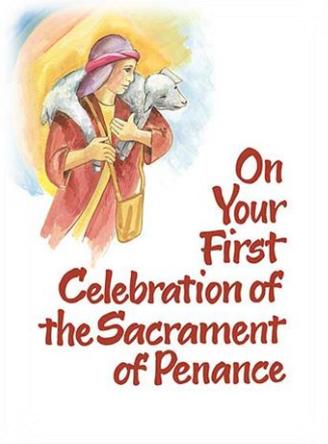




April 2026 Newsletter



Our Primary 7 children will be celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation on Friday 17th April 2026 in St. Columb's Church, Chapel Road. Mrs Forbes' class ceremony will begin at 11.30am, while Mr Herron's class will be at 1.30pm. A photographer has been booked for both ceremonies and will be in attendance throughout.



Well done to our Primary 4 children who celebrated the Sacrament of Penance as they continue to prepare for their First Holy Communion. The First Communion will be held on Friday 15th May 2026. Mr Doherty/Mrs Anderson's class will be held @11.30am and Mrs Connor/Mrs Duffy's class will be at 1pm. A photographer has been booked for both ceremonies and will be in attendance throughout.

Families Connect Programme

We are delighted to be working alongside The Greater Shantallow Area Partnership to offer an opportunity for up to 12 families to avail of the Families Connect Programme. Here you will work alongside Mrs Laura Gallagher over the course of 8 weeks to develop skills and knowledge in helping your child at home with their learning. This is open to Parents/Guardians of Primary 1 and Primary 2 children. If you're interested please register here and we will be in touch:

<https://forms.office.com/e/Cjm5mMPjAv>



Where: Good Shepherd Primary & Nursery School, Derry Assembly Hall



Time: 1.15pm each Wednesday



When: Starting Wednesday 15th April 2026 and running each Wednesday until Wednesday 27th May 2026



Talk to: Primary 1 & Primary 2 teachers or Mrs McCafferty.

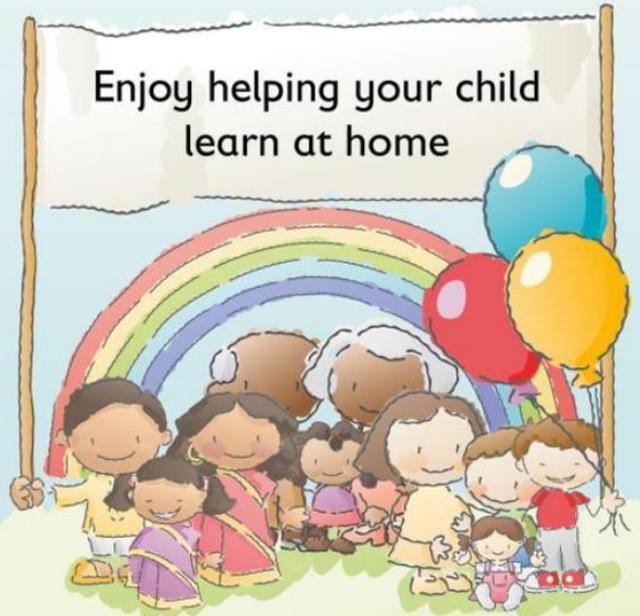
This programme is being facilitated by Mrs Laura Gallagher (Families Connect Coordinator) from the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership.



Get in touch to find out more, we would love to hear from you!

FAMILIES CONNECT

Enjoy helping your child learn at home



- ★ Your child will love spending time with you
- ★ Try out free games and activities to play at home that will help your child learn and develop




What is Families Connect?

