



Laurencekirk School Newsletter



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<http://laurencekirk.aberdeenshire.sch.uk>

September 2015

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Welcome to our new school year

by Mr Boyd

With a mixed weather summer I hope your plans were to spend time ducking and diving the local showers. April showers in August continue as we return to school.

The children and staff were excited to be back and the work undertaken by staff during their holidays was out for show on the first day.

Staff worked hard to prepare classrooms and cleaning out ready for their new cohort.

Whilst the rooms were being prepared the Senior Management Team were ensuring that all classes were staffed. This resulted in us missing many days of our holiday interviewing to ensure that as little time as possible between teachers was present.

Questions about teachers leaving.

A few questions have been asked about the timing of notifying parents regarding change of teachers. As was promised we alerted classes as soon as we were able. It should be noted that a teacher's post continues to be his/her's until they resign. A lot of teachers choose not to do this until they have received a letter in writing about their new post and this can be delayed by the compulsory

checks that the profession require. Rest assured that the staff at the school work hard to ensure that your child gets the best education and that information is provided as soon as we can, even if that means giving up part of our holidays.

Houses

The children are very excited about the house they are in. We are on a trial this year and the system is constantly evolving. Thank you to all parents who support us with putting the badge on their child- we are looking at wrist bands for next year but please stick with the badges, the commitment by the children is worth it. Staff now know their house and there is a great buzz with children and staff talking about it.

Bounce Back

As part of our relaunch of the houses all children will attend an assembly where a life target will be set – e.g. honesty. If any child is "caught" doing this they will earn a token for their house. Next time you are in school look at the house collection tubes in the foyer. Is your child's house winning?



Houses- the community spirit

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Houses

by Mr Boyd

As part of our reflection and consultation all stakeholders (parents, children and staff) believe that we need to get it right for our school community.

Badges

Your child should now be issued with a pin on badge. This badge now forms part of the uniform and highlights the house to which your child is a member.

So what does this house colour mean?

Simply put, your family will have a key contact within the school as well as the class teacher. This in no way undermines the good relationship you should have with your child's class teacher but means that there is a key contact if you wish to contact someone other than your child's class teacher or if your child wants to speak to someone outside their class.



We are now set up and eagerly await the release of our new software to send letters via e-mail. Thanks for your patience.



Driving In Our Local Area

Your child's safety should be everyone's responsibility. Police Scotland has asked that we highlight that they are aware of dangerous driving around our school and would like to remind all drivers to obey the Highway Code and local traffic laws. Drivers have been seen driving on the wrong side of the road, above the speed limits and parking in bus bays.

All staff will also be part of a house and in time it is hoped that children can take a lead role in becoming house captains and be responsible for not only the morale of team building but also the organisation of sports activities and other house activities. This approach is about us "all being in it together" and regardless of one's weaknesses we can work to be strong as a team.

So who is my child's Head of House?

Your first point of contact should always be the class teacher.

Green House: Mr Boyd

Yellow house: Mrs Clark

Blue House: Mrs Allen

Red House: Mrs Millard.

There are a lot of children in each house, so please don't be surprised if your Head of House pops into the occasional meeting with the class teacher.



ABSENCE PROCEDURES

It is important that your child is safe no matter where he/she is. It is your responsibility to contact the school between 8.40 am & 9.10 am if they are not attending school.

From 1 September 2015, Text Messages will now be sent out for unknown absences. A PHONE CALL must be made to explain this absence so we can ascertain who is reporting the absence.

Our School Improvement Plan

by Mr Boyd

This year we will look at the effectiveness the North Lanarkshire Active Literacy Programme has had on our children, comparing their results and development with that of previous years.

We will also be focusing on how we teach maths and how we can introduce basic concepts. An important part of this will be on how we assess the children and use this to get the pace and challenge right for every child.

The most voted for area by children, parents and staff was that of developing resilience. To do this we have agreed to build a very positive community where all children and staff will be part of houses. The weekly assembly will highlight important lifelong skills and attitudes. This will then be developed in the classroom and identified at all opportunities. The house point system will be used alongside our other behaviour management system meaning that a child can be rewarded for showing a Bounce Back skill such as honesty but if wrong-doing has occurred first, the behavior management

system may involve children receiving a sanction elsewhere. Children will have this clearly explained to them.

