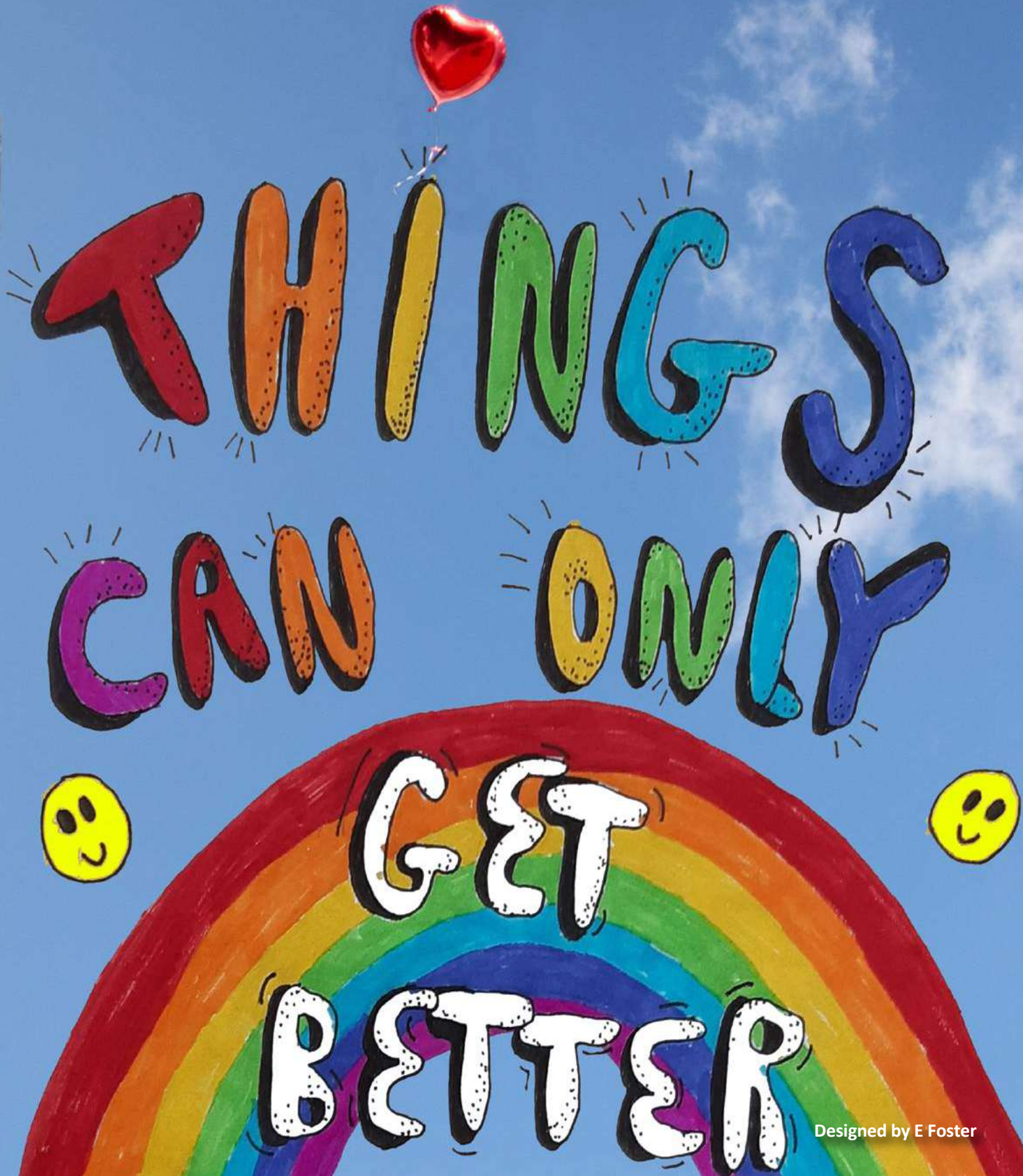


# utu NEWS

The journal of the Ulster Teachers' Union



# CONTENTS

## PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT

*UTU President, Stephen McCord and head of science at Larne High School comment.*

## WELCOMED WELLIES

*Aughnacloy pupils decorate local carehome with floral wellies.*

## UN75 - TOGETHER FIRST

*Join 'the conversation' with the UN for their 75th anniversary to stimulate a global conversation on realising a better world by 2045.*

## LOCKDOWN HEROES

*Pupils from every corner of Northern Ireland share their stories and lockdown heroes.*



34  
35



end child poverty



## VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020

*UTU leads the way with extraordinary first 'Virtual Conference' with over 400 members and delegates participating.*

## HEALTHY KIDZ AT HART

*Pupils at Hart Memorial reaching their physical and personal best in 2020.*

## MATHLETES OF DRUMGOR

*Math week with Drumgor Primary School pupils making the top 4 in the UK.*

## AND MUCH MORE!



# PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT



It was a great honour to be installed as President of the Ulster Teachers' Union at our extraordinary and virtual conference in June. Little did I imagine when I accepted the role a year earlier what different and difficult circumstances teachers and trade unions would be

working under, not only locally but on a global level too. Indeed, it was a great privilege to have the opportunity to have a second chance to represent members, and I was fortunate that my previous term of office gave me an understanding of the mechanics and inner workings that allowed me to hit the ground running in April, as the challenges resulting from COVID-19 changed the education landscape.

I already understood the huge sense of responsibility that the role of President undertakes, representing our teacher and principal members on issues regarding health and safety, employment rights, pay and conditions, mental health and well-being and professional development. On this occasion, the issues are very different. Now teachers require answers and guidance on remote & blended learning, care for key worker children, the preparation for returning to school, the "new normal" followed by issues regarding identification of positive cases. Within a few days the issues that you as teachers face change, and so the UTU adapts to your needs.

Despite the Covid-19 situation the challenges

and issues facing teachers continue and the UTU represent you the member both locally, nationally and internationally.

Locally, at the end of April the Teachers' Negotiating Committee, Management Side and the Northern Ireland Teachers' Council formally ratified an agreement to resolve the long running industrial dispute of teachers' pay and workload. This agreement delivers a level of pay which is in line with colleagues in the rest of the UK for the same pay periods, and NITC have now submitted a pay claim for 2019/20 and 2020/21. We were able to engage with members across the province at Branch and Area Association meetings and, thanks to Zoom, the world has suddenly become much smaller! We can network with our members from the comfort of our own classroom or home!

Nationally, our General Secretary and I have attended the British and Irish Group of Teacher Unions during the summer. A joint statement was issued and picked up by the press in all jurisdictions. The issues around pupils, teachers and these testing times are the same no matter where we live.

Internationally, it has been a great honour to join the European Trade Union Group of teachers and listen to the challenges across Europe. Then following from that, we were also able to join EI (Education International) and hear at times some of the dreadful circumstances our teacher friends across the World are meeting due to lack of amenities or at times some governments ignorance of the pandemic we now live with.

As we enter the Winter, there will be many more challenges and trials that we will meet. That has already been seen by our Primary 7 teachers and pupils who have the



# PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT

unnecessary worry regarding test dates being moved by a few weeks. Our post-primary colleagues have seen a lack lustre response from our Education Minister regarding GCSE and GCE examinations taking place in 2021. On the other hand, we have recently engaged with a group of our Principal members and it was great to hear their positive comments regarding pupils, parents and teachers who have all adapted to the new school day.

Even before Covid our education system was on its knees. Nothing has changed! Indeed, the

**“What gives me most optimism is our young people themselves and their ability to see opportunity even though crisis.”**

crisis we are living through has only deepened and highlighted the failings of our undervalued and under resourced education system. For too long teachers have lacked professional development and as entered lockdown it was teachers own initiatives and resourcefulness that allowed the home learning to develop.

There are some positives however, thanks to Zoom the world has suddenly become much smaller! We can network with our profession internationally to see how other countries cope, and share our expertise. Hopefully we will see education and its global context differently going forward.

What gives me most optimism is our young people themselves and their ability to see opportunity even though crisis. It's their resilience which allows me to believe in a recovery from all this and to envision a hope

for the future. As a Union, we will continue to challenge those in positions of power and ensure that the needs of our teachers and pupils are met as we move post-covid.

At headquarters too we very quickly adapting to the changing circumstances.

Our staff and officials are working from home but continue to engage quickly with members' emails, queries and concerns. We have also been represented in consultations and meetings with the Department of Education and Education Authority by our General Secretary Jacquie White. From the start of lockdown and right through the Summer, she has been advocating on behalf of our Union.

The experience and professionalism that the UTU staff bring to our members is vast and I wish to place on record my thanks to everyone of them over these past few months. They have been responding to members outside normal office hours, often advising and reassuring members regarding the ever-changing circumstances.

In closing, may I thank you the member for all that you have done over the past few months. I wish you well in your endeavours and trust that you and your families will remain safe and well in the coming months.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephen McCord'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized flourish at the end.

**STEPHEN MCCORD**  
**UTU PRESIDENT**



# GENERAL SECRETARY FOREWARD



## Colleagues

It is indicative of the nature of education in these recent times that I am writing regarding the latest developments re Covid-19 in schools immediately prior to the release of this edition of the UTU News whilst not knowing whether it will be current when you, the member, reads it.

We now know that the planned reopening of schools on 2nd November announced by the First and Deputy First Ministers has taken place.

The return to school for this second half-term of Covid embedded education has brought a different range of anxieties from our previous experience. In August we walked into the unknown; we have now had the experience of positive diagnoses, bubbles of children self-isolating and engagement with the track and trace process.

And the number of cases is growing. There is on-going political and medical debate as to whether schools should be open at all and whether by being open they are serving to keep the R number at a level which is not manageable by society.