- ★ 2 hours a week
- ★ 8 weeks
- ★ Parents and children aged: 4, 5 & 6 years of age (P1 & P2)

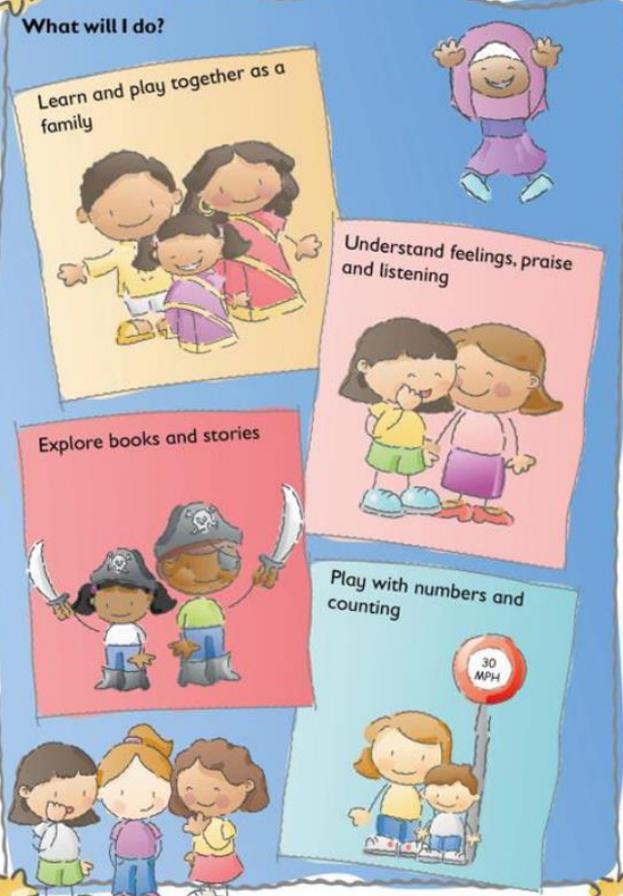
Spending time with other parents and carers

- Talk about the activities that help your children learn
- Share your own advice and challenges
- Share games and activities to play at home



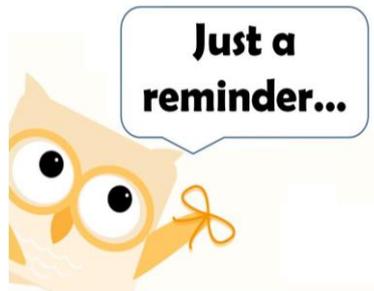
What will I do?

- Learn and play together as a family
- Understand feelings, praise and listening
- Explore books and stories
- Play with numbers and counting



Primary 1 Mrs Chambers Class- Update

Mrs Chambers will begin her maternity leave at Easter. We would like to wish her every blessing for the next few weeks ahead. A substitute teacher will be in post until further notice. More information to follow.



Please settle any dinner money arrears on ParentPay. If you require any help or assistance with this, please get in touch with the school office.



We will be holding our Easter Split the Pot raffle on Wednesday 1st April. Make sure you have your ticket in!

How does Split the Pot work? £1 minimum entry. Place **£1 or more** into the envelope issued by the school labelled with your child's name. One ticket will be randomly chosen with half of the money raised going to the named ticket holder and the other half going to school funds. The larger the donation, the more money 'in the pot' to win! Thank you for your continued support of the school and best of luck!



Our school community raised £272.10 for the NSPCC on Friday 13th March 2026. Thank you for your generosity.

Information from the PHA:

Meningitis - know the symptoms

Symptoms of meningitis develop suddenly and can include:



Fever (over 37.5C)



Vomiting



Headache /Stiffness



Confusion



Rash



Dislike of
bright lights



Fatigue



Seizures (fits)

If you become worried about yourself, your child, or a friend, particularly if symptoms are getting worse, seek medical help urgently.

MenACWY vaccine



Pupils in year 11 and 12, are offered the MenACWY vaccine in school. The vaccine helps protect young people against four different causes of meningitis and septicaemia: meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y disease. If you're aged 25 or under, at university and haven't yet had the MenACWY vaccination, you should ask your GP for the vaccine.

There are other types of meningitis that there are no vaccines against, so it is important to still watch out for the signs and symptoms.

www.pha.site/meningitis-nidirect

 Public Health
Agency

Meningitis and septicaemia: awareness for educational settings

The Public Health Agency (PHA) is aware of the meningococcal disease outbreak recently reported in South East England. The UKHSA is leading the response to the outbreak and there is **no increased risk** to the population in Northern Ireland. However, this incident highlights that it is important for everyone to be aware of the signs and symptoms of meningitis and the steps to take if they are concerned.

