

MULLAVILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL



46 Mullavilly Road
Tandragee
Co Armagh
BT62 2LX

Tel/Fax: 028 38840911
E-mail: lmclimonds066@c2kni.net
Website: www.mullavillyps.co.uk

Principal: Mrs L McClimonds, B.Ed, PG CET, PQH

07 March 2018

Dear Parent/Guardian

Funding Crisis

In January, our school, along with 631 other schools in Northern Ireland received a letter informing us that our budget for 2017/18 has “not been approved”.

Despite always having a “carry over” in recent years it is predicted that because of budget cuts we will have a deficit at the end of this school year. We are not alone and the majority of schools in Northern Ireland are facing the same issues.

School budgets are allocated using different criteria. There is a basic amount for each child in school and then other factors provide additional monies, such as:

- Number of children taking Free School Meals
- Number of Statemented children
- Number of Newcomer families.

Due to having a very low percentage of families/children in these categories we are relying on the basic funding for our school. More and more pressures are being placed on schools to operate with limited financial resources.

Our situation is heightened even more so by our current growth in numbers and the Department of Education’s decision to prevent further growth. We currently have an enrolment number of 125, this is number of pupils that DENI allows our school to accommodate. In recent years we have been allowed to grow to 146. In December 2015 the Board of Governors submitted a Development Proposal to the Education Authority requesting an increase in our enrolment number due to the growth in the Laurelvale/Mullavilly area and the building of new housing developments which are attracting more families.

In Spring 2016 to Education Authority issued new guidelines whereby no School Development Proposals were being published and instead have sought to follow a Strategic Area Plan which considers all schools in the local area and the availability to accommodate children in schools which are located near to each other.

As a result of this we have been capped at our current number and are being prohibited from accepting children and families who live in the local area and for whom Mullavilly Primary School is their nearest school. We currently have a waiting list and most of these families live between 0.1 and 0.7 miles from our school.

The Education Authority’s justification for this is that the Department of Education deem two miles to be a reasonable travelling distance for a child of primary school age, and because there is a neighbouring school which has spaces within that distance, those spaces should be filled before allowing the growth of Mullavilly Primary School. These issues have been raised with the Education Authority and the Governors are continuing to pursue this matter.

This has a knock on effect on our budget, as if we were able to accept the pupils on our waiting list we could potentially have an additional £20,000 added.

Despite recent budget cuts Mullavilly Primary School has continued to maintain the standard of education for our children which we have always strived to provide and within the last four years have grown from being a five teacher school to a seven teacher school thus continuing with small class sizes, classroom assistant support and learning support teacher.

Unfortunately, this will be not able to continue with the current financial situation. There is simply not enough money.

Whilst other schools within Northern Ireland are having to take actions such as reducing staffing levels (both teaching and non-teaching) thereby enforcing staff redundancies, increasing class sizes thereby forcing schools to have composite classes, reducing or removing Learning Support teaching thereby disadvantaging children with Special Educational Needs. Parents are being asked more and more to provide financial help to ensure that the school can provide the basic level of teaching. The amount of special resources and educational school trips are having to be curtailed due to lack of funding.

We do not believe that we should be forced to take such measures.

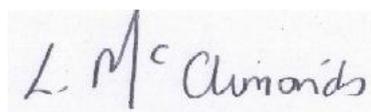
It is vital that sufficient funds are given to school budgets to enable the delivery of the continued high standard but throughout Northern Ireland.

How can Parents support our school? There are many different ways in which you can help:-

- Write to you MP/MLA. You can use the template letter from the NAHT Union (<http://www.naht.org.uk/our-priorities/school-funding-in-crisis/school-funding-in-crisis-northern-ireland/>)
- Share your views on Social Media at to why more money needs to be invested in education using the hashtag #FundNISchools
- Continue to support fundraising events in our school.

The current financial situation is of grave concern to myself and the Governors and I hope I have the support of our school community in trying to change the way funding is allocated to schools in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L. A. McClimonds". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'M' and 'C'.

L A McClimonds (Mrs)
Principal