

Alexander Dickson Primary School



Helping small
people with
BIG ideas

School Arrivals and Departures Policy

Introduction

At Alexander Dickson Primary School, the children's safety is of paramount importance.

The beginning and end of the school day is a busy time for school and our aim is to ensure all children arrive promptly and safely and are dismissed carefully under supervision, collected on time and arrive home safely. The aim of these procedures is to ensure the safety of children by making sure that the responsibilities and expectations of all parties are clear when it comes to children arriving and leaving the school premises.

Arriving at School

Early Birds

Early Birds runs from 8:00 to 8:45am and places should be booked in advance via SchoolMoney. Children should arrive at the side door of the Early Birds' room. We expect all children to be escorted by their parents to this door and ensure that their child has entered.

Drop Off / Start Times

The school day starts at 9:00am for all children. Pupils should be in class, ready for registration at 9:00am so that lessons can begin on time.

Arriving at School

It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children arrive to school safely and on time. Parents/carers may decide that their children are able to walk to school without an adult. This is at the parent's discretion. Where we have any concerns about children arriving at school, we will contact the parent to discuss this.

School Opening Times

Children, other than those attending Early Birds, may enter school from 8.45am. Children should be supervised by an adult before this time and not left outside the school gates as we cannot be responsible for their safety and wellbeing. The school will endeavour to supervise the school playground from 8:45am by a member of staff.

The school doors will open at 8:45am. The children have from 8.45am to 9.00am to enter school at their designated entrance for prompt registration at 9:00am.

Pupil Entrances

Each classroom has its own side door which leads directly outside. Each door will be opened by a member of the class staff at 8.45am and closed at 9.00am for security and safeguarding.

Late Arrivals

Pupils arriving after 9:00am will need to enter school through the main doors and report to the school office to ensure they are marked on the register and inform staff if they are school dinners or sandwiches. Pupils will be officially marked as late on the electronic register. The Educational Welfare Service of the Education Authority will review both registers termly. Office staff will walk children to their classrooms (if required).

Church Car Park

The school is fortunate to have access to Ballygowan Presbyterian Church's car park for parents to use during drop off and pick up. Parents should not use the main car park unless dropping off at Early Birds (Monday-Friday) or picking up from Late Birds (Friday only).

During icy/snowy weather, the Church Car Park will be closed.

School Collection 'Pick UP'

Finishing Times

The school day ends as follows:

P1/2: 2.00pm

P3: 2.00pm* (*P3 pupils will stay until 3.00pm each Tuesday and Thursday in term 3)

P4-7: 3.00pm (2.00pm Friday)

Pupil Exits

Each class will walk collectively to the school playground via their classroom exit door where they will be dismissed. Parents are encouraged to come into the school playground and wait for their child.

P1-4 Collection Arrangements

Given the age of the children, we require parents/carers to inform us each time that a different person is due to collect their children.

A member of staff, usually the class teacher, will release children to a known adult. This may be a person who is known to the school and/or a person that the child knows well and is comfortable to go home with. If for any reason, a staff member feels uncomfortable releasing a child to the individual that has arrived to collect, they will of course seek clarification by contacting the parents. The safety of the children is paramount and staff will use their professional judgement if they feel they should take that extra precaution.

To avoid any unnecessary confusion or upset, parents are encouraged to inform their child of their pick-up arrangements.

P4 pupils may walk to the car park independently.

P5-7 Collection Arrangements

A member of staff, usually the class teacher, will take their class outside and supervise until the children have left. These children may walk to the car park independently or walk home. Children are regularly reminded they must return to their classroom and class teacher if they have any problems.

Children walking home

Parents of older children may, understandably, wish to encourage independence prior to their children going to post-primary school and allow their child to travel (walk or cycle) home alone, or with a friend. Should this be the case, we ask that parents' consent to this via their permission booklet (usually when starting school).

Late Collection of a child.

Parents should collect their children promptly at their dismissal time. Sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, we understand that a child may not be collected on time. Parents should contact the school as soon as possible to notify us if they will be late. Where parents are late collecting their children, the children will either stay with their Class Teacher or safely wait at reception.

For children's safety when travelling to and from school, pupils are allowed to bring mobile phones to school if parents wish, although they must remain switched off for the entire school day.

Late Birds

Late Birds' After School Club closes at 3:00pm. Staff are only contracted to work until 3:00pm so it is essential that children are collected on time. Pupils will be dismissed from the playground from Monday-Thursday and the main staff car park on a Friday.

Winter Weather Arrangements

At Alexander Dickson Primary School, we always try to keep school open whenever possible. Parents should always assume school is open as normal in the event of wintry weather unless they hear otherwise directly from the school or via the local media. When considering whether the school can open during adverse weather, the following will be considered:

- can pupils and staff access the school building safely?
- considering weather forecast for later in the day, could pupils and staff safely leave the building at the end of the day?
- can pupils and staff be evacuated in an emergency?
- in an emergency, could the Emergency Services access the school?
- can buses, meal deliveries, etc. reach the school?
- if a limited number of staff and pupils can attend, is the Pupil:Teacher Ratio (PTR) acceptable?

In the very rare situation that weather is so severe that it prevents school from opening or requires early closure, school will:

- Contact parents directly via DoJo.
- Update the school Facebook page and website
- Inform the Education Authority and the Department of Education. This will prompt the NI Direct website (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/school-closures>) to be updated to reflect the school closure.

It is important to remember that, during icy/snowy weather, the Church Car Park will be closed even if school is open. Parents are reminded to leave extra time for their journey and to park safely and legally, giving due consideration to local residents. Pupils should be escorted to the main entrance of the school via the Comber Road by an adult.