Meningococcal infection doesn't spread very easily. The bacteria can only be passed to others after a long period of close contact, for example living with someone in shared accommodation or through prolonged kissing. While meningococcal disease can affect all ages, recent outbreaks have shown that older children, teenagers and young adults, particularly those in shared settings such as schools, colleges and universities, are more likely to be affected.

Meningococcal disease is uncommon but can become serious very quickly, particularly in teenagers and young adults. Early recognition of symptoms and prompt medical assessment are essential.

A range of resources are available to support awareness:

- PHA press release: www.pha.site/MeningitisKent
- Information on meningitis symptoms and vaccinations can be found on NI Direct: www.pha.site/meningitis-nidirect
- The Meningitis Research Foundation has produced clear and accessible guidance for the public on signs and symptoms, and when to seek urgent medical advice: www.meningitis.org/about-meningitis/symptoms/young-adults/
- Leaflets on MenACWY vaccine
 - Teenage immunisations for ages 14 to 18: www.pha.site/teenage-immunisations
 - Are you aged up to 25 years and starting university for the first time?: www.pha.site/MenACWYstudentsguide

We encourage you to share or signpost these resources to staff and, where appropriate, students and parents.

If someone is unwell and meningitis or septicaemia is a concern:

- Seek urgent medical advice (via GP, Out of Hours service, or Emergency Department as appropriate)
- Do not wait for all symptoms to appear or for a rash to develop
- In an emergency, call 999



Swimming

Primary 7 will be going swimming for 10 weeks each Wednesday- beginning Wednesday 15th April.

Primary 5SM will be going swimming each Friday- beginning Friday 17th April.

Please pay via ParentPay. £20 for 10 weeks.



Ms Michelle Reid from the Education Authority will be facilitating a transitions programme with our Primary 7 children each Thursday after Easter as they prepare for post-primary school.



MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT

WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Key Point

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To gain qualifications.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To have the best possible start in life.

CAN ATTENDANCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO EXAM RESULTS?

Greater than
95% Attendance



77% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended more than 95%

77%

Less than
90% Attendance



43% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended less than 90%

43%

Less than
80% Attendance



32% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended less than 80%

32%



EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.



Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time - not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness - this should be followed up with a written note when your child returns to school.
- If your child is not attending school as you expect they may be putting themselves at risk - Who are they with? What are they doing?
- Do not take family holidays during term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homeworks).
- Attend parents evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.

Key Point

Parents of children aged 4-16 who are enrolled in school are legally required to make sure they attend.



Teaching and learning starts at 9am every day. It is important that your child is punctual for school. School gates open from 8.45am. **Breakfast club is open from 8.10am. No need to book in for the breakfast club- £1 a day per child.** **Please enter the school grounds via the Nursery pedestrian gate.** In the interests of health and safety, children should not be left unsupervised at the school gates before they open.



Why not take on a new challenge, learn new skills, have fun and make new friends at our after school clubs...

*All clubs must be signed up for before they commence...

Day	Club	Year Group & Time	Book/Pay
Monday	Mini-Professors Science Club	P1-P2 2-2.50pm P3, P4 & P5 3-3.50pm	Restarts on Monday 13th April 2026 £30 for 7 weeks Book via ParentPay (20 spaces maximum for each session)
Monday	R9 Multi-Sports Club	P1-P2 2-3pm P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-4pm	Restarts Monday 11th May 2026 5 weeks (discount for siblings attending) Book via R9 Website https://www.cognitoforms.com/R9SportsCoaching/GoodShepherdPrimarySchool
Tuesday	Singing with Clodagh McCullough	P1 & P2: 2-2.45pm P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7: 3-3.45pm	Restarts on Tuesday 14th April 2026 £38 for 8 weeks (20 spaces maximum for each session) Book via Parent Pay
Tuesday	Chess Club	P5, P6 & P7 3-4pm	Already started...
Wednesday	Dance	P1-P2 2-3pm P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-4pm	New block starting Wednesday 6th May https://skillschool.classforkids.io/
Wednesday	Guitar Lessons with Mark from leap lessons, Derry	Primary 5, Primary 6 & Primary 7 3-3.30pm & 3.30-4pm	Restarts Wednesday 22nd April £40 for 10 weeks Spaces may become available. Reserved for those already enrolled- please pay via parentpay
Thursday	Maiden City Soccer	P1-P2 2-3pm P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-4pm	Restarts again on Thursday 16th April 2026 Pay via Parent Pay £42 for 10 weeks Book via ParentPay

