

Balbardie Primary School

September 2018

NEWSLETTER NO 1



Achieve, Believe, Celebrate

Dear Parents, Grandparents, Carers and Friends,

Welcome to the new school year. I hope you have all had a restful and enjoyable summer holiday with family and friends. Although we have only been back in school for 3 weeks, the staff and pupils have settled back in very well and we are ready for the successes and challenges of another school year.

As you will know, there have been a number of changes to the staff this year. I myself have only been a member of Balbardie school community for a few weeks and am truly delighted to be here. Mr Kevin McCabe is our new Depute Headteacher and joined us in August. Mrs Katy Leamy is our other new Depute and knows the school well as she has worked in Balbardie for a number of years. We are hoping to get to know the children as quickly as possible and are looking forward to meeting families and getting to know the routines in school in order to ensure our transition into Balbardie is as smooth as possible. We also welcome Mr Blair and Ms Cowan to the teaching staff team and Mrs Sharon Allen as our new Family Link Worker. Mrs Allen will be working in Balbardie to help make extended links with families and to support them in any way she can. She will hopefully be coordinating a number of parent support groups and will be able to support our families through the school holidays as well.

I would also like to extend a big Balbardie welcome to the new Primary 1 children and their families! They are all settling in ex-

trremely well and I have been truly impressed by how ready and prepared for starting school they seem to be. It is a huge milestone for all families when a child starts school and I hope our P1 families are adjusting as well as their children. We also welcome 2 new families to the school—Leah, Christopher and Scott.

We have also been delighted to welcome the children, staff and parents of Bathgate Early Years Centre to our extended community and I am very much looking forward to working with them.

In our first Newsletter of the year, there will be important information about the new school website, how our assemblies will work this year, news about the progress of the building work in school and the annual school calendar. It is my intention to send out 2 newsletters every term but all news and school updates will also be available very regularly on the school website, our school blog, and also via Twitter.

I look forward to working closely with all of you this year. With thanks as always for your support for the children and the school,

Mrs Margaret Johns

HEADTEACHER

Recent Parental Concerns

It has been brought to my attention that there have been a couple of recent parental concerns that have caused some worry amongst members of our school community. I would most sincerely like to allay those concerns.

There has been no change of policy since the beginning of the school year regarding children being allowed to go the toilet. It is the school's policy, as always, to allow all children access to toilet facilities whenever necessary. There has been one small change at break times and lunch times as we now have a member of school staff supervising the toilet corridor. This is to ensure that all children, particularly our youngest, can go to the toilet knowing that there is a member of staff available should they need one. It also means that the toilets stay clean and hygienic for all pupils.

Also, if the children chose to do so, they can eat their lunches outside. Please be assured that under no circumstances are they forced to eat outside and, if the weather is wet, children immediately have access to inside facilities. They may have to wait a longer time to eat inside as the dining room staff have a large number of children to seat in the time allowed.

I would wish to reassure all families that we actively teach children about their rights and we would never, therefore, deliberately deny them those rights. If you have any concerns as a parent, as always please contact the school and a member of staff will deal with your concerns as quickly as possible.



Playground News

We would like to find out your views about our current playground arrangements. Following discussions with the Parent Council and school staff, I would be grateful if parents could respond to the survey which is detailed below.

The Survey asks parents their views on whether they would agree with a children-only playground in the morning before the start of the school day. We are asking your views for a number of reasons. The playground is a very busy and crowded place in the morning as parents are waiting to see their children safely into school. This has become more pronounced as the building work means that there are extra children in the back playground every day.

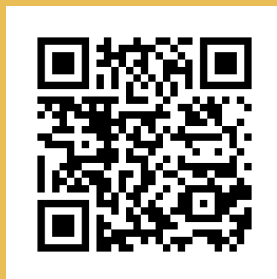
If we had a children-only playground in the morning, supervisors would man the gates from 8.30am to ensure that all children are dropped off with a member of school staff at the school gates and no child can then exit the playground. We are also hoping, if we agree to go ahead with this, that it will ease congestion in the roads around the school as parents will drop off and be able to leave without the need for longer parking periods. Arrangements for collecting children at the end of the school day would remain the same as staff can ensure they hand over all children as they do at the moment.

