in January :

<https://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions>



# Online Safety Newsletter

# December 2025

## AI Chatbots and companions

A simple search of “AI Chat” within the App store highlights the number of AI apps already available, many are rated as 18+ so it is important to speak to our children about them and the risks associated with them. Examples of AI chatbots that your child may have heard of are Character.AI (18+) and My AI from Snapchat (13+).

### What are the risks?

- Over reliance on AI companions, for example they may replace ‘real life’ friendships or over reliance on using them for homework or problem solving.
- Exposure to inappropriate content.
- Privacy/data risks.
- Misinformation as not all information shared is correct and can be biased.

### How can I protect my child?

- Check age ratings of any apps or websites that your child accesses.
- Discuss the risks of AI chatbots with them and have open conversations about why they may be using them.
- Set up appropriate parental controls on their devices/ broadband.
- Chat to your child regularly and ensure your child knows that they should talk to you or another trusted adult if anything concerns them.

### Further information

<https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/ai-chatbots-and-companions-risks-to-children-and-young-people>

## New Technology

As some children may be receiving new technology or related games at Christmas, here is a quick reminder of the importance of setting up appropriate parental controls.



### Games/Consoles

- Check age ratings: look at the PEGI rating of any new games. *Remember, PEGI rates the gameplay so whilst it is important to review age ratings, you must also check to see if it has any communication elements.*
- If a game does allow your child to communicate with others, then adjust or disable the settings as appropriate to your child.
- On the device itself, set up applicable controls such as restricting spending limits. Follow the links below to find out how to set up Parental Controls for popular devices here:

**Xbox:** <https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/family-hub>

**PS5:** <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/ps5-parental-controls-spending-limits/>

**Nintendo Switch:** <https://www.nintendo.com/en-gb/Hardware/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-2-Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-2873385.html>

### Tablets/Smart phones

Set up parental controls on the device to prevent purchases, restrict content viewed and adjust privacy settings. Furthermore, remember to check any apps your child requests to check that they are suitable for their age. Follow the links below to find out more:

**iPhones/iPad:** <https://support.apple.com/en-gb/105121>

**Android Device:** <https://support.google.com/googleplay/answer/1075738>

### Further information

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

## The Safety-First Smartphone

The Other phone is a new smartphone, which includes “SafetyMode” software. The software automatically blocks nudity, profanity, and bullying language in real time. You can find out more here: <https://otherphone.co.uk/>.

Smart Phone Free Childhood also list some alternatives that you could consider here: <https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/alternatives>.

*Please note, that the inclusion of these models does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation. While these devices may provide a ‘safer’ alternative to traditional smartphones, there are still potential risks associated with children using any type of phone.*

# Roblox

Following a recent ITV investigation\*, which found extremist content on Roblox, we thought we would provide a reminder of what you need to be aware of. Roblox is a platform consisting of a collection of games. Players can either create games or play games that other users have created. It is free to download (however subscription options and in game/app purchases are available) and can be played across numerous devices. **A lot of the content is user generated, which means not all games will be suitable for your child to view/play.** If your child is playing Roblox, it is important to monitor what your child is accessing and set up appropriate parental controls. **PEGI rate Roblox with a Parental Guidance label, this is because it is considered a platform with a huge level of user generated content.**

## What should I be aware of?

**Game content** – as mentioned, users create games so the content/themes may not be appropriate for your child. Roblox label content based on the type of content rather than by age. The labels are Minimal, Mild, Moderate and Restricted.

**Chat Facility** - Players can chat with each other (users under the age of 13 need parent permission to access certain chat features though). You can turn communication off completely or add restrictions, such as only able to communicate with friends.

**Virtual Currency** - Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) to buy in-game upgrades or accessories.

## How do I report abuse and block users?

This article outlines the different reporting facilities:

<https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/203312410-How-to-Report-Rule-Violations>

## What else can I do?

Chat to your child regularly about what they are doing online and remind your child that if anything is worrying them, then they should talk to you or another trusted adult.

## Further information

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/roblox>

[\*Source: <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-11-14/mosque-attacks-and-far-right-skins-roblox-teens-exposed-to-extremist-content>]

# Discord

Discord is a social networking app originally designed for gamers but is now used by lots of different people to **chat to each other online**. The minimum age to access Discord is 13. The App store rates it as 17+.

Discord is made up of servers, which are spaces for groups to chat, upload files and share images etc. Anybody can set up a server, and they can either be public or private. Users can video call and send direct messages to other individuals or groups. Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat whilst playing the game (**rather than using the game's own chat facility**). In-app purchases are available through Discord's subscription service called Nitro.

## How can I make it safer?

Discord have created a Family Centre, which provides further information about what Discord is, as well as information about different safety settings available:

<https://discord.com/safety-family-center>

As always, we would encourage you to chat to your child to see why they use Discord and ensure that they know how to block users and what to do if they see any inappropriate content. It is important to be aware that Discord does include video/voice calling which cannot be filtered. **Discord is used by an array of users and therefore adult content can be found on Discord as well as inappropriate language.** Discord have produced this article, which answers frequent questions: <https://discord.com/safety/360044149591-answering-parents-and-educators-top-questions>

**Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language?** You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleyclcs.org.uk/december-2025-primary/>

# Signal Private Messenger

Signal is rated as 13+ on the App store. It is a messaging app, where users can text, send voice messages and photos plus participate in group chats and calls. There are no parental controls currently available. As with all messaging apps, the risks can include bullying and viewing inappropriate content. Find out more here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

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