



Buick Memorial Primary School Newsletter

Friday 30th August 2024



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the new academic year at Buick! We are delighted with how well our new Nursery and Primary 1 pupils have embraced school life and we look forward to meeting more P1 pupils next week!

Our P2-P7 children have thoroughly relished being back in school and it is lovely to see those smiling faces ready to learn, grow and enjoy their time at school. As parents and carers, you have been very supportive by dropping children off at the gates at the correct times and complying with our requests. Thank you! It is essential that you continue to read the Weekly Newsletter to keep informed of all things Buick over the coming weeks and months.

Music Exams

We are delighted to share with you that Cara Lamont, James Gibson and Erin Colville achieved Distinctions in their Grade 1 exams on clarinet, oboe and flute respectively. This is an amazing achievement and testament to the wonderful provision in place at Buick.

The Education Authority's peripatetic music service will continue to provide tuition at Buick throughout this academic session. Miss Bell (strings) and Mr McCubbin (woodwind) will be commencing lessons next week. If anyone is interested in taking up music lessons please contact Mrs McCleery, our Music Co-ordinator.



SEAG Registration

Primary 7 parents are reminded that SEAG Registration is still open. Please ensure you have registered if you wish your child to sit the SEAG Transfer. Please visit <https://seagni.co.uk/> for further registration information and to gain information on the timings and contents of the assessments.

Registration for SEAG is a parental responsibility and the school cannot complete such applications. The closing date for submission is Friday 20th September 2024.

The SEAG Entrance Assessments (now only 2 papers) will be held on the following dates:

Saturday 16th November 2024

Saturday 23rd November 2024

Results Day = Saturday 25th January 2025

Attendance

We will continue to complete Attendance Records each morning electronically via SIMS. It is imperative that all children are in school on time each day and prepared for the day ahead. Parents must contact the school via telephone to inform us if their child is going to be absent. This communication is essential in keeping our school attendance records accurate and to maintain a safe learning environment for everybody at Buick. Upon return to school, pupils should bring a note to explain their absence. These notes are kept for discussion with the Education Welfare Officer in circumstances where attendance falls below 85%.

Children who arrive late should make their way to the front door in the morning. Parents who are late at collection time must recognise the stress that this can cause a child. Furthermore, this delay prevents Buick staff from completing their 2pm-3pm teaching roles, or After School Clubs whilst they await the late collection.

Uniform

Our children look incredibly smart in their new dark brown uniforms. We hope to maintain this standard of presentation throughout the academic session. **Parents should ensure that their child wears black or brown shoes to school - not trainers!** It is important to have your child's uniform and shoes labelled clearly with their name as these can easily be muddled up within a primary school environment. Also, could all parents please ensure that each child has a coat for outdoor play every day? We try to have as much fresh air and active play as possible to promote children's health and holistic wellbeing. Thank you in advance.

Our PE kit will be encouraged during all Physical Education lessons.

Please note that leggings and jogging bottoms are not part of our school uniform and pupils should not be wearing these to school on a daily basis.

We recognise the difficulty encountered by some parents in sourcing brown skirts and trousers this year. We are actively investigating opportunities to perhaps supply these centrally. There will be additional opportunities for parents to purchase further Buick uniform items (jumpers and polo shirts) from the school in January 2025 and again in June 2025.

Parking

We would kindly ask parents to park responsibly and not on in the bus lanes at the back of the school, or on the zig-zag or yellow lines on Main Street. Children's safety is of paramount importance and we need your full co-operation in this matter. We appreciate that Pottinger Steet and parking at the back of the school can also be difficult to navigate at times; however, it is essential that everybody parks responsibly. Please share this information with grandparents or childminders who don't receive this Weekly Newsletter.

Dining Centre and Lunches

Monday, 2nd September is Week 1 of our new Lunch Bunch Menu. School dinners remain at a cost of £2.60 per day. Any pupil with a food allergy **must** complete the relevant form before availing of food from our Dining Centre. These forms were sent home today with every child. If your child doesn't have any allergies, please do not return this form to school.

We would like to remind parents that they should clearly name pack lunch bags too as they can easily get misplaced or swapped in a school environment! Also, please do not send food to school which your child cannot open or does not like! It is important that children have enough food and drink to sustain them for the full day.

Parents are encouraged to be mindful about sending in big bags of sweets as lunch. Nutrition is essential for growth, please carefully consider the content of your child's packed lunch.

