



# Monthly Newsletter

30<sup>th</sup>



2026

## MPS – School Vision

Our vision is to develop and nurture, in a stimulating, safe and supportive environment the potential of every child to ensure that 'Tomorrows Success Begins Today'.

## MPS – Mission Statement

Our mission is to promote excellence in child centred education in a safe, nurturing, inclusive, happy and caring school, where the dignity of all is valued and where everyone can aspire, achieve and experience success through the collaborative working of entire school community.

2025 – 2028



Rights Respecting Schools

UNITED KINGDOM

unicef



Gold Rights Respecting



Sustrans School Mark Silver  
Excellence in Sustainable Travel



## RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS FOCUS

### January 2026

#### Article 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities)

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

### February 2026

#### Article 23 (children with a disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

## MPS Monthly Values

Respect  
September

Honesty  
October

Well Mannered  
November

Kindness  
December

Enjoyment  
January

Fairness  
February

Empathy  
March

Compassion  
April

Creativity  
May

Community  
June

Our school website, along with the school app, school Facebook page and monthly newsletters will keep you updated on school activities. If there is an item you consider useful to include on the website or newsletter, please speak to one of the teachers or to myself.

If you have any queries or require clarification on any aspect of school life, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Please take a look at our school website and school Facebook page for photographs of school events and class activities: [www.markethillps.co.uk](http://www.markethillps.co.uk)

## MEET OUR SAFEGUARDING TEAM



**Dr McLernon**  
Principal



**Mr Wilson**  
Safeguarding Governor



**Mrs McCool**—  
Designated teacher for  
Child Protection.



**Mr Qua**—Deputy  
designated teacher for  
Child Protection.



**Mrs Nicholson**—Deputy  
designated teacher for  
Child Protection.

## Child Protection / Safeguarding

If you have concerns regarding Child Protection, please contact Mrs McCool or a member of the Safeguarding Team. Children are made aware that there is always an adult in MPS who will listen to any worries they may have. Please remind your child of this. We are here to help and the sooner we know about a problem the sooner we can resolve this.

## Markethill PS - School Development Plan: Summary for Parents and Pupils

### The Learner and Learning Context

#### Play

In P1-P4, play isn't just fun – it helps us learn and grow!

While we're playing, we're also: Building new skills, exploring exciting ideas, and learning about the world around us.

Our play activities link to our World Around Us topics, so every game, role play, and adventure helps us understand more about people, places, and nature.

#### ICT - E -Safety

We use devices to learn and have fun - but it's important to be safe.

Pupils will learn how to: Use devices responsibly, Take care of their wellbeing, Respect the law, themselves, and others online.

#### History

Discovering about the past and learning about history is exciting!

We'll explore timelines, artefacts, and different stories from the past. With some topics we may even go on fun trips or have workshops in school!

#### Creative and Expressive

MPS pupils are full of talent! Over the next 3 years, we'll grow our skills in:

Music – using Charanga, joining festivals, and enjoying specialist lessons

Art & Craft – exploring colours, textures, and creativity

PE – building strength, teamwork, and confidence

Let's have fun while learning and creating!

### The Environment

Friday clubs have refreshed, P6 – P7 pupils can look forward to embracing practical activities, involving the outside environment; Forest Schools and gardening.

A chicken coop is the newest addition to our Conservation area.

Our playground is getting a colourful upgrade with bright paths and trails – perfect for play and learning outdoors!

### Wellbeing and Care

#### PATHS

Pastoral PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies)

We'll learn to:

- ♥ Treat others the way we want to be treated
- 😊 Understand our feelings and how to manage them
- 🌟 Celebrate the Pupil of the Day with compliments from friends and staff!

Let's grow kind hearts and strong minds together!

#### Principles of Nurture

Staff are learning about the 6 Principles of Nurture to support pupils' social, emotional and mental health.

Our staff are learning about the Six Principles of Nurture to help support every pupil's social, emotional, and mental health.

This helps us create a caring, safe, and supportive school for everyone.

### Professional Learning Community

We are all learners in MPS. Our staff are taking part in training for:

- 🔄 PATHS      ♥ Six Principles of Nurture
- 🌲 Forest Schools      🌟 SEN procedures

This helps us support every pupil's learning and wellbeing.

