



*A happy place
to have fun
learning!*

Phone (028 427 58350)

Website: www.victoriapsballyhalbert.co.uk



We look forward to welcoming the children back to another fantastic year of learning at V.P.S. We trust you have enjoyed your summer and are ready to get back to the routines of the school year. We want to extend a very special welcome to all our new pupils, families, and staff and look forward to catching up with you all in the coming days and weeks.

Children return to school next Wednesday 30th August with 12 noon finishes on both Wednesday and Thursday. Normal school hours resume from Friday 1st September.

The school gates will be open from 8.45am, children should not arrive to school before then. Your child can come straight into the classroom at anytime between 8.45am and 9am. Parents do not need to accompany children to the classrooms if they are confident enough to walk in by themselves. Just drop them off at the black gates and we can take it from there.



The school bell will ring at 9am and lessons will begin promptly. The flexible start will have enabled registers to be taken before 9am. This will maximise the learning opportunities available during the school day. Please make sure your child is in school by 9am every day.

School Dinners



School dinners will be available from Friday 1st September. Please book and pay in advance on the School Gateway App as normal. Dinners must be paid for at the time of booking.

Dinner options will be updated when the school menu for the term is available.



Our PE sessions will begin in school from 5th September. We ask that children come to school in their PE uniform on Tuesdays and Thursdays to avoid the need for changing clothes in school. Children can wear either the school PE kit which is supplied by Signature Works or a plain **NAVY** tracksuit on these days along with a pair of trainers. Plain **NAVY** tracksuit bottoms may also be worn along with the school sweatshirt. Full school uniform **must** be worn on all other days, including proper school shoes.



As you know school is not the same as childcare. Previously we have provided childcare before and after school which was self-funded. There was updated guidance last year cracking down on schools providing this childcare. In order to meet the new guidance requirements there is a considerable cost implication, and we are not in a position to meet that. For people who relied on us for regular childcare we can no longer provide this additional service but there are some fantastic childminders and a nursery in the village.

The good news is that while we can't provide childcare after-school, we can still run clubs.

We plan to offer a variety of after-school activities throughout the year with a programme of activities coming soon. These will run for 6 week blocks and extended provision will be organised when the main school is up and running.



Our lines of communication are as follows:

1. A weekly newsletter for all families will be posted to the school website on Fridays.
2. The school website is your main source of information and you should check in with that for updates.
3. Messages to groups of parents (eg. P6 etc) will come to you as an email. We use an app to bulk send - **please do not reply to these group messages as the school app is not monitored for incoming messages.**
4. Individual emails to parents will be sent from the school office. Please make sure we have an up-to-date email address to keep in touch with you. Any email communication from parents must be sent to the main school email account – info@vicpsballyhalbert.newtownards.ni.sch.uk
5. Facebook will also be used for promotional material, celebrations and marketing our school events. Photographs of what we have been up to will be added to the school website as we go through the year with a 'nudge' on Facebook to let you know they have been posted.
6. You will also need to check your child's schoolbag for any messages from the class teachers.

MAKE AN
APPOINTMENT



As before, teachers have commitments already planned from 8.45am to 4pm daily and diaries are usually filled at least a week in advance. If you need to speak to someone diaries need to be re-arranged and therefore, we work on an appointment system only. If you need to speak to a member of staff, **please** contact the school office to **arrange an appointment**. When you contact the office please don't be surprised when you are asked to explain what you need to discuss. This is important information for us to identify the right person to arrange the appointment with and ensure that person has all the relevant information and documentation before meeting with you.

As you will know there has been considerable work going on in school over the summer holidays in preparation for our two new special education classes – exciting times ahead! We are now nearing completion with painters and decorators in at the minute.

We think that is enough information for the time being. Once again, we welcome you all back for another exciting year of learning together and we will be in touch with further updates soon.