We will also develop our evaluation skills. This involves asking parents, children and staff for view son what we are doing well, why we think it is going well but how can we make it even better.

In line with Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government, French in Primary 1 will be developed as part of the 1+2 national initiative.

The Parent council has also been asked to look at the cost and style of school uniform and our playground staff will be discussing how we can promote positive experiences in the playground.

HOT TOPICS

**STAFFING**

We are sad to see Miss Wallace leave us for pastures new in Aberdeen City. Miss Wallace was popular among parents, children and staff and we wish her well in her next step in her career.

In our commitment to staff the school, the Senior Management Team conducted interviews over the summer holidays. We welcome Mrs Hayati to the Nursery, Mrs Donald, Mrs Pigatello, and Miss Houston to our staff in the school. Mrs Mackie, P7 teacher will join us on 15 September

CLASS STRUCTURE

Laurencekirk Primary remains a very popular school and as a result the numbers in classes continue to change. It is important that space is left for children who come into the catchment area and as such we do have to inform all parents that class structures can change at any time. It is hoped that this will be minimal and will always be a last resort.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

An important part of child's experience is activities above and beyond the learning in the classroom. A range of activities is on offer at Laurencekirk Primary School. See our website or watch out for our letter for more information.

Extension

by Mr Boyd

We are really excited about our building development. Aberdeenshire Council will be submitting plans for an extension. This will have 3 new classrooms and an area to be shared with the school and community. Visit our website or the information board in the car park to find out more.

A day in the life of P1

by The children in P1

We have all settled in really well. There haven't been too many tears and most of the mummies managed to tear when they got home and had a nice cup of tea.

We liked getting our coloured badges and finding out which house we belong to, lining up on our matching dots in the playground helps us to get ready to start our busy day. We have been very lucky to have Mrs Lahoar and Mrs Murray from nursery to help out in both P1 classes and will continue to have Mrs Murray until Christmas.

It has only been three weeks and already we have all worked through our PIPS assessment – thank you to our parents and carers for helping our teachers manage this. We have had lunch with our parents and carers, experienced sessions with the Kodaly teacher and enjoyed meeting Harold the Giraffe! No wonder we need a wee sit down to recharge those batteries.

**Sponsored Walk**

by Mrs Millard

Fantastic Weather

Last term the whole school headed off to Denlethen Woods for our sponsored walk. It was a glorious afternoon, the sun was shining and the children were singing along the way. The older children took a longer route strolling down Blackiemuir Avenue and eventually meeting up with the rest of the school at the level crossing on Provost Robson Drive.

We're on a Beastie Hunt!

At the woods we took the circular route through the trees looking for flora and fauna. However with all the laughing and singing I'm afraid we scared away most of the wildlife. After a risk assessment completed the previous day we were careful to avoid the logging work being carried out by the Forestry Commission but did take the opportunity to explain to our children how to be safe in the woods. We arrived back at school at the end of the day all tired from our adventure.

Thanks

These events are only possible due to our parent helpers and a huge thank you goes out to them. Also thank you to all our sponsors; we raised £5302.70 which has gone to school funds.



Nursery Corner

by The Nursery Team

We have been harvesting our vegetable containers and have enjoyed a bumper crop. The returning children have been revisiting past learning by discussing the planting process to our new children. Both classes have been involved in our harvest and have made vegetable soup to be served as snack.

We operate a free play system allowing the children to choose when they go outside. Due to the wet weather and high demand to play outside we are struggling to provide the necessary footwear. It would be appreciated if you could return your child's nursery wellies ensuring that initials are written inside them.

Thank you for your support in allowing your child to be independent in seeing to their own needs, in respect of putting on their own coats, shoes and so on. We appreciate it that many children have returned to nursery with footwear that they can change themselves.

The Nursery 2 class had PC Austin Stevenson in for a visit. He talked to the children about his job and most were keen to try on parts of the police uniform.



The local police visit the Nursery.



From patch to pot



Cycling to School

by Mr Boyd

Promoting safe, healthy and Eco friendly ways to arrive at school has always been high on the school's agenda.