## School Development Plan

What we are working on and how we are going to improve our school



## Monthly Award

During January our monthly value was **Enjoyment.**

Classes	Endeavour Award	Enjoyment
P1KG	Lewis Gray	Charlotte Irvine
P1/P2SN	Sawyer Kerr	Joel Smyth
P2KS	Gabriel Gardiner	Harper Dawson
P3KT	Emma Jasinauskaite	Heidi Kilpatrick
P3/P4RC	Ada Scott	Arthur Andrews
P4EE	Harris Downard	Lucy Fiddes
P5HS&RS	Isabella McCall	James Chambers
P6PMcC	Hannah Kilpatrick	Eloise King
P6AA/LP	Leah Dougan	Mia Okeke
P7KQ	Daniel Kennedy	Darcie Scott
P7RCh	Lillian Davis	Isaac McClure

Monthly Award for February...

**Kindness**

 Well done!



...to everyone who received an  
Endeavour or Be Kind Award at our December Celebration Assembly.



## Celebration Assembly

January was the turn of the P3 and P4 boys and girls in Miss Lockhart's class to lead the Celebration Assembly. Their theme was 'Enjoyment' which links to our January monthly value. The P3 and P4 boys and girls shared lots of ways of how we can enjoy ourselves. They shared a very catchy song at the end which everyone enjoyed. Well done to everyone who took part in a very enjoyable assembly.



## P7 Transfer Process – Key Dates

*Information is available on the EA website. Please contact the school if you have any queries.*

Date	Activity
Tuesday 27 January 2026 - at 12 noon	EA Connect opens for online applications for Post Primary.
Thursday 19 February 2026 - at 12 noon	EA Connect closes. Last date/time for punctual applications for Post Primary Year 8.
Tuesday 24 February 2026 - by 4pm	Final date/time for late applications. Final date/time for Change of Preference in Exceptional Circumstances. Final date/time for documents in support of applications.
Saturday 9 May 2026	Applicants will receive application outcome via email (where one is held) or by letter.

## Parent-Teacher Interviews – February 2026

Interviews have been arranged in school on Monday 2, Tuesday 3, Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 February 2026. The February interviews are optional. You can choose to meet the teacher via Microsoft Teams or face-to-face in school. Booking forms are now closed on the school app.

School will finish at 1.15pm for pupils in P1 – P4 and 1.20pm for pupils in P5 – P7 to facilitate interviews commencing at 2.00pm. The 123 Club is available from 1.15 – 4.15pm. The 123 Club booking app is now closed.

# Children's Mental Health Week (9 - 15 February 2026)



Markethill Primary School will be participating in Children's Mental Health Week once again this year. We are combining this with our focus on 'Active School Travel' and the 'Take 5 Steps to Wellbeing'. We're condensing our activities into 2 days due to the mid-term break.

## **Monday 9 February: Take Notice - Rainbow Quest.**

On your journey to school find something of each colour – red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple or lots of one colour.

Find something of each colour...



Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet



Or lots of one colour...

**Monday 9 February: Be Active - Daily Mile activity in school.**

**Wednesday 4 February: Connect - Walking Bus 8.45am.**

**Tuesday 10 February: Keep Learning - Take 5 Sensory Discovery.**

On your way to school and in school take time to look and admire the world around us and learn about it through our senses. Things we can see, hear feel and smell. The children can participate in a taste test at home and in school.

Take your time to look around and admire the world around you and learn about it through your senses. Slowly work your way through the list in your own time counting off items for each sense before moving onto the next.

NAME..	
5	things you can <b>see</b>
4	things you can <b>hear</b>
3	things you can <b>feel</b>
2	things you can <b>smell</b>
1	thing you can <b>taste</b>


Print this sheet out and take the list with you, you might want to take a pencil to list your answers on the back or even a class iPad or tablet to take some photographs

When noticing things you can **feel**, it's best to wash your hands with soapy water as soon as possible after. We recommend **thinking about the textures** you can see such as prickly leaves or the rough bark of a tree. Can you **notice the feeling of your feet** standing on the ground, or the breeze on your face?

\*For 'TASTE', we recommend teachers or parent/guardians take a mystery piece of fruit cut up to sample. Pupils close their eyes and see if they can work out what it is by using their sense of taste. Always check pupil allergy info prior.