I would like to stress this is a matter for consultation and it is important to us to take into account all parental views before a final decision is made. Please take time to complete the survey via the link below and make your views known. It will only take a few seconds.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3JJM5DL>

School Website

<http://balbardieprimary.westlothian.org.uk>



Our new school website is now ready for parents and carers to access. It is the official source of all information about the school and will be updated very regularly. Included on the website is all the information that current parents and prospective parents will need.

The website also has links to our school Blog and to our Twitter account—both of which will also be updated regularly. The Parent Council will also have a number of pages which will be regularly updated.

Please take the time to have a look and if you have any suggestions for the website, please get in touch with the school office.

The web address is above or if you scan the QR code, you will access the website on your phone. We will give all pupils a sticky label with the website address and the QR code this week for you to use at home.

Annual Calendar

Some dates for your diary

13.9.18	Meet the Teacher evening, 6.30pm
17.9.18 & 18.9.18	Pupil holiday
19.9.18 to 12.9.18	Childsmile Week for P1 to P4
28.9.18	Macmillan Coffee Morning
9.10.18	Parent Consultations, 3.30 to 5.30pm
10.10.18	Parent Consultations, 6.30 to 8.30pm
12.10.18	Church Service, 9.30
15.10.18 to 22.10.18	Pupil holiday
23.10.18	New school lunch menu
26.10.18	P7 assembly—parents of both classes, 9.15am
7.11.18	Flu vaccinations, P1 to P7
8.11.18	Parent Council, 7.00pm
13.11.18	P7a to Lady Haig Poppy Factory
14.11.18	P7b to Lady Haig Poppy Factory
7.12.18	P6 assembly—parents of both classes, 9.15am
12.12.18	Nativity performance, 2.30pm
13.12.18	Nativity performance, 9.30am
20.12.18	Panto in school—Dick Whittington
21.12.18	Church Service, 9.30am
24.12.18 to 4.1.19	Pupil holiday
7.1.19	All back
17.1.19	Parent Council, 7.00pm
21.1.19	Burns Competition
24.1.19	P7 Burns Supper, 1.30pm
25.1.19	P5 Assembly—parents of both classes, 9.15am
18.2.19 & 19.2.19	Pupil holiday
22.2.19	P4 Assembly—parents of both classes, 9.15am
4.3.19	School photographs
18.3.19	P7 Residential to Dounans
21.3.19	Parent Council, 7.00pm
22.3.19	P3 Assembly—parents of both classes, 9.15am
25.3.19	P5 Residential to Lowport
2.4.19	Parent consultations, 3.30 to 5.30pm
3.4.19	Parent consultations, 6.30 to 8.30pm

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES

Our school assemblies are now every Friday morning. We will be alternating between Infant and Upper School assemblies and also having one 'Celebrate!' assembly every month.

During our Celebrate assembly, we will be taking extra time to reward the wonderful behavior, the amazing achievements and fantastic learning of our children. Children can earn a certificate to reflect their hard work and the our school Values—Respect, Fairness, Trust and Passion.

Look out on Twitter for our regular Friday updates outlining all awards and successes.

As before, parents will be invited in to our class assemblies and those dates are listed in our Calendar.

Parent Consultations

Our next Parent Consultation sessions will be on 10th and 11th of October. In line with other schools in West Lothian, the school will be using a new on-line booking system for parents to book a slot to discuss learning and progress with class teachers.

Mrs White will send out information to all parents on how to book over the next couple of weeks.



A Few Reminders

Dogs in the Playground

I would ask all parents to remember that, in line with West Lothian Council policy, there are no dogs allowed in the playground.

Parking around the School

Please take care when you are parking in order to collect your children. The space opposite the front of the school should be clear for the school buses to collect our children.

School Extension

The current building work taking place at the side of the school is providing us with a new entrance. The work is scheduled to be completed before Christmas and work so far has been going well.

When the new school entrance is open, the current entrance will be used only as a fire exit and all access to the building will be at the side next to the Memorial Garden.

Parents Information Evening

All parents are welcome to come and meet new class teachers this Thursday 13th September at 6.30pm. Each member of staff will complete a short introduction and chat for half an hour and parents can then visit any other teachers they need to meet.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

This year's Macmillan Coffee Morning will be held on Friday 28th September. The timetable for classes and parents will be sent out shortly. Tickets are available for adults at the school office. All children will automatically receive a ticket.

As always, I offer all parents my thanks for your continued support for the children and the school community.

Margaret Johns, HT

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