The overwhelming feeling, whether from politicians, parents, children or the principals and teachers themselves is that the best place for our children is in school. There is no question that that is the case. But we must put the health and well-being of the school population

at the centre of our decision-making and, if we want to make the reopening of schools sustainable, we need to unpack what exactly is happening and work out how to move forward with schools open but with a more robust and effective range of mitigations to keep everyone safe.

The Minister has recognised that the efforts of schools to put in place mitigations can be seriously undermined by the risks associated with the journey to and from school. He has firstly, therefore, strongly encouraged parents to wear face coverings in the vicinity of the school building. He has

further announced that *‘the wearing of face coverings on all dedicated school buses and public transport will be mandatory for all post-primary children when schools reopen next week’*. Whilst these added factors are welcomed and, if adhered to, could have a very beneficial impact on the school situation.

However, the enforcement of these mitigations is for the Department of Education to consider and is not the responsibility of schools.

What is the responsibility of schools is the mitigations inside the school building and what is clear is that we need clear information, medically-based advice and properly funded practices to move forward.

**“we must put the health and well-being of the school population at the centre of our decision-making”**

UTU has serious concerns regarding the impact of absences of both staff and children in relation to positive Covid-19 diagnoses and associated self-isolating and has been engaging with DE to obtain relevant data. The functioning of our education system depends on the health and well-being of our principals, teachers and other school staff and the manner in which the data has been reported to date appears disingenuous and does not reflect the experiences of members. It is imperative that proper scrutiny is given to the actual situation in our schools and that the direction of travel is grounded robustly both in reality and in properly funded mitigations.

UTU has been seeking a meaningful breakdown of the data regarding positive cases and numbers self-isolating amongst both staff and children. DE is working with us on this and we hope to have statistics in the coming days which will serve as a starting point to reconsider and move forward.

Whilst we are aware of a considerable number of cases in primary schools this is particularly of concern in post-primary settings. The PHA has informed the teaching unions that 11-17 year olds are *'just as likely to spread infection as an adult'* and we must therefore pose the questions as to why the *'relaxing'* of mitigations for this age group is acceptable in comparison to those recommended for adults generally. This would include the guidance around social distancing and that of the wearing of face coverings in public areas. This is of particular concern considering the current plans to continue with GCSE and A level examinations and the huge barriers being faced by both the teachers and the children in trying to prepare accordingly.

And, of course, schools cannot

continue to move forward without the appropriate financial support. Just prior to the return to school the Minister, Peter Weir, announced funding of almost £64 million *'to help schools manage Education Authority pressures, COVID-19 pressures and for free school meals'*.

He stated that *'the funding, which has been allocated as part of the October monitoring round, includes £49.4 million to cover additional costs such as maintenance, staffing, cleaning and other pressures, and £12.8 million to cover for a range of pressures including those in Special Educational Needs, and schools maintenance'*.

We are currently seeking clarification as to the distribution of and access to this funding and the other issues outlined above. We will keep you informed of progress.

## **PAY AND WORKLOAD AGREEMENT**

Work continues with Management Side regarding the workload elements of the Pay and Workload Agreement which was agreed in April 2020.

The time budget element was the first priority with the intention being that every teacher would have a time budget reflecting the varying demands of their particular roles in schools in place by the beginning of the academic year. Events, most notably Covid, impacted on the original timetable and, in order to facilitate training and advice, and in recognition that there were many pressing issues for Principals to deal with in schools, the date was extended to 31st October with the time worked so far to be taken into account.

UTU ran a series of virtual workshops to answer queries and provide support and the Officials continue to work with Principals and teachers on an individual basis. Whilst it appears that the majority of our schools now have

the time budget in place please do not hesitate to contact us if you need further clarification or guidance.

The other two priority issues were the establishment of Joint Consultative Committees and the workload proofing of New Initiatives. A working group comprising NITC and Management Side representatives are currently establishing Terms of Reference and direction of travel for each of these areas and further meetings are scheduled to take place in the near future. We will report back on progress.

Progress has also been made in terms of the reviews. Following the reconstitution of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee, efforts are now being made to establish the appropriate frameworks and access and establish the required personnel and expertise. It is the current aim that the work proper will commence in January 2021.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

Despite the inevitable focus on Covid-19 there are further consultations on-going in respect of terms and conditions and practice in schools and in the wider system.

The most pressing is the consultation on public sector pensions and the remedies required to redress the inequalities determined by the McCloud/Sargeant judgements. Many members have expressed an interest in responding to this consultation and have been seeking information and guidance in that regard. A great deal of work has been taking place behind the scenes to ensure that the information to be released by unions, both teaching and public sector generally, to their members is in line with that to be provided by the Department

of Education and the Department of Finance. This information has now been made available on the UTU website and further guidance will issue in the coming days.

<https://www.utu.edu/pension-consultation-transitional-protection-arrangements/>

A number of consultations have been released in regard to Special Educational Needs: the 'Public Consultation on the Draft Special Schools Area Planning Framework'; the 'Public Consultation on the Draft Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools and Draft Framework for Specialist Provision in Mainstream Schools – Pilot' and the New SEN Framework. Meetings will be commencing shortly regarding responses to these consultations. If any member would like to be involved in the UTU response please email your details to [office@utu.edu](mailto:office@utu.edu) and we will ensure you receive the details.

We wish you well for the next half-term and can assure you of UTU's continued help and support in dealing with any issues which arise. We encourage you to browse through the UTU News – there are elements which offer a beacon of light in these challenging times and will remind you of why you're continuing to do what you do.

**Enjoy – and keep safe.**



**JACQUIE WHITE**  
**GENERAL SECRETARY**

# Welcomed wellies **BRIGHTEN** up carehome

Pupils from Augnacloy PS colourful lockdown connection with **local carehome residents**

**T**he boys and girls from Augnacloy Primary School have all been really busy over this past number of months. They have been working on their Home-learning Literacy, Numeracy and World Around Us packs as well as enjoying lots of different articles, challenges and reports on NewsDesk.

We wanted to tell you about something that we are very proud of. During lockdown we challenged our pupils to plant a flower in a Recycled welly boot to make a special kind of flowerpot!

We were amazed at just how many pupils rose to the challenge. There were literally dozens of pairs of wellies! They all looked different.

Many had been decorated and jazzed up with special sparkles, paint and ribbons, while others had messages attached to them.

The special flower pots were heading to a new home. Copperfields Private Nursing Home in Augnacloy.



Augnacloy Primary School pupils with their wellie flower pots



It took two car loads to transport all the lovely wellies. Mrs McKeown, was just delighted to receive the donations and she positioned them around the conservatory and along the wall outside the home.

The residents, who were not allowed any visitors at the time, really enjoyed

looking at the flower pots and some even watered the plants.

### Special Connection

We have a special connection with the home, as many of our pupils have relatives who live or work there. Several times a year we visit the home and sing for the residents. We all look forward to seeing all the staff and residents in the near-future.

If you want to see some more pictures of the beautiful display of colourful wellies, check out Copperfields Private Nursing Home Facebook page.



**8 Socially distanced wellies**



# Duneane Primary School classes move outdoors!

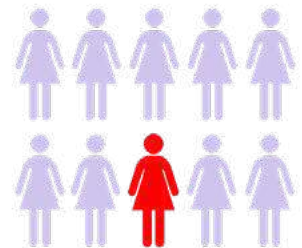
**W**ith the current advice to use outdoor areas as much as possible for teaching and learning, Duneane Primary School have taken full advantage of the space available to them. As well as regular outdoor play sessions, pupils have been working in their school garden and making use of their seated Forest School area in the adjoining church grounds. To enhance their outdoor provision in the current circumstances, the PTA purchased a gazebo which has been erected over existing picnic tables. This provides a great area for practical activities and working with groups of children. Sides can easily be attached when required to provide shelter from the wind and rain. Duneane Primary School pupils are loving their extended



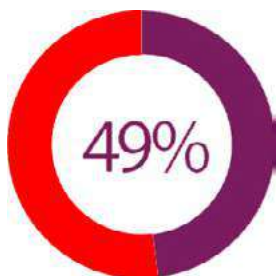
learning space and the opportunities available to them, making the challenging circumstances into a positive experience.

## Period poverty among Northern Ireland pupils must not be sidelined

Period poverty among Northern Ireland pupils is in danger of being sidelined as schools battle with the Covid crisis. "We are the only region in the UK not to have centrally-funded free sanitary products in schools, relying instead on a charity to provide them," said Jacquie White, General Secretary of the Ulster Teachers' Union.



**1 in 10 girls and women aged 14 to 21 years old said they hadn't been able to afford sanitary protection**



**of 14 to 21 year olds have missed an entire day of school because of their period - of which 59% made up a lie or an alternative excuse**

"Not having access to sanitary products because they can't afford them is undignified and humiliating. It impacts a young person's mental health and well being and that stigma can stay with them in later life. "It is shameful that Northern Ireland is relying on a charity to provide free sanitary products in schools when every other region in the UK has a centrally funded resource."

"The situation here wasn't helped by the fact our Executive didn't sit for three years while England, Scotland and Wales were pressing forward to help girls and young women. Then by the time it did, Covid was top of the agenda. "Now we are returning to some kind of normality and schools are operating again, we must ensure that issues like period poverty are not forgotten.

"Research published by the charity Plan International indicated that one in 10 girls between the ages of 14 and 21 in the UK have been unable to afford sanitary products, while 49% have missed an entire day of school because of their period. "Given the pay cuts and job losses which have and will in the future result from the pandemic, coupled with the acute

levels of poverty already existing here, it is more important than ever that girls don't have to miss out on school because they can't afford appropriate products."