Thursday	Crafty Kidz Art & Craft Club	P1-P2 2-3pm P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-4pm	Restarts again on Thursday 23rd April 2026 £38 for 9 weeks 20 places maximum Book via Parent Pay
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The school will be closed from:
 Wednesday 1st April @12noon.
 Thursday 2nd April- Friday 10th April for Easter.
 The school reopens on Monday 13th April.

Wednesday 1st April is a half day, children can wear their own clothes on this day. Those who receive free school meals and our nursery children will be offered dinners only.



Please ensure that you download the Schools NI App which is linked to our website. Click on the ? on the app and ensure that notifications are turned on. This is our central means of communication.

Safeguarding Information



In the interests of health and safety we now ask that children do not bring any shellfish products or nut products to school for either break or lunch. This includes Nutella.



Smart Watches and Mobile Phones

Please be mindful that smart watches with message facilities and cameras; as well as mobile phones, are not permitted in school.



We would like to take the opportunity to remind parents/guardians that **no cars are permitted inside the school grounds at any time** unless this has been pre-arranged with Mrs McCafferty or you are a blue badge holder- **spaces are very limited.** Please share this information with grandparents and childminders as refusal often causes

offence. If you are a blue badge holder and you avail of parking within the school grounds; **please wait to exit the school grounds until the large crowds have dispersed.** If crossing the road outside the school gates please cross with our school crossing patrol lady, Mrs McQuaid at the dropped kerb.

Please ensure that the school gates are kept clear. Cars should not be parked on the yellow zigzag lines outside the school gates at any time. Please talk to your child about general road safety. Enter and exit the school using the pedestrian gates only. Once your child is collected from school, please keep them beside you at all times. These measures are in the interest of everyone's health and safety. Thank you!

Members of the Schools Safeguarding team are:

The Chair of the Board of Governors (Mr P. Duffy)

The Designated Governor for Child Protection (Dr M. Gormley)

The Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs M. Harley)

Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection (Mrs S. McCafferty).

Other members of Safeguarding Team:

Mrs P. Houston/Mrs R Warne /Mrs Kyle/ Mrs A Kivlehan/Mr D Herron.

School policies can be found on the school website under the 'My School' section. There is also a wide range of support information for parents in the 'Parents Section' of the school website. This is updated regularly.

The school holiday lists can be accessed here:

<https://www.goodshepherdps.net/parents-area/holiday-list/>

The school dinner menu can be accessed here- please check which week we are on as there is a 4 week menu:

https://storage.googleapis.com/siteassetsswd/475/docletter/20260112034845_27_PS_Spring_Summer_2026_2_Choices.pdf