You can do this exercise at **anytime, anywhere** to help focus your mind on the positive world around you.

**Monday 9 & Tuesday 10 February: Give - Do something nice for someone in school and at home.**




# Take5

steps to wellbeing

We know when we are mentally and physically well but sometimes we need a little extra support.


Here are five simple steps to practise every day:



Connect

Connect


Connect with the people around you: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be active

Be active

Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Take notice


Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in your everyday life and think about how that makes you feel.



Keep learning

Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give

Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

Adapted from work by the New Economics Foundation commissioned by the Foresight Project on Mental Capital and Wellbeing ([www.neweconomics.org](http://www.neweconomics.org)).  
Artwork designed in association with Belfast Strategic Partnership.

[www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

Public Health Agency, 12-22 Linenhall Street, Belfast BT2 8BS. Tel: 0300 555 0114 (local rate).



Markethill Primary School

# St Valentine's Social

Wednesday 4 February 2026



P1 - P4 @ 5.00 - 5.45pm

ENTRANCE: The FRONT DOOR will open at 5.00pm.

EXIT: Parents should wait at the front door (5.45pm) and children will be handed over at this location.



P5 - P7 @ 6.00 - 7.00pm

ENTRANCE: Children should enter via the SIDE DOOR (upper playground), which will be opened at 6.00pm.

EXIT: Parents should wait at the front door and children will be handed over at this location (7.00pm)

Entry to Social is £2.00



## Active Wednesday Challenge

Be part of our Active Wednesday Challenge. Starting 1 October and every Wednesday during the year, we are keeping a record of the number of children who walk, cycle or scoot to school.



BE COOL  
WALK TO SCHOOL



## Walking Bus Day

Wednesday 4 February 2026



The car park at  
Rainbow Stop

Staff will meet the children at

8.45am to supervise them on their journey to school.

The Walking Bus will provide a valuable opportunity to reinforce the importance of road safety. We ask that children do not bring scooters or bicycles as the emphasis is on walking to school.

Parents / carers are welcome to walk with the children to school.

If you are late and miss the Walking Bus, it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure children arrive at school safely.

## Early School Closure - Tuesday 10 February 2026

On Tuesday 10 February 2026, school will finish for the mid-term break at 1.50pm for pupils in P1 - P3 and 2.00pm for pupils in P4 - P7. 123 Club is available.

## An Easy Way To Raise Funds

Do you shop online? Did you know that every time you buy something you could be raising money for MPS?



Over 2400 well known retailers including Amazon, M&S, Tesco, House of Fraser, Expedia and many more, will donate a percentage of what you spend to Markethill Primary School when you shop with them, via [Easyfundraising's Page](#) Each purchase generates a donation.

Instead of going directly to a retailer's website, go to [easyfundraising](https://www.easyfundraising.com) first and choose the retailer you want to shop with - then everything you spend with that retailer earns a free donation for Markethill Primary School. It's completely free to use. On average, each retailer will donate 5% of the cost of your shopping - and those donations soon mount up. Whatever you need to buy, groceries, clothes, travel, mobile phones, buy it via [easyfundraising](https://www.easyfundraising.com) and raise money for MPS at no extra cost to you! Please register to support us when you shop online.

### Health

If a child has been ill during the night, it is in the child's best interest to stay at home. If your child requires medication during the school day, the form *Procedure for the Administration of Medication* must be completed by the parent/guardian. Please note, medication e.g. antibiotics, cough bottles etc will not be given to your child unless this form has been completed. Forms can be obtained at the School Office. Inhalers and all medication must be clearly labelled with your child's name. If your child is absent from school, a note or the Absence Notification Form (see school website) must be sent to the teacher when he/she returns. It is also essential that you inform the school beforehand if a child has to leave school early or may be in late due to attendance at medical or other appointment.

Please do not send your child to school if he/she is unwell with cold/flu symptoms.

### Nut Free School and Birthday Cakes /Treats

Please remember that Markethill PS strives to be a NUT FREE ZONE. We are very grateful for your support in helping us keep our children safe and well. Should your child have an EpiPen for an allergy, please keep a note of the expiry date so that a replacement can be obtained from your G.P. and sent into school. Due to some children having nut and gluten allergies, cakes, buns and biscuits are not permitted in school to celebrate birthdays or special events.