**T**ogether First is a new worldwide project instigated this year by the United Nations (UN) for its 75th Anniversary to stimulate a global conversation on realising a better world by 2045, the 100th Anniversary of the UN. Our experience is that 'the Conversation' is already flourishing amongst young people in Northern Ireland. The United Nations Association in Northern Ireland (UNA NI) is one of many worldwide UNA groups which promote the aims of the UN and here in NI we have seen over many years that young people, in particular, seize the opportunity to participate in events which allow them to voice their opinions and concerns on issues



Ms Koulla Yiasouma, the Northern Ireland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, Primary 3 pupils from the Drelincourt School, Armagh with their Principal, Mrs Eileen Trew and Classroom Assistant, Mrs Sonia Ritchie, and with representatives of UNA-NI's Committee.

# TOGETHER FIRST- JOIN 'THE CONVERSATION'

which affect us all worldwide, such as Human Rights, Gender Inequality and Climate Change.

Consider 2015, the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the UN. Here in Northern Ireland we, in UNA NI, created a project to link each of the 11

new local Councils with a school in their district through the presentation of a copy of the UN Charter. None of us foresaw the extent of the enthusiasm of both the Councils and the many schools that eventually took part. Invariably the Mayor of each Council hosted a reception for the event and the students prepared reports on the international work in which they were engaged through the curriculum or extra-curricular activities. They also presented a copy of the UN Charter to the Mayor and Council. Listening to the pupils' talk with understanding about



Principal, teachers and students from Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock.

Sustainable Development, Climate Change, Food Security, Human Rights and Fairtrade, for instance, and demonstrate their involvement in their projects was truly inspiring. The series of events culminated in a reception at Parliament Buildings, Stormont with a presentation of the UN Charter to the Speaker of the Assembly. These young



Send The Bessler, Staff Members and Students of Sandelford Special School and Councillor Michelle Knight-McQuillan,

people had a role to play, not only in their own communities but in the wider world.

Many of you will remember taking part in a Model United Nations Assembly (MUN), where students take responsibility for representing a UN member country through role play. This particular introduction to world politics enables them to have the confidence to debate issues of international concern. Through their preliminary research, the students gain knowledge of their country's culture, economy and politics and a sometimes temporary empathy for their values and human rights.

UN Day, October 24th, is always an occasion to celebrate and promote the work of the UN. In 2018, we arranged a meeting for sixth formers at the Palace Demesne, Armagh and invited Captain Tom Fitzpatrick of the UN Training School Ireland to speak to local sixth formers on his service abroad as part of the UN Irish Peace Keeping Force. He was joined by Kevin Hyland OBE, the UK's first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, who had since been appointed as Chief

Executive Officer of ChildFund Ireland, an organisation whose worldwide work includes promoting children's rights and campaigning for policies that protect children.

Last year we teamed up with the National Union of Journalists to raise awareness for World Press Freedom Day in May with a seminar for journalism students from Queen's University and the University of Ulster, the Belfast Metropolitan College and other senior pupils. Titled 'The Media and Democracy – Why Journalism Matters', the seminar was dedicated to Lyra McKee and addressed by senior journalists including Jim Boumelha who spoke of the current aim to encourage the UN to adopt a convention on the safety of journalists. The final young people's event of 2019 was hosted by the Armagh Robinson Library to mark the 30th Anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Library prepared an exhibition of items from its collection on children's rights from the 18th century and Primary 3 pupils from the Drelincourt School celebrated with Koulla Yiasouma, the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People.



Natalie Samarasinghe, UNA-UK's Executive Director, and students from Methodist College, Belfast, after receiving certificates of appreciation from UNA-NI.

UNA NI has enjoyed the challenge of seeking new ways to link with schools, colleges and universities across Northern Ireland. We have endeavoured to organise visits from our colleagues based in London. Sir Jeremy Greenstock spoke at a

meeting in Stormont during his term in office as the UNA UK Chairman. Our Executive Director, Natalie Samarasinghe, has inspired students on two visits, including the pupils who



Featured with the Lord Mayor and guest speakers are pupils and teacher from Portadown College. Image credit: Liam McArdle

had set up the UNA NI website and had the pleasure of speaking with her. She is currently on sabbatical in New York serving as UN75 Deputy and Chief of Strategy but will be recording a **'Thought for the Day'** for BBC NI to be broadcast on October 26th.

This year, we will be marking the 75th Anniversary in NI, not as expected with a special event and dinner in the Belfast Harbour Office, but in the on-line company of Liz Weir, an NI award-winning storyteller and writer who will be storytelling to highlight the UN's Sustainable Development

Goals as part of the CADA One World Festival NI, an event open to



UNA-NI's Secretary, Maureen Maguire, left and the Chairperson, Patricia Irvine, fourth from the left, chatted with students from Wellington College, Belfast. Image Credit Kevin Cooper.

all. We have also produced a list of excellent videos for the UTU website

on the wide range of issues that the UN works on, day by day. They have been sorted according to their suitability for Primary and Secondary Schools and are a valuable teaching resource. Please take a look.

**'Together First'**, from the title of this article, is a 75th Anniversary initiative from the UN to encourage new voices to engage in the transformation of global governance. Who better to do this than our young people? Many are already involved as we in UNA NI have evidenced but even more could join the discussion – there are so many topics to get them thinking and talking which will be of importance to their daily lives. A quote from a pupil who spoke at the reception at our 70th Anniversary celebrations in Parliament Buildings is an uplifting



Oakgrove Integrated College pupils and staff.

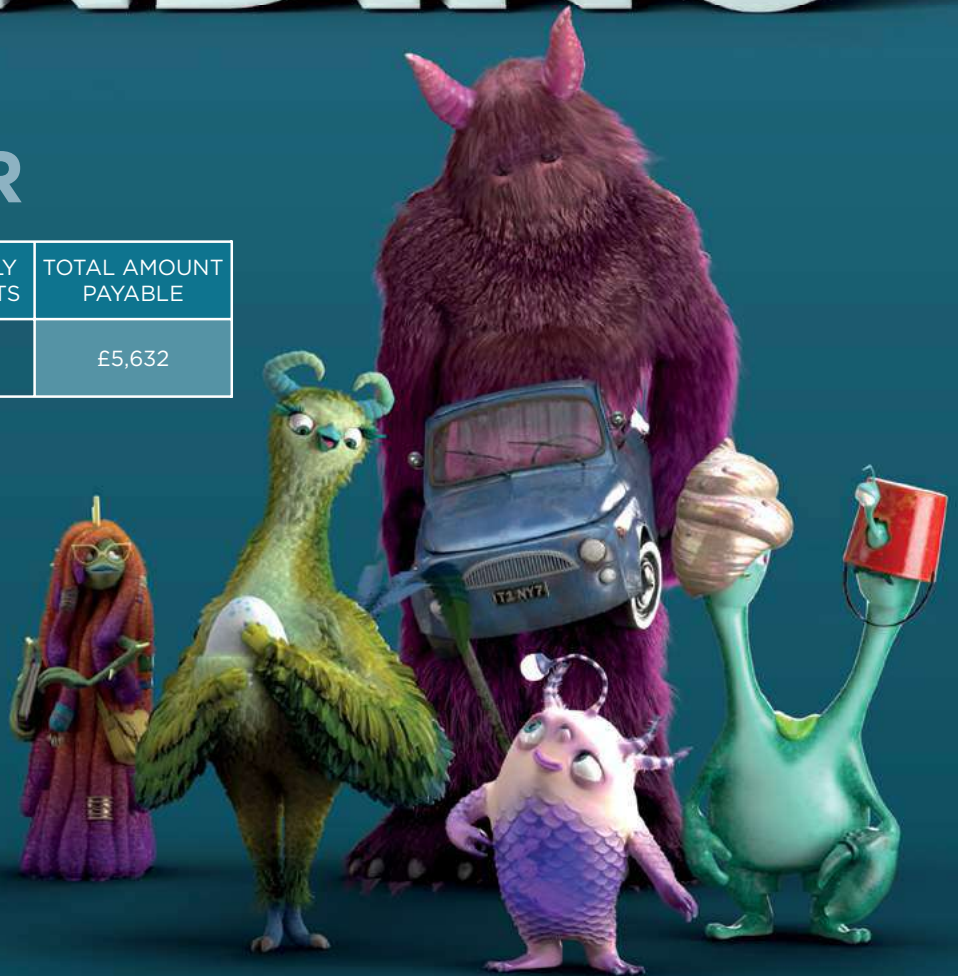
conclusion: '... as young people on the brink of adulthood, we are aware of the challenges facing the world... We are fortunate to live in a society where we are valued as full citizens of our nations and where we can grow, flourish and create futures full of opportunity, where we are protected and cherished and an excellent education is our birth right. ... we have a particular duty to use our skills and opportunities to speak out for young people in the world who are still without even the basic essentials for a life worth living. ...'

# WE'RE LENDING

## 8.19% APR

AMOUNT	TERM	APR	36 MONTHLY REPAYMENTS	TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE
£5,000	3 year	8.19%	£157	£5,632

Information correct as of 16/10/2020



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# UTU Competition allows pupils to show creative flair of their heroes or best day during lockdown!

The annual international relations competition this year allowed pupils to focus on Lockdown Heroes or their favourite day during lockdown.

The entries far exceeded any previous competition and the standard was absolutely amazing. The members of the committee had so many wonderful entries to look at, from poetry to short stories, art work and even video clips. Prizes were distributed as e-gift cards to the overall winners. We hope you enjoy looking at some of the winning photos, stories and poems. You can see many more on the [UTU Facebook video](#).



**STAY AT HOME  
STAY ALERT**

**When this is all over, we  
will.....**

Swimming on Saturdays,  
lots of fun.  
Travelling to Granny's for  
fun in the sun.  
A lot of hugs because we  
missed them most.  
You and I will enjoy holidays  
up at the coast.  
Taking long walks in places  
we have never been,  
Our mission should now be  
to keep our environment  
clean.  
Going to McDonalds, out  
with some friends,  
Everyone working together  
to ensure that this ends.  
This virus has taught us to  
be grateful for school,  
How I look forward to going  
back, that day will be cool.  
Every day we are closer so  
keep this in mind,  
Remember to hug when  
you can and always be kind.

