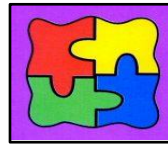




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Please reply to:

Head Teacher: Mrs Margaret Johns

1st May 2020

Newsletter Update



Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

I hope you are all well and managing to stay safe and strong during this time. I am happy to inform you that the staff are well and, as you will know, we are working from home to support learning and well-being as best we can in the current circumstances.

I'd like to use this newsletter to update you on school activities and, hopefully, reassure you that whilst we are not able to meet in school, our Balbardie children and families are never far from our thoughts!

Learning at Home



We can see from Teams for Primary 4 to 7 and from the feedback we are getting from families of pupils in Primary 1 to Primary 3, that most of our children are accessing learning that class teachers are preparing on line. We are seeing real engagement and I'd like to thank parents most sincerely for facilitating this. I know it is not easy to do when you may also be working from home and managing many other challenges. We would be delighted if all of our pupils were able to access home learning and if there is anything further we can do to support this, we are happy to help. If you are having trouble with technology, please get in touch by email or through Teams and we will do our best to find a solution.

I am also conscious that some pupils may need more materials to work with – paper, jotters, pens, pencils etc. From Monday morning, there will be a box just inside the main school door with small bags of resources. Please collect one for your child if you need it – to make sure there are enough for all, please only take one for each learner. Also, over the next couple of weeks our Family Link Work, Courtney, will be making up small boxes with fun family games and activities – bubbles, jigsaws, craft materials, playing cards and board games. We will distribute these to identified families but please let us know by email if you would like to be considered for one.

We are contacting families on an ongoing basis to make sure that all are well, so please don't be surprised if your child's class teacher gives you a call to ask if home learning is working for you. This will appear as a 'withheld' number on your phone which can stop some people from answering. Please answer as we would really like to know how you are all doing. As we are now in a better routine with remote learning, you will know that class teachers check in with daily activities on Teams in the morning and will check on learners later in the day. They are available to answer questions from pupils but will not be on line constantly while they are completing other work duties including report-writing or volunteering in the Key Worker Hubs. Like some of you, they are also juggling working from home with care for their own young children. However, please be reassured that they are committed to responding to learning queries as soon as they can.

There will not be any on line learning activity on the days that have already been identified by West Lothian Council as a holiday. I have added a short calendar at the end of this newsletter.

Transition Arrangements

Nursery children that have been granted a place for Primary 1 in Balbardie and their parents will receive an email this week outlining what our plans for transition are. We have put together a programme which will allow our new P1 pupils and their parents to get to know the school building, their new class teachers and complete some fun activities on line with the staff. This will all be happening over the next few weeks and we hope will allow us to get to know our new pupils before they start Primary 1.

Our Primary 7 pupils are all about to start transition to their new secondary school. Again, this will be done on line and secondary schools have already planned what that will look like. Again, I know that they intend to be in touch with families next week and begin that communication.

The overall class structure for next year hasn't been decided yet. I will inform parents of classes and teachers as soon as I have the information.

I should stress that we are all planning transition with the certain knowledge that we must be as flexible as possible moving forward. Please bear in mind that we do not yet know when we will return to learning within school or what that return will look like.

Reports

Class teachers are all currently working on end-of-year reports. We intend that these reports will be posted out during the week beginning Monday 25th May. It is important that we give you, as parents, an opportunity to discuss the comments within the report with the class teacher. This will have to be completed by phone or email within the first 2 weeks of June and I will keep you posted about how we will support this contact.

Lunches

Hot and cold lunches continue to be distributed from the school Monday to Friday between 12.00 and 1.30. This service will continue during any holidays. If your child is eligible for a free school meal – that is all P1 to P3 pupils or those in receipt of free school meals from P4 to P7 – please collect from the school.



Dates for May and June

Thursday 30 th April and Friday 1 st May	New Primary 1 letters to parents
Monday 4 th May	School holiday – no online learning Lunch provision in school
Tuesday 5 th May	Inset day – no online learning Lunch provision in school
Friday 8 th May	9.30am On line assembly
Friday 22 nd May	9.30am On line assembly
Week beginning Monday 25 th May	Pupil reports to parents
Monday 8 th June	School holiday Lunch provision in school