Date	What's on?
<p data-bbox="108 219 464 264">Wednesday 1st April</p> 	<p data-bbox="528 219 1353 264">School closes at 12noon for the Easter Holidays</p> <p data-bbox="528 271 746 315">Non-uniform</p> <p data-bbox="528 322 1406 405">Dinners will be provided for those in receipt of free school meals only & nursery children.</p>
 <p data-bbox="165 786 1433 898">Thursday 2nd April-Friday 10th April School Closed for the Easter Holidays</p> <p data-bbox="150 904 1445 958">School reopens for all children on Monday 13th April 2026.</p>	
<p data-bbox="108 965 427 1010">Monday 13th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 965 1469 1048">After School Mini Professors P1 & P2: 2-2.50pm, P3 & P4: 3-3.50pm Week 1</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1061 427 1106">Monday 13th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1061 1145 1144">After School R9 Sports P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm Week 6</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1158 427 1202">Monday 13th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1158 1027 1202">Children of Fatima Prayer Group</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1202 427 1247">Monday 13th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1202 1305 1247">St. Mary's College Maths workshop with Primary 6</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1247 427 1292">Tuesday 14th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1247 1449 1330">After School Singing lessons P1 & P2 2-2.45pm, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-3.45pm Week 1</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1344 427 1388">Tuesday 14th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1344 826 1388">Chess Club Week 4</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1388 427 1433">Tuesday 14th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1388 1442 1471">Chinese New Year workshop @Lumen Christi College with 8 Primary 7 pupils</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1485 488 1529">Wednesday 15th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1485 1091 1529">Families Connect Programme Week 1</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1529 488 1574">Wednesday 15th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1529 963 1574">Primary 7 swimming Week 1</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1574 488 1619">Wednesday 15th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1574 1299 1619">After School Guitar Lessons P5, P6 & P7 Week 10</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1619 488 1664">Wednesday 15th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1619 1091 1702">After School Dance P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm WEEK 6</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1715 488 1760">Wednesday 15th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1715 852 1760">P7 Mandarin Lessons</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1760 443 1805">Thursday 16th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1760 1449 1843">After School Maiden City Soccer P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm Week 1</p>
<p data-bbox="108 1856 443 1901">Thursday 16th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 1856 1362 2029">Crafty Kidz Art & Craft Club P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7: 3-4pm Week 10 LAST WEEK OF CURRENT BLOCK</p>
<p data-bbox="108 2042 395 2087">Friday 17th April</p>	<p data-bbox="528 2042 1474 2125">Primary 7 Confirmation Mrs Forbes' class ceremony will begin at 11.30am, while Mr Herron's class will be at 1.30pm.</p>



Friday 17th April	Primary 5SM swimming Week 1
Monday 20th April	After School Mini Professors P1 & P2: 2-2.50pm, P3 & P4: 3-3.50pm Week 2
Monday 20th April	After School R9 Sports P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm Week 7
Tuesday 21st April	After School Singing lessons P1 & P2 2-2.45pm, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-3.45pm Week 2
Tuesday 21st April	Chess Club Week 5
Wednesday 22nd April	Primary 7 swimming Week 2
Wednesday 22nd April	After School Guitar P5, P6 & P7 Week 1
Wednesday 22nd April	After School Dance P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm WEEK 7
Wednesday 22nd April	P7 Mandarin Lessons
Wednesday 22nd April	Families Connect Programme Week 2
Thursday 23rd April	After School Maiden City Soccer P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm Week 2
Thursday 23rd April	Crafty Kidz Art & Craft Club P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7: 3-4pm Week 1
Thursday 23rd April	Primary 1 & Primary 2 visit Lurgybrack Farm
Friday 24th April	Primary 5SM swimming Week 2
Friday 24th April	Primary 7 careers workshop TBC
Monday 27th April	After School Mini Professors P1 & P2: 2-2.50pm, P3 & P4: 3-3.50pm Week 3
Monday 27th April	After School R9 Sports P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm Week 8 LAST WEEK
Tuesday 28th April	After School Singing lessons P1 & P2 2-2.45pm, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7 3-3.45pm Week 3
Tuesday 28th April	Chess Club Week 6
Wednesday 29th April	Primary 7 swimming Week 3
Wednesday 29th April	After School Guitar P5, P6 & P7 Week 2
Wednesday 29th April	After School Dance P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm WEEK 8
Wednesday 29th April	P7 Mandarin Lessons
Wednesday 29th April	Families Connect Programme Week 3
Thursday 30th April	After School Maiden City Soccer P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3 P4 P5 P6 P7: 3-4pm Week 3
Thursday 30th April	Crafty Kidz Art & Craft Club

	P1 & P2: 2-3pm, P3, P4, P5, P6 & P7: 3-4pm Week 2
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*We would like to take the opportunity to wish our
entire school community a happy Easter.*

Thank you for your continued support of the school.