Free School Meals

We have a number of children enrolled within the school who would be entitled to free school meals but are not registered as such. If your child is not currently on the 'Free Meals Register' and you feel that they could/should be, please visit www.eani.org.uk/financial-help/free-school-meals to make an application. It is in the school's best interest to have all children who are eligible registered as such, as this impacts on the budget allocated for this academic year.

Parents who have applied should not presume their child will receive a free school meal immediately. Only parents who have completed the registration process and who have received written confirmation will be on our list. The Education Authority has stated that pupils who are awaiting processing should pay £2.60 per day, if availing of a school meal, until the registration process has been completed.

Applying for Free School Meals & Uniform Allowance

If you require help...



www.eani.org.uk/fsm



028 9041 8044



mealsanduniform@eani.org.uk

1. Are you eligible?



You must be:

- in receipt of a qualifying benefit OR
- be an Asylum Seeker supported by the Home Office Asylum Support Assessment Team (ASAT).

Qualifying Benefits:

- Income Support;
- Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance;
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit;
- Child Tax Credit or Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable household income of £16,190 or less;
- Universal credit and have net household earnings not exceeding £15,000 per year.

2. What documentation do you need?

You will be asked to upload proof that you are receiving a qualifying benefit:

- Tax Credits Award Notice
- Universal Credit Payments breakdown or
- Proof of Benefit letter (if you are in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or the Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit).



3. What else do you need?



- National Insurance Number
- Children's names
- Dates of Birth
- Schools they will be attending
- Address
- E-mail and telephone number
- Bank or building society account and sort code details.

4. Where do you apply?

Apply for Free School Meals and Uniform Allowance for the new school year beginning September, through the Education Authority's online portal, EA Connect. If you haven't already registered an EA Connect account, it's quick and easy to do. Information can be found on the EA website.



5. What happens next?



We aim to process applications within 4 weeks. However, in the busy period of June to September, this can take up to 5 weeks. Please do not contact EA for an update on your application within the 5 weeks of submitting your application. If you have provided incorrect or insufficient supporting documentation, you will receive a tailored email advising you to resubmit your application with details of the correct documentation you need to provide.

You will receive an email from EA once your application has been approved and processed.



eacconnect

Nut Allergies

We have a number of pupils in school with allergies to particular foods such as nuts. Buick is a 'NUT FREE SCHOOL'. We respectfully ask parents to think carefully about what items they give to their child. Please encourage healthy eating and do not send any nut products into the school environment. We must eliminate the risk of anaphylactic reactions. Your co-operation in this matter is essential in keeping all children safe.

Medical Needs

We have individual children with specific medical needs such as diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, anaphylaxis and allergies. Parents of these children should complete an AM1 and AM2 form (which were sent home this week and are available on our school website for new needs identified throughout the year) and return them to school.

Miss Peters will then approve the administration of medication and return agreed and signed forms to you for your reference.

For children who fall under the high-risk categories, we must complete a Care Plan and Risk Assessment annually. If you feel that your child requires one of these Plans, please contact Miss Peters directly as soon as possible. Children who previously had a Care Plan received forms yesterday to be updated and these should be returned to the School Office. It is essential that parents share all relevant medical information or changes in conditions with their child's class teacher throughout the academic year.

Transport

A number of our children travel by bus to school each day. During Assembly on Wednesday morning, we spoke about travelling safely to and from school and bus passes were distributed accordingly. We look forward to transport recommencing from Monday 2nd September.

Parental Role

At Buick, we want to promote effective partnership working. If you have any comments, queries or concerns about school practices you should speak with your child's class teacher in the first instance. If matters are not satisfactorily resolved, you should contact Mr Beattie or Miss Peters to arrange a meeting.

We would also like to remind parents of their responsibilities with regard to naming Buick Memorial Primary or any Buick personnel on any social media platforms. Please see the attached letter from the Ballymena Primary Principals' Association.

Additionally, Buick staff should not be contacted on their personal mobiles or social media accounts to ask a school specific question. All communication should come via the school office, which is open from 8:45am - 3:30pm each day. Thank you in anticipation of your support in this matter.

Buick staff have thoroughly enjoyed meeting their new classes and are seamlessly getting back into a routine again.

Thank you for your continued support as we drive forward developments for all children. We have made ambitious plans and we are all really looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

Have a lovely weekend!

Kind regards,
R. Peters
(Acting Principal)