*By Afllie Lee*



**The World is on Hold**  
-----

The clock's ticking by  
But the world is on hold  
In the warm mid-year air,  
still inside we are cold  
With worry and fear,  
With doubt and dread  
And nothing to go by  
except what is said

America says 'yes' and  
Australia says 'no'  
Scotland says 'stop' and  
England says 'go'  
T.V, papers, Radio, news  
Everyone, pushing  
So we will listen to their  
views

Classes, empty  
and silence in the hall

There are no new  
pictures  
For hanging on the wall.  
For the NHS we clap at  
night  
It gives us hope  
For the end of this  
tunnel, seeing light

If you can see through  
the grey skies  
and in to the blue  
You will see all the things  
you can discover anew

Like your hobbies, those  
day trips,  
Your friends too.  
But the things we took  
for granted  
are the things I most  
want to do.

Going to the shop  
Or splashing in the pool  
Playing in the park  
Even going to school!

Our concert time has  
come and gone  
No chance to show what  
we can do  
How inspiring it will be to  
work  
In groups: choirs,  
orchestras and lessons  
too

We're missing out on all  
the things  
that make a year, a year  
The trips, concerts and  
tournaments  
I could have been in  
Holland, not here!

I can cope with isolation  
And the restrictions it  
can bring.  
But my abrupt end to  
primary school  
I find the hardest thing.

But this life is a journey  
of tunnels and bridges  
Of twists and turns  
And dips and ridges  
But after a downhill  
there's always a rise  
Just think of the future  
and look up to the skies...

*Katie Soper*  
**Age 11**  
**KS2**  
**P7**  
**Strandtown Primary  
School**

## What I am Looking Forward to After Lockdown

When this lockdown's over. Things won't be the same. Social distances of 2 metres to remain.

I can't wait to be free of lockdown So, I can visit my friends again. Riding motocross tracks. And visiting the Gortin Glens.

I can't believe I am saying this. But I miss my school and friends.

The home-schooling is hard. I really miss a teacher.

I can't wait to get hugs from Granny. And have a sleepover at her house. But I really miss my Auntie Karen. Who is working hard for the NHS.

I can't wait to get back to rugby. And playing golf. So excited for so much more. Can't wait to get out the door.

I can't stop thinking about my friends

I really want to get playing again. I love my caravan and I miss it so. Can't wait to get back there thou.

Lockdown has given me lots of things. Special time with my family. Playing games and having fun. Riding my bike and enjoying the sun.

But I can't wait for it to be over.

**Lennox P6, Strabane CPS**

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS WINNERS

Overall Winner: *Alyssa E, Harding Memorial Primary School*

### Nursery

**1st Prize** *Felicity M, Ballygowley Early Years*  
**2nd Prize** *Charlotte W Millington Nursery School*  
**3rd Prize** *Eve J, Lisbellaw Community Nursery, & Archie A, Cooley Primary School & Nursery unit*

### Foundation

**1st Prize** *Laura H, Enniskillen Model School*  
**2nd Prize** *Emily B Fivemiletown Primary School*  
**3rd Prize** *Olivia A, Cooley Primary School & Nursery unit & Ruby R, Dromara Primary School*

### KS1

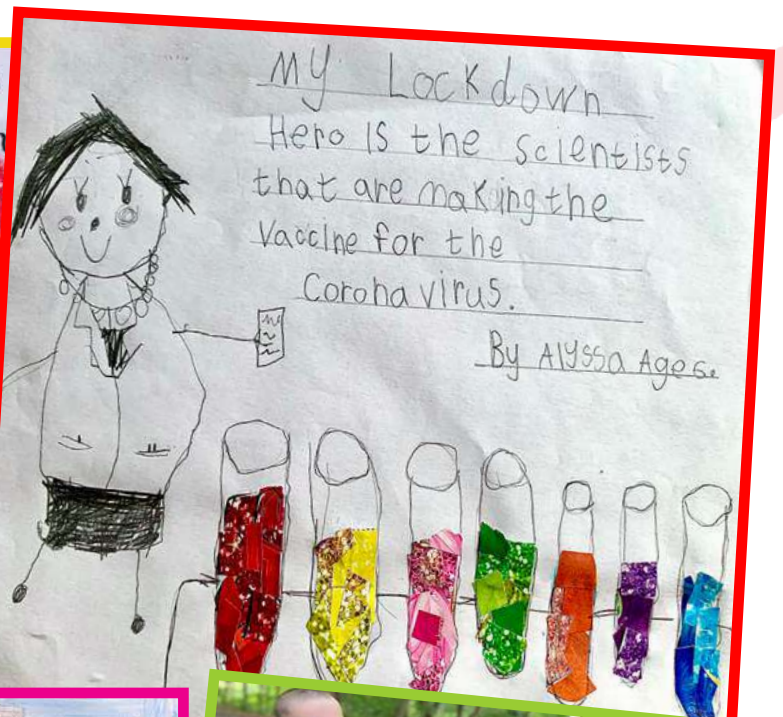
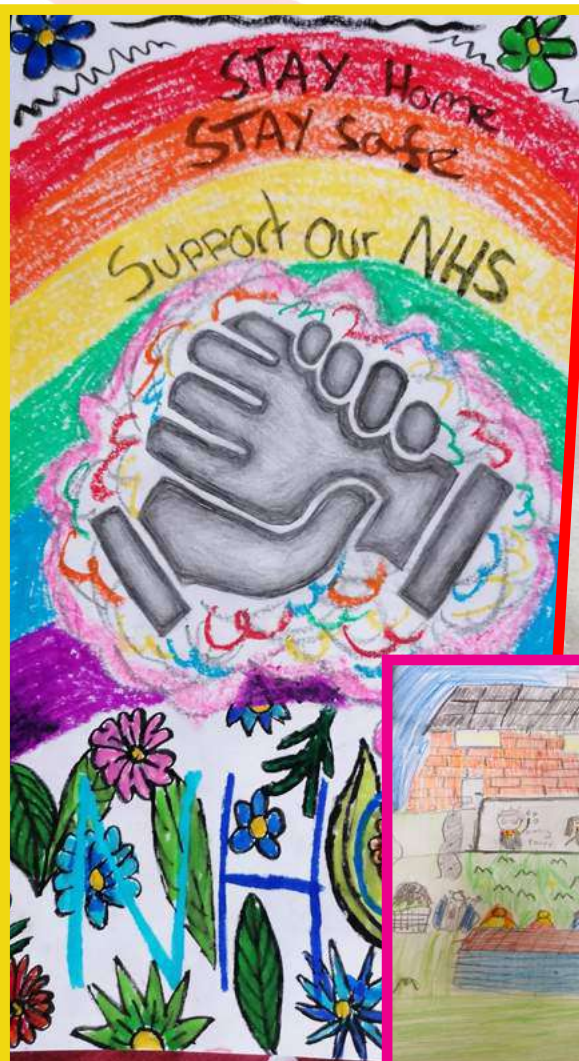
**1st Prize** *Amelia M, Strathearn Prep*  
**2nd Prize** *Alfie L, Aughnacloy Primary School*  
**3rd Prize** *Alex H, Pondpark primary school & Victoria G, Castle Gardens Primary School, & Abigail W, Millington Primary School & Anna W, Ballydown Primary School,*

### KS2

**1st Prize** *Darcie K, Howard Primary school*  
**2nd Prize** *Jack B, Birches Primary School*  
**3rd Prize** *Katie S, Strandtown Primary School & Amelie B, Carrowdore Primary School*  
*Lennox B, Strabane CPS*  
*Gracie M, Garryduff Primary School.*  
*Katie S, Strandtown Primary School*

### KS3

**1st Prize** *Sarah M, Larne High School*  
**2nd Prize** *Sri L, Aquinas Grammar School Belfast*  
**3rd Prize** *Ethan M, Ulidia Ulidia Integrated College Carrickfergus & Hannah R, Larne High school*  
*Nicole T, Royal School Dungannon*





# ULSTER TEACHERS' UNION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020

Leading the way with the first extraordinary Virtual Conference

Over 400 'virtual' delegates attended an extraordinary online conference on Wednesday 17 June. With the UTU March conference cancelled due to the Government lockdown, the central executive committee decided to bring forward three emergency motions which were debated and supported by members attending. "We felt it was vital that grassroots membership should have their say in helping chart the future for their profession during this time of unprecedented upheaval," said Jacquie White, General Secretary of the UTU. "The pandemic crisis has seen teachers become the fourth emergency service as they man schools, regardless of their own health worries, to help keep key workers' children in class so their parents man the front line. "As some sort of new normal starts to coalesce, we have become aware of the key areas of concern exercising our members, and this extraordinary event is a



chance for them to air their fears and demand better going forward. "Before this outbreak, rarely a day went by without

**"The pandemic crisis has seen teachers become the fourth emergency service"**

some sort of new financial crisis rocking our education system as principals were forced to make staff redundant, cut classroom resources and even ask parents to provide toilet roll in a desperate attempt to reduce growing deficits – some running into seven figures – and that was just to keep afloat. Susan Thompson, outgoing President, commented that "In our first motion we

will demand assurances that things will change and schools will be adequately resourced, funded and staffed." As well as this, delegates will also vote on a another motion calling for adequate post pandemic mental health support for pupils and staff, as well as a third addressing workload and assessment. "Our children are living through extraordinary times, which will leave their mark more deeply on some than others. Undoubtedly, there will be a mental health fall-out for them and for their teachers as they acclimatise to a new normal following this unprecedented crisis which has taken hundreds of loved ones from us," continued Mrs Thompson. "We want assurances that mental



Education Minister - Peter Weir

health support will be readily available for all who need it, while on a more practical level we also need assurances on logistics.