### Early Bird Club and 123 Club

Breakfast Club opens at 8.00am in the School Hall and costs £2.00 for supervision and breakfast.



Parents should collect their child / children from the 123 Room. Please wait outside the room for Mrs Whiteside.

**PLEASE NOTE: CANCELLING A SESSION AT 123 CLUB MUST BE DONE THE DAY BEFORE IN ORDER TO GET A REFUND.**

Parents must book places for these clubs on the school app. The school is no longer receiving cash for the provision of clubs.

Children should not attend these clubs without pre booking on the school app or contacting the secretary to enquire if spaces are available.

Breakfast Club and 123 Club places for the week must be booked by 12 mid-night each Sunday. If you require a place during the week you must contact the school office to check

for availability. Spaces are limited so we advise booking early.  
 If you have booked a slot at either club and your child does not avail of this, for example, due to sickness, you will be refunded via the app. It is not possible to carry over sessions.  
 Thank you to our breakfast and 123 club staff, Mrs McKelvey, Miss Stewart, Mrs Davidson and Mrs Whiteside

**PLEASE NOTE**

**PARKING IN THE BUS BAYS IS NOT PERMITTED. THESE MUST BE KEPT CLEAR AT ALL TIMES. PLEASE KEEP ENTRANCES TO ESTATES AND ROADS CLEAR TO ENABLE RESIDENTS TO ACCESS THEIR HOMES AND TO HELP PREVENT ACCIDENTS.**

*We ask that caution is exercised in the car park when reversing out of spaces. Children who come by bike or scooter should dismount at the school gates and walk along the path to enter the playground areas.*

*Parents should not drive into the staff car park to drop their child off. This car park is for staff use only. There is ample parking available in the bottom car park and we would appreciate if parents used this area.*



# Dates to Remember

<b>FEBRUARY 2026</b>	
Mon 2 – Fri 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent-Teacher interviews: school will finish at 1.15pm for pupils in P1 – P4 and 1.20pm for pupils in P5 – P7 to facilitate interviews commencing at 2.00pm.</li> <li>• 123 Club is available from 1.15 - 4.15pm.</li> <li>• 123 Club - £3.00 per session.</li> </ul>
Wed 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking Bus @ 8.45am Rainbow Stop Car Park</li> <li>• Valentine's Social: 5.00 – 5.45pm P1 – P4 &amp; 6.00 – 7.00pm P5 – P7.</li> </ul>
Tue 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P1 – P4 finish at 1.50pm and P5 – P7 finish at 2.00pm.</li> <li>• 123 Club available.</li> <li>• No school buses.</li> </ul>
Mon 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Mental Health Week</li> </ul>
Tue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School finishes at 1.50pm for P1 – P3 &amp; 2.00pm for P4 – P7.</li> <li>• 123 Club is available.</li> </ul>
Wed 11 – Fri 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-term holidays</li> </ul>
Mon 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School reopens</li> </ul>
Tue 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P6 Parent Information Session for SEAG</li> </ul>
Wed 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safer Internet Day Assembly – K Todd</li> </ul>
Wed 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration Assembly P7KQ</li> </ul>
<b>MARCH 2026</b>	
Wed 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking Bus @ 8.45am Rainbow Stop Car Park</li> <li>• <b>Green Day *PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE</b></li> </ul>
Wed 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil literacy, numeracy and WAU books sent home</li> </ul>
Thur 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil books returned to school</li> </ul>
Tue 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School closed – St Patrick's Day</li> </ul>
Wed 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SEAG Club commences at 8.45am</li> </ul>
Wed 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celebration Assembly – Empathy P5HS</li> </ul>
Fri 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-uniform Day £1.00 per child / £2.00 per family</li> <li>• School finishes at 11.50am P1 – P3 &amp; 12 noon P4 – P7</li> </ul>

Mon 30 – Fri 10 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Easter Holidays – school closed</li></ul>
<b>APRIL 2026</b>	
Mon 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School reopens</li></ul>
Wed 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eco Council School Assembly</li></ul>
Wed 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Celebration Assembly – Compassion P7RCh</li></ul>

*If you require any information or would like clarification on any issue, please contact me via email or phone.*

*Dr H McLernon*