“What will a new school day look like, for instance? How will special educational needs and assessment issues be handled



and what are the workload ramifications for teachers of all this?

“These are the issues on which we want – and deserve – clarity. For too long the education system has been running on empty, shored up by little more than the goodwill of our profession. “It had, however, reached critical mass and could not carry on. There has never been a better time for the Minister to listen to those at the chalkface, those who know best, and to do the right thing.” Susan Thompson addressed attendees with her Presidential address. The theme “Uniting, trusting and understanding Teachers” was given even more poignancy given the timing and circumstances. She made note that never before was there a time for the profession to stand up and demand to make change in education. She also made clear that we require a culture of trust. Delegates attending were also addressed by Mr Peter Weir, Education

**“We have seen no leadership, no engagement and our hard work has been disregarded.”**

Minister, and members of the Education Committee. The incoming President Mr Stephen McCord branded the Education Minister’s attitude towards his profession as ‘scandalous’. Addressing the UTU’s emergency online conference just after being installed as President, he blasted what he said was the Minister’s ‘lack of leadership’.

“When Peter Weir spoke to our conference today I didn’t hear any clarity. Unlike the Health Minister who stood up and said he would not allow any worker in the NHS to be put in danger, we feel we have been totally disregarded,” said Mr McCord. “We have seen no leadership, no engagement



and our hard work has been disregarded.” Some of the most impassionate speakers addressed the motion calling on mental health support for all who need it as soon as they need it, including teachers. Conference heard how they were often working late into the night and early hours taking calls and messages from parents and pupils about home schooling. One Co

Down principal said she had done door step food drops to families who rang her in desperation with nothing to eat, while another said her phone would regularly ping with messages from pupils at 3, 4 and 5am. A Belfast teacher said she took a call from a mum with two children who have additional



educational needs and who was also a key worker. “She was distraught but I managed to talk her through things.

All these instances though take their toll mentally on the teachers too who are coping with their own lockdown challenges, looking after older parents and maybe home schooling themselves,” she continued. In the first crisis motion of this extraordinary conference, delegates called for assurances on adequate resources and funding to ensure schools were adequately staffed, funded and resourced so no child would be adversely affected by the crisis as a result of being from a lower income family. In a third motion teachers also demanded clarity on what the new school term will look like regarding hygiene, social distancing, PPE, school meals, transport, pick up and drop off arrangements.



CARING FOR  
TEACHERS  
CARING FOR  
CHILDREN



**MOTIONS FOR SPECIAL CONFERENCE**  
**WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2020**

**1.** Conference notes with concern the significant disruption that has been caused to children’s education. Conference commends the efforts of schools to provide learning opportunities for their pupils and care for the children of Key Workers. Conference demands that the Education Minister and Education Authority give full assurance that schools will be fully financed, resourced and staffed when we return to school in the next academic year. Conference calls on the authorities to ensure that the health and well-being of both children and staff are prioritised.

**2.** Conference commends the work that has already started with stakeholders with regard to considering the safe return to school. Conference is also mindful of the trauma that “Lockdown” will have on school communities. Conference asks the Employing Authorities and Management to be cognisant of the mental

health of both pupils and teachers and ensure that active and easily reachable services are available before and during the return to school.

**3.** As we return to school, Conference wishes to place on record our serious concerns regarding what a new school teaching day will look like, how SEN issues and assessment procedures will be managed and what workload may be demanded of teachers. Conference firstly demands time for school leaders and teachers to establish routines and practices. This time should be included clearly in the time budget to allow for the adaptation and assessment of work as we introduce blended learning to pupils. Conference instructs the General Secretary, Officers and CEC to demand how the new agreement which sets out clearly the statutory terms and conditions of teachers should be fulfilled.



At the recent FIT (**Future In Teaching**) group AGM, **Jillian Jones** was elected as the new Vice Chairperson of the **Future In Teaching Group**

## NEW FUTURE IN TEACHING VICE CHAIRPERSON ELECTED

Jillian is currently a Key Stage 2 teacher (amongst wearing many other leadership hats) in Desertmartin Primary School and has been in this position for 4 years now. Here is a little bit about her teaching journey so far and how she became involved with the UTU.

After completing four very fun filled years at Stranmillis University College, I took an alternative path in securing my first teaching position. Rather than going straight onto the subbing register, I interviewed for and was offered a Stranmillis internship working for Barnardo's. This was an exciting and creative job, working in one school as one of their support teachers, whilst also juggling part-teaching a P7 class and helping parents find more creative and active ways to help their children learn. This also meant that I learnt to become adaptable in a school scenario, which in turn led me to my very first full-time teaching job in the same school with one of their P1 classes. When my year was completed, I joined the whole host of other teachers on the subbing register. Fast forward a couple of years and (after countless interviews), I was lucky enough to land my current permanent position.

I completed my alternate placement with the UTU, shadowing Jacquie and Avril to

many meetings. It was then I realised how much the UTU do for teachers across Northern Ireland. It was at this point that I knew that UTU was the union that I was going to join after I had finished university. I joined the FIT group after graduating and found it highly useful when applying for jobs (finding out exactly how you fill out those extremely long applications). The FIT meetings are informative and on a plus note, they're a great way to meet other teachers (even if it's not talking about school!) and get help where you need it. One thing I find most beneficial about the FIT group is that all the members in it are in the same position – needing help in some aspect of their teaching careers or wanting to share ideas that have helped them along the way. It's a group of teachers who you can come to ask all the awkward questions about schoolwork but it's also somewhere you can go to just listen to how others are dealing with the everyday difficulties of being a teacher.

Any beginning/recently qualified teachers, I hope to see you at our next meeting. Watch out for the invite and why not introduce yourself to Ashton (Chair) or myself! If you want to find out more information about FIT, contact UTU HQ and the office staff will pass on your details.

# Principals and School Leadership Forum

**TUESDAY  
10TH NOVEMBER  
3.30PM  
VIA ZOOM**

The UTU Principal and School Leadership Forum in November will focus on the evaluation of the Engage Programme with input from the Education and Training Inspectorate.



Registration is via the link by **Monday 9th November**. Webinar link will be emailed to those wishing to attend. Email [stephen.mccord@utu.edu](mailto:stephen.mccord@utu.edu) to register.



## WHY YOU COULD BE OWED A TAX REFUND FACT:

**1 in 3** employed taxpayers have paid too much tax in the past 4 years after being given the wrong tax code by HMRC. This happens because most taxpayers assume their employer automatically takes the right tax off their pay....but they don't. Your employer uses the tax code you are given to calculate the tax you need to pay. If your code is wrong, they will take the wrong amount of tax. HMRC makes you personally responsible for telling them if they have given you the wrong code. Only you can do this, not your employer. If HMRC has given you the wrong code, you have up to 4 years to tell them and they will give your money back. After 4 years, they get to keep your money!

As a member of the UTU you are able to get your tax codes checked by professional tax experts at The Tax Refund Company.

To apply and find out if you are due a refund [click here](#)

*If you do get a tax refund, then there is a fee to pay. For refunds up to £100, the fee is £38. For refunds over £100, the fee is 38p for each £1 you get back.*



## Early intervention ‘critical’ for autistic children in Northern Ireland

Without critical early interventions for children displaying autistic tendencies, Northern Ireland risks a lost generation. Jacquie White, General Secretary for the Ulster Teachers’ Union, which represents about 6,000 members, was speaking after comments made to Ministers on 21 October 2020 by parents and charities involved in the autism sector. They highlighted the challenges being faced by both children and their parents who, they said, had been left without support.

**“Without it we risk letting down and losing this generation of young people.”**

Now Northern Ireland teachers are calling for extra

funding to be used towards early interventions for these children.

“We have actively been following up with some



of these support services, especially regarding their role in schools,” said Ms White. “Children with autism have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, and now that schools are back teachers too are facing the full impact and fall-out from that among both children who have autism as well as their other pupils. “The situation regarding support for these children

before Covid was in crisis and now teachers have been left with even greater challenges. “The Minister has secured some funding and we would urge this should be used towards an increase in capacity for early intervention among nursery and foundation stage children who are awaiting assessment so they can get extra support. “Without these critical assessments, these children – as well as their families and their teachers - will be left struggling.

Without it we risk letting down and losing this generation of young people.



## Pond Park Primary Principal Honoured



***The Principal of Pond Park Primary School, Lisburn, Mr Geoffrey Cherry has recently been honoured in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List for services to Education and awarded the MBE.***

Geoffrey is the Principal of Pond Park Primary School and the pupils are regular competitors in the BBC School Choir of the Year and have been placed both as runners-up and winners in recent years. He is also a popular choirmaster and pianist in Belvoir Parish Church of Ireland.

“I was obviously delighted to receive the news a few weeks ago,” said Geoffrey. “It is an honour I accept on behalf of many people who have journeyed with me. I’ve been blessed to have worked with outstanding colleagues who have supported me professionally and personally throughout my career. I also value

the role of my school Governors who have selflessly invested so much time into Pond Park. I only ever wanted to teach and this award is dedicated too to the children I’ve met along the way.

Mr Cherry has also been involved in the music team in Belvoir Parish for almost 25 years. He said that “Belvoir is a wonderful, accepting community of people. I’m ‘in charge’ of the choir, a unique group of people who support each other in so many ways. Belvoir is such an exciting church to belong to and the music and worship is valued and appreciated by all.”

The Ulster Teachers’ Union sends our warmest congratulations to Mr Geoffrey MBE.

# Your new UTU Membership Plus Card has arrived! Activate it now to access over 1,500 savings.



**You should have already received your new UTU Membership Plus Card for 2020 - 2022.**

Make sure to activate it now while it's on your mind, and you will gain exclusive access to a range of 1,500+ exciting discounts.

## How to activate your new Membership Plus card...

- 1** Remove your Membership Plus card from the leaflet it arrived in and locate your Membership Plus card number, printed on the front of your Membership Plus card.
- 2** Visit the Membership Plus website [www.membershipplus.co.uk](http://www.membershipplus.co.uk) or the **Membership Plus app** which is free to download from the App Store for the iPhone or from Google Play for Android phones.
- 3** - **If you already have a Membership Plus account** from previous years, simply login to Membership Plus and click on **Update Card**, within Your Account.  
- **If this is your first time registering with Membership Plus**, simply click on **Register** and follow the on-screen instructions.

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Once your Membership Plus card is activated, you can start saving. With over 1,500 offers to enjoy, you can save up to 50% off when shopping, grabbing a takeaway, working out in the gym and much more.

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## Supermarket Discounts

Save on your groceries with a Shopping Card.



## Savings on your cravings

From fast food to fine dining, sit-in to take out.



*"It's a brilliant card, I love using it. Keep the offers coming!" - Megan, Lisburn.*

*"It's great to get the discounts so readily in participating shops." - Sarah, Belfast.*

## Useful Home savings

Furniture, decor, services, motoring and more.



## Discounted Days Out

Cinemas, parks, soft play, bowling and more.



## Shopping Cards from Membership Plus

To save with big brand retailers such as Tesco, Currys PC World and Topshop, you can purchase a discounted Shopping Card from Membership Plus.

**E.g. Spend £96 each week at Tesco with a discounted Shopping Card, save £200 annually!**

Simply choose a retailer through Membership Plus and follow the instructions to purchase a pre-paid Shopping Card to get your discount. You will receive your Shopping Card in the post or by email, then depending on the retailer, you can use the card either in-store, online or both to pay just like a debit card!



For full terms of use for each offer, please visit [www.membershipplus.co.uk](http://www.membershipplus.co.uk)

Offer details correct at time of publication. Please always check the website or app for full details of each offer before redeeming.



# Discounts on your doorstep...

With over 1,500 businesses across the country offering Membership Plus discount, you can find participating businesses locally, further afield and online. Please read the Terms & Conditions of each individual offer before visiting the venue to ensure you receive a warm welcome!

## Countrywide

Argento  
Clayton Hotels  
CMS Cinema Club  
Domino's Pizza  
DV8  
Ground Espresso Bars  
Halfords  
Maldron Hotels  
McAtamney's Traditional Butchers  
McDonald's  
Menarys  
Stena Line  
The National Trust  
The Perfume Shop  
The Zip Yard  
Uberfone  
Vogue

## Belfast

Airtastic Entertainment Centre	Jurys Inn
Armatile	Karine & Co
Better Leisure Centres	Make Up Pro Store
Bogart Menswear	Malone Lodge Hotel
Café Parisien	Optical Express
Clear Day Nurseries	PureGym
Clements Coffee	Q-Park
Corries Farm Butchers	Radisson Blu Hotel
Cotswold Outdoor	SD Kells
Crown Decorating Centres	Skechers
Europa Hotel	Stormont Hotel
Frankie & Benny's	The Pizza Co.
Funky Monkeys	The Spa at the Merchant Hotel
George Best Belfast City Airport	Titanic Hotel
Grand Central Hotel	wagamama
Gym Co. Belfast	We Are Vertigo
Joseph Rea Jewellers	Wee Care Day Nurseries

## Co. Antrim

Ballygally Castle, Larne  
Belfast International Airport  
Drumbo Park, Lisburn  
Frankie & Benny's, Lisburn  
Fratelli Ristorante, Ballymena  
Funky Monkeys, Antrim & Larne  
Hilton, Templepatrick  
Inn on the Coast, Portrush  
Lisburn Bowl, Lisburn  
Moes Grill, Antrim & Magherafelt  
PureGym, Lisburn  
Ruby's Bar, Antrim & Larne  
Skechers, Newtownabbey  
Spruce Meadows Farm, Lisburn  
Taboo Donuts, Ballymena  
The Junction, Antrim  
The Tides, Portrush

## Co. Down

Airtastic Entertainment Centre, Bangor	PureGym, Bangor & Newry
Armatile, Newry	Ruby's Bar, Dundonald
Aurora Leisure Complex, Bangor	SD Kells, Newtownards
Bogart Menswear, Newry	Skechers, Newry
Crown Decorating Centres, Bangor	Slieve Donard Resort, Newcastle
Culloden Estate and Spa, Holywood	Taboo Donuts, Bangor
Eddie Irvine Sports, Bangor	The Ivanhoe Inn, Carryduff
Funky Monkeys, Bangor	Tuk Tuk Asian Bistro, Newtownards
Moes Grill, Banbridge	wagamama, Dundonald

## Co. Derry/ Londonderry

Crown Decorating Centres, Coleraine	Philip White Tyres, Derry/Londonderry
Everglades Hotel, Derry/Londonderry	PureGym, Derry/Londonderry
JumpLanes, Coleraine	Riverside Fitness, Coleraine
Make Up Pro Store, Derry/Londonderry	Roe Park Resort, Limavady
Paolos Pizzas, Derry/Londonderry	Taboo Donuts, Derry/Londonderry

## Co. Tyrone

Barboni's, Omagh  
Barrontop Farm, Strabane  
Crown Decorating Centres, Dungannon  
Funky Monkeys, Dungannon  
Glenavon House Hotel, Cookstown  
Omagh Leisure Complex, Omagh  
The Ritz Multiplex, Cookstown  
Todds Leap Activity Centre, Ballygawley

## Co. Armagh

Airtastic Entertainment Centre, Armagh  
Armagh Planetarium, Armagh  
Armatile, Armagh  
Edenmore Country Club, Craigavon  
One Fitness, Armagh  
Rogers Toymaster, Portadown  
Skechers, Craigavon  
United Colors of Benetton, Craigavon

## Co. Fermanagh

Belleek Pottery Visitor Centre, Belleek  
Belmore Court & Motel, Enniskillen  
Enniskillen Golf Club, Enniskillen  
Killyhevlin Lakeside Hotel, Enniskillen  
Lakeland Karting, Kesh  
Lough Erne Resort, Enniskillen  
Lusty Beg Island, Kesh  
United Colors of Benetton, Enniskillen

! **COVID-19:** As many businesses have been affected by the ongoing pandemic, please double check that the business is open and operating before attempting to visit any venue listed on Membership Plus. !

**For full terms of use for each offer, please visit [www.membershipplus.co.uk](http://www.membershipplus.co.uk)**

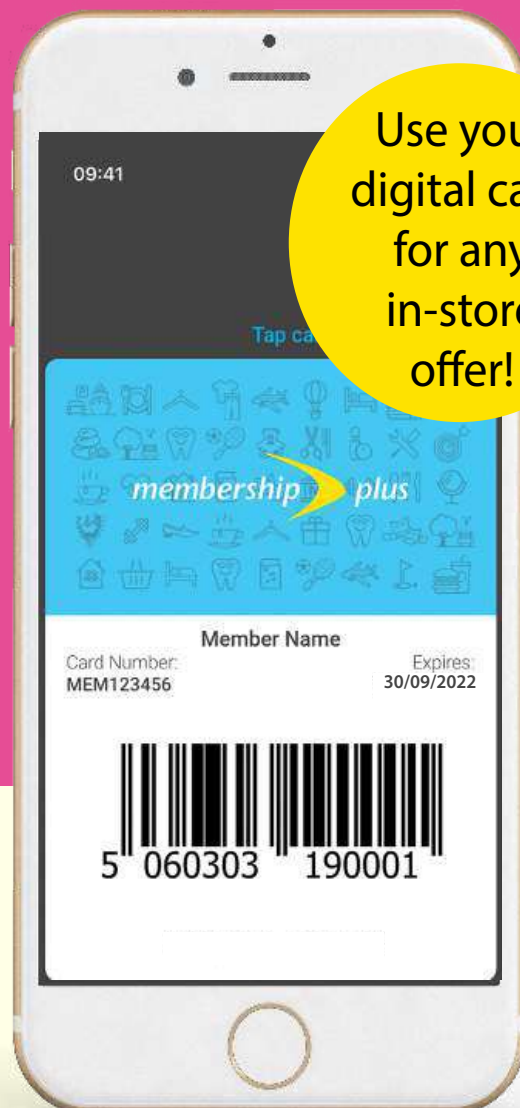
Offer details correct at time of publication. Please always check the website or app for full details of each offer before redeeming.

# Save on the go with the Membership Plus app

Download the Membership Plus app to your phone to continue saving while out and about. It is available for free from the App Store for the iPhone or Google Play for Android phones.



Use your digital card for any in-store offer!



**Forgot your Membership Plus card?**  
Simply present your **digital** Membership Plus card through the offer page on the app!

## Money back guarantee

In the unlikely event that you are refused discount in a Membership Plus venue, please contact us straight away. Providing you have attempted to redeem the offer correctly, we will be able to reimburse you for the discount.

## New offers added recently

During 2020, we have added more online offers than ever before to help you **safely** save money for you and your family. New offers are added to Membership Plus regularly so be sure to always be checking the website and app to never miss a new discount!



£1 trial box with SimplyCook, online



Save 15% at Corries Farm Butchers



20% off a Fitbit online



30% discount at Watch Shop, online



50% off your first HelloFresh box, online



Follow Membership Plus on Facebook to keep up to date with new offers, exciting competitions and more!

For full terms of use for each offer, please visit [www.membershipplus.co.uk](http://www.membershipplus.co.uk)

Offer details correct at time of publication. Please always check the website or app for full details of each offer before redeeming.

# Wellbeing at the **Hart** of everything they do!!!!

By Susan Thompson

**H**art Memorial Primary School is stepping out to ensure all children reach their physical and personal best in the year ahead. Hart Memorial has teamed up with Healthy Kidz, bringing real enthusiasm for physical activity, building core strength, co-ordination, agility, balance and speed. Now, in 2020, we are also bringing Healthy Mind lessons into the classroom as well.

Every class has three full outdoor PE sessions per week – regardless of weather: just get on the wet weather gear and go! – and an additional outdoor activity to maximise the time spent outdoors and the positive effect this has on mental and emotional health. The weekly sessions are based at each year group’s level of skill, and link to all aspects of the NI Physical Education Curriculum. The sessions are incredibly popular with all classes from Nursery to P7. Children love to see Healthy Kidz coaches around the school – Coach Steve and Assistant Coach Jamie are total celebrities in the Hart! This high level focus on physical and emotional wellbeing took off in response to educational research into the effects of the Covid lockdown on children and young people. Following their mission statement “In the Hart, the needs of our pupils are at the heart of every decision we make!” the Hart Memorial staff embraced the broadening of the Healthy Kidz approach with open arms.



*“In the Hart, the needs of our pupils are at the heart of every decision we make!”*



The new Healthy Kidz' Emotional Wellbeing website means all staff can access a wealth of resources and link the physical activity focus to all other areas of the statutory curriculum: PDMU, WAU, Literacy, Numeracy and more! The activity planning aspect of the Healthy Kidz website has ensured teachers have time to deliver inspiring lessons which create enthusiasm and excitement among pupils. The range of activities that can be delivered in the classroom require minimal equipment and no physical contact between pupils. Staff and children work together to ensure all lessons are recorded on the bespoke Healthy Kidz app and are linked to physical homework activities. Certificates for all children taking part plus additional rewards and bonus prizes are distributed each half term.

An additional benefit of



Healthy Kidz is that it has enabled P6 and P7 children to enjoy after school clubs for each class during September and October, at a time when most schools have had to suspend their extra-curricular activities. This will be rolled out to different classes during each term of the school year!

The pupils at Hart Memorial Primary School, Portadown, are certainly lucky as well as healthy kids!!

**For more information contact**  
paul@healthy-kidz.com  
Tel: 07708 519 249  
[www.healthy-kidz.com](http://www.healthy-kidz.com)

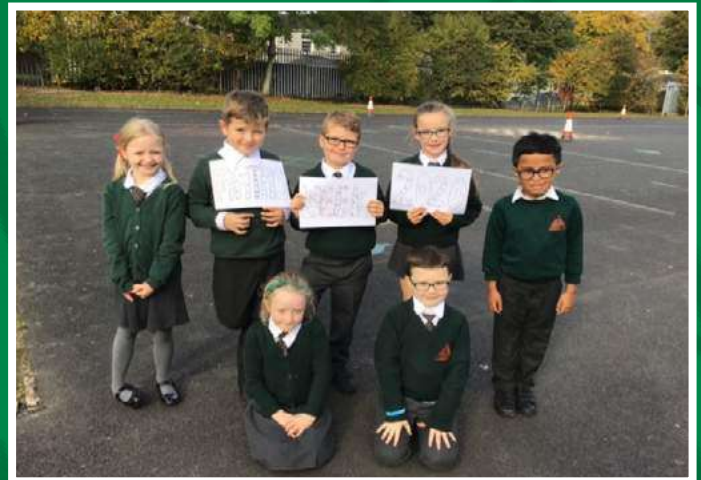
# P4 at Drumgor, make UK top 4!

**M**aths week was celebrated at Drumgor Primary School, Craigavon, from the 12-16th October 2020. It was a whole-school effort throughout the week, celebrating the importance of maths in our everyday lives. Each class participated in a range of daily fun numeracy activities; ranging from taking part in an online nationwide Mega Maths Quiz, to creating a giant bar chart with autumn leaves. Indeed, many classes brought their learning outdoors, taking advantage of our outdoor space including a 4G football pitch which we are very fortunate to have.



A whole-school Mathletics competition, with a promise of prizes, brought out a competitive edge in the pupils (a.k.a. "mathletes") which is nothing new at Drumgor Primary (staff are not exempt from competitive spirit either). Adding to our enjoyment of the week (you'll pardon that pun as well as these which follow), and without taking away from all their competitors, we had a P4

*"Pupils may all be sitting in rows and confined to class bubbles but Drumgor Primary strive to continue to have a warm, caring and stimulating environment in which all of our children feel safe, loved and inspired."*



and a P5 class finish 4th and 6th in the UK, respectively! 'Sum' achievement, eh?

Pupils may all be sitting in rows and confined to class bubbles but Drumgor Primary strive to continue to have a warm, caring and stimulating environment in which all of our children feel safe, loved and inspired. Good luck to all of our colleagues and their pupils for the term and year ahead. We will get through this!

# Mathletes of Drumgor



# 6 most useful apps for Teachers and Parents

The Covid-19 situation has led to teachers thinking outside the norms and using technology in the classroom and on phones as a teaching aide. Here we list some of the apps available to teachers, pupils and parents across Northern Ireland.

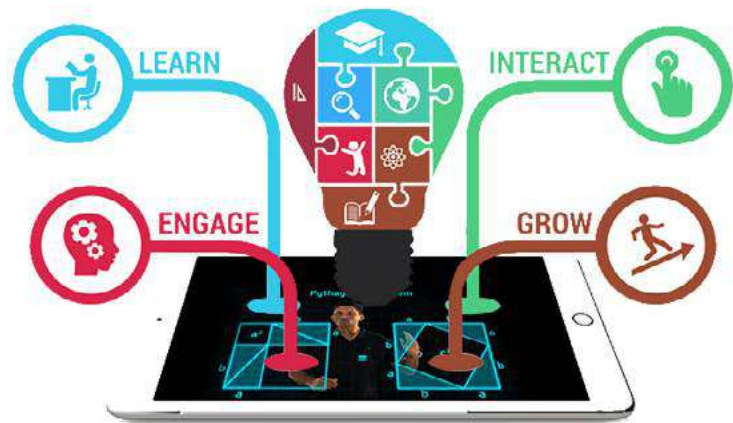
**SIMS Parent** - With SIMS Parent, parents and guardians can see all their children's data even if they attend different schools. It allows Parents to track their child's progress by viewing assessment results, attendance, behaviour: good and bad, and also enables them to view school reports. Parents can also update their information quickly. Alerts are also able to be sent to all who are using it. See the information needed to understand your children's education and their overall



**Satchel: ONE (previously Show My Homework)** - across the UK around 1 in 3 secondary schools are now using this software. It allows teachers, parents and pupils to keep tabs on homework, timetables, behaviour and even detentions! For teachers it is easy to upload homework activities. Grading and comments can be added and both the pupil and parent can keep track of hand in dates and can be informed of any that are missed!!



**StopCovidNI** - If you are 11 or older and live in Northern Ireland you can use this HSC contact tracing app. By using it you will help stop or slow the spread of



coronavirus. How does the app work? If you are in close contact with an app user who has told their app that they have COVID-19, you will get an alert from this app. You won't know who, when or where.

**SeeSaw Class** - Seesaw is a digital portfolio that inspires your pupils to do their best work and saves on teacher time. It's creative tools encourage student engagement. It also allows pupils to upload their work and for the teacher to respond digitally – meaning less of those books need to be trailed from school to home and back!



**Teach your Monster to Read**  
This is a groundbreaking game that makes learning to read fun. It covers everything from letters and sounds to reading full sentences. Designed in collaboration with leading academics. The island king and monster have really captured children's imaginations and it is wonderful to see reluctant readers begin to engage!



**iDoceo**  
This is an app (can be a little costly at around £12.99) that can be used like a grade book for your classes. It is also a planner and diary and can also be used to keep seating plans of the class. When using the grade book you can add columns and edit the data. It does allow you to ditch some of the paper needed!





**SDM** SHEAN DICKSON MERRICK  
SOLICITORS

*For peace of mind, we would encourage everyone to have both a Will and an EPA in place.*

Many clients still ask if there is any real need to make a Will nowadays, particularly if they are not especially wealthy. The answer is yes for several reasons.

The obvious reason for making a Will is that you can be assured that those you want to inherit your estate, your beneficiaries, will do so. There are also other considerations however such as being able to choose your Executors, so that the person or persons who carry out your wishes after your death will be people in whom you have trust and who are capable of doing so. There are also opportunities to take steps to mitigate the Inheritance Tax on your estate by considering possible tax reliefs or exemptions in a carefully drafted Will.

Dying without a Will is known as an Intestacy and the rules which will apply in this situation are set down by Statute and dictate who will be appointed as your Executors and who will benefit from your estate.

Also, with dementia, Alzheimer's and other such conditions on the increase, the importance of having an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA) in place cannot be over emphasised. This will ensure that if you lose mental capacity to deal with your financial affairs, you have appointed a suitable person to do this on your behalf. The lack of such an appointment means that an application may have to be made to the Office of Care and Protection in the High Court for a Controller to be appointed. This process takes longer, is more costly and involves ongoing oversight by the Court.

**Shean Dickson Merrick is currently offering UTU members a fixed fee offer to those wishing to avail of this service. Please contact our Probate and Wills specialist, Clare Walsh on 028 9032 6878 or by email to [clarew@shean-dickson-merrick.com](mailto:clarew@shean-dickson-merrick.com) to discuss.**



**Nursery**

**Teachers' Forum**

**THURSDAY  
12TH NOVEMBER**

**3.15PM TO 4.30PM**

Nursery Principals and Teachers continue to experience challenging circumstances at this time. The UTU are hosting a question and answer session for members to address your concerns regarding H&S and other concerns regarding Nursery settings directly to EA.



Registration is via the link by **Wednesday 11th November**.

Webinar link will be emailed to those wishing to attend.

Email [stephen.mccord@utu.edu](mailto:stephen.mccord@utu.edu) to register.







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**D**iane Cusick works supporting training Early Childhood teachers in Zambia. The Ulster Teachers' Union,

through our International Organisation Committee, have contributed to Diane's work previously when she was in Malawi and currently in Zambia. Contributions have been made to purchase stationery, running water and practical resources for the children.

Diane moved to Zambia in 2016 to set up an early childhood development programme for CCAP Synod of Zambia. The Covid-19 has proved challenging for schools across Zambia.

Schools have opened in Zambia on 21 September!!! It was a very exciting but tense time in many ways as schools were given only a weekend's notice to open! However, the Ministry of Education have given us some guidelines to follow, and this includes only 2 hours daily for the Early Childhood class. Classes are restricted to having 23 in a class – of course some of our classes would usually have as many as 70 or 80 in the ECD class. This means either the teacher has classes on alternate days with 23 in each class or has three or four classes per day! Think of the implications – cleaning each class and all the play materials between each session – no classroom assistants here! Challenges of schools having no soap or in some cases no water...well, we just have to cope as best we can. Also, in ECD in Zambia it is very education based with little focus on play. The Government has said that during the 2 hours each day the children must only do language and maths, which is all rote learning! I am trying to encourage our teachers to spend the 2 hours doing numeracy and literacy through

# The new normal for teachers and children in Zambia

play so that at least the children enjoy the experience!

I was making teachers manuals which are almost finished but due to covid-19 work was put on hold. These manuals give teachers ideas for making activities for the children using locally available resources! I intend to have a workshop with teachers from Southern Zambia and Lusaka over the December holidays if Covid-19 stays away from us here!

I am currently in Livingstone (Victoria Falls home) visiting our ECD centre there and chatting with issues teachers are facing. I will be moving tomorrow to Monze and Mazabuka on Wednesday 28 October to visit our centres there before returning to Lusaka.

So today I am at one of our centres - only 10 children so far (as school opened mid-month, parents could not pay school fees. We anticipate



*“ Teachers are not wearing face masks there is a hand washing bucket for the children, no hand sanitizers or anything like that! But the kids are happy and glad to be back - the teachers are trying their best ”*

more children next month). It's 38 degrees here today - no aircon and tin roofs on the buildings! Sometimes hot can be too hot!!

Teachers are not wearing face masks (even though Gov say they should), there is a hand washing bucket for the children (as was always the case), no hand sanitizers or anything like that! But the kids are happy and glad to be back - the teachers are trying their best. I spent time helping teachers to

make some pre-maths activities out of rubbish while the kids played with other rubbish and wood offcuts that I brought with me. I was given a donation by a local bookshop of books which are not that suitable for our kids culturally, but I think they



gave them away because they were not selling (for the same reason!) So now at least this centre has a few books!

I am so grateful for the kind donation that UTU continue to give me for my work.

**Keep updated with my life and work by checking my blog**

[www.dianecusick.blogspot.com](http://www.dianecusick.blogspot.com)



# ‘WE NEED TO CONTINUE THE FIGHT, **FOOD POVERTY** FOR OUR CHILDREN IS A REAL ISSUE’



**A**s we go to press Mr Peter Weir, Education Minister, and the Stormont Executive have decided to extend Free School Meal payments to cover the Halloween break. UTU President Stephen McCord said, “this is a welcomed initiative, especially at the time when increased numbers of families

are struggling due to the Covid-19 crisis and the current mini lockdown.”

With nearly a quarter (24 %) of children across Northern Ireland living in poverty according to research published on 14 October 2020 by the End Child Poverty coalition. In their analysis which now factors in housing costs it is estimated that more than 107,000 children are living below the breadline, with overall numbers showing no signs of improvement. The study emphasises the scale of the challenge faced by the NI Executive if it is to realise its ambition to build back better and level up opportunities for children across Northern Ireland. In the research by Loughborough University it shows that before the pandemic, the rate of child poverty in the NI had flatlined, with little change over the five years up to March 2019. Campaigners are warning that many more families could be swept into poverty once the full effect of COVID-19 is felt.

In May 2020, the Department for Communities published child poverty figures for Northern Ireland which confirmed that more children live in poverty here than in Scotland.

Celine Mcstravick, Director of the National Children’s Bureau, a leading member of the End Child Poverty coalition, said: “None of this is any surprise to teachers as sadly we daily see the evidence in front of us when we hear children are coming to school hungry, with holes in their shoes, unable to afford to go on school trips, all the things everyone else takes for granted.

“As a teacher it’s hard to look at and we have always tried to help these families whenever we can but with so many other financial issues pressing on schools it’s becoming increasingly difficult and so it is these children who are suffering most.

“Families who are managing might find it hard to believe that pupils in their children’s class are coming to school hungry in this day and age but it is a fact. “It is often much more complicated than that family simply not having enough money to feed the children. There may be other issues at work too – mental health issues, an invalid parent, alcohol or domestic abuse.

“The result is that it’s the children who often bear the brunt. They’re not receiving the nourishment they need to thrive and learn and so the vicious circle

threatens to repeat itself.

“Teachers can only do so much. We can’t fight food poverty alone and we would ask for the funders to ensure this most vulnerable section of our school communities receives the support they deserve.” The England and Manchester United footballer Marcus Rashford has called for the UK Government to provide free school meals during the holiday period



Marcus Rashford  
@MarcusRashford  
An Open Letter to all MPs in Parliament...  
#maketheUtun  
Please retweet and tag your local MPs

to the front of the National Press. Having recently been awarded an MBE he continues to campaign for over 1.5 million children to be given vouchers to provide for them during school closures.

Stephen concluding by saying that “it will be important that our executive continues to consider the many struggling families and children across the Province as we enter the Winter months. It will be important that those in real need continue to be supported during the Christmas and any further lockdown periods. As teachers many of us have seen the real impact over hungry children in our classrooms. The Covid-19 crisis must be a chance to re-evaluate our values and ensure that no child goes hungry one day during their holiday.”

## About End Child Poverty

End Child Poverty is a coalition of organisations from civic society including children’s charities, child welfare organisations, social justice groups, faith groups, trade unions and others, united in our vision of a UK free of child poverty. For more details visit: [www.endchildpoverty.org.uk](http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk)



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# TIME BUDGET FAQs

***The April 2020 Agreement between management and trade union side of the Teachers' Negotiating Committee sets out and clarifies the Teachers' Terms and Conditions (Jordanstown Agreement) and a series of measures to address teacher concerns about workload and accountability and to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system.***

**Who is responsible for determining a teacher's time budget?**

The Principal is responsible for determining a time budget for each member of the teaching staff, giving due regard to the individual responsibilities of each teacher. While the spirit of the agreement is that Principals and each member of staff should seek to reach agreement on a teacher's time budget, teachers will not have freedom to determine how their time is utilised.

Principals have been supported and have taken part in webinars, via the EA, on planning and on the allocation of the 1265 hours. Due to a delay in training and with agreement between management and trade union side (NITC) the time budgets are expected to be completed by 30 October 2020.

**I am a part time primary teacher working 3 days per week. How will my directed time be worked out?**

Directed Time for a part-time teacher should be calculated on a pro-rata basis. In your case you are entitled to 75.9 hours PPA time. Your class contact time would be 15 hours per week, 3/5 of the 25 hour full time equivalent. Your supervision of morning, break-time and after-school should also take into account your part-time hours and should be reflected in your time budget.

**I am a Head of Year and am expected to take assembly once per week. Is this included in my time-budget?**

Leading an assembly is considered to be class contact time in the time budget. For other teachers who are attending it would be included in their time budget but not as class contact time.

**I haven't seen my time budget for 2020-2021. What should I do next?**

This has been an exceptionally busy start to the school year, for both Principals and teachers. The EA were also delayed in giving training to school leaders. Agreement was reached that in these circumstances time budgets could be delayed until the 30 October 2020. If you still haven't received one after this date you should speak to your UTU school representative and write to or email

your Principal asking for a copy of the time budget. If after 5 days you still haven't received it please contact UTU at [office@utu.edu](mailto:office@utu.edu)

**I have a Teaching Allowance as a Key Stage Co-ordinator. I continue to teach the same number of hours as other members of staff in school. Am I entitled to extra time?**

Some teachers will be in receipt of Teaching Allowances or Special Educational Needs Allowances for specific duties. These duties must also be included within the time budget of 1265 hours. You should speak to your principal and ensure that you have been allocated adequate time to carry out your duties. In some cases this may mean you have a reduction in teaching time, but this does not necessarily apply in all schools as circumstances will differ from school to school.

**I have been asked to carry out a lunch duty one day a week. Must I do this?**

All teachers are required to have a lunch break of at least 30 minutes. Lunch breaks are unpaid and do not count towards Directed Time. With lunch duty, we would need to clarify if you are being asked to supervise pupils and in what circumstances. For example if you are supervising your class down to the canteen and helping as they queue for their lunch, this must be included in your time budget. You would then be entitled to your 30 min lunch break. If you wish to supervise over lunch this is a separate paid contract, and you must still have a 30 min break between 12 and 2pm.

**I am a vice-principal and have been told that I do not require a time budget. This is unfair. What should I do?**

The UTU will be addressing the workload of Principals and Vice-Principals through the reviews that have been established in the April 2020 agreement between management side and teacher side. In the meantime you should discuss the duties that you undertake with your Principal. Ensure that you have been allocated adequate time to carry out your duties but also ensure that your own health and well being and work-life balance have been considered.

**I have contingency time on my time budget. What is this for?**

Contingency time is the time left following the allocation of Directed Time commitment. It is recommended that each teacher's time budget includes an element of contingency time to ensure there is flexibility to accommodate situations that may arise and are unaccounted for within the time budget.

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