Recently a number of our parent volunteers have been trained in promoting safe cycling on local roads. These volunteers will work with P6 & P7 this year as part of the Bikeability training, in conjunction with the class teacher providing theory based and safety based workshops.

To promote the safety element of our partnership with home and Bikeability we will be promoting the wearing of a helmet by all bike, scooter users and we would ask for support if we retain any bikes or scooters for collection by parents (or the child the next day) if no helmet is worn.

Although the promotion of cycling and coming on scooter is part of our healthy lifestyle, we cannot provide any insurance and hold no liability for damage to any personal possessions including helmets or equipment. We would always promote the chaining of items left outside and ask that the designated bays are used between the infant and upper school playground.

It should be noted that part of the responsibility of a child's use of the scooter or bike is to dismount at the service entrance and walk in to the playground; protecting the pedestrians around them.

The school also promotes the successful completion of the Bikeability course before children cycle to school. Although we cannot enforce this, we would ask for support and if we are led to believe that a child is a danger to themselves, road users or pedestrians, would work with home to have the bike collected.

Bikeability for P7 will take place in August/September with P6 in February time. It is hoped that these dates will change in the future and that we can begin to provide other courses at earlier stages.

Learning Council

by Mrs Millard



This year we are giving the children an opportunity to examine the learning that takes place in our school looking at both the positives and the areas that we can improve on.

The role of the learning council is to make recommendations on how to:

- Improve learning conditions for all children at Laurencekirk Primary School.
- To ensure that learning is fun.
- To ensure that learning is interactive and interesting.
- To ensure that planning and teaching are pupil centred to ensure improved education for all.

This will be achieved by the children:

- Visiting classes to see how things are done differently.
- Observe lessons and comment on them from the pupils' perspective.
- Carry out surveys of pupils' views about learning in school.
- Carry out surveys of parents' views about learning in school.
- Review on a regular basis the school's curriculum aims, teaching and learning policies.
- Comment on the available resources.
- Make recommendations to the staff.

Many of these steps will not be implanted this year but will grow with this important role.p

We believe we have a great school and we want to make it even better. To keep up to date with what we are doing check for updates on the school website.

Diary Dates

School events listed until Christmas- Subject to change, addition and cancellation.

Date	Event	Times
31 August	Primary one start full day.	9.00 am – 3.15 pm.
2 September 2015	ALEC Giraffe arrives to talk to children about healthy lives.	
24 September	Open afternoon for any parents wishing to meet the management	2.30pm- 3.10 pm
	Open evening for any parents wishing to meet the management	6.00pm – 6.30pm
25 September	P3/4 Assembly – Parents of this class are invited along.	9.30 am- 10.00am
9 October	Last day of term 1	3.30 pm
Monday, 26 October	School starts	9.00 am
	SPCA for P4-7	
Monday, 26 October	Primary 5 complete standardized assessment in class- Information for parents only- no action required.	
Friday, 30 October	School Harvest Assembly taken by P6. P6 parents invited to join assembly and class afterwards.	9.30 am – 10.30 am
Tuesday, 3 & Wednesday, 4 November	Parents' Evening- letters to follow	3.30 pm -6.00 pm
Friday, 13 November	P5 assembly	9.30 am – 10.00 am
Monday, 16 & Tuesday, 17 November	INSET DAYS- Staff only.	
Friday 20 November	P4 assembly	9.30 am – 10.00 am
Friday 27 November	P5/6 assembly	9.30 am – 10.00 am
Thursday 17 & Friday 18 December	Infant Christmas Show	2.00 pm
23 December	School closes for Christmas Holidays	
6 January	School reopens	9.00 am
Thursday, 11 February & Friday 12 February	Occasional Days – Holidays	
Monday, 15 February	Local Holiday – school closed.	
Wednesday 17 February 2016	INSET day- Staff only	
Friday, 25 March	Good Friday	
Monday, 4 April	School closes for Easter	
Monday, 18 April	School reopens	9.00am

Date	Event	Times
Tuesday 24th May	Provisional Sports Day	9.00 am – 3.15 pm
Monday, 2 May	May Day holiday- school closed	
Friday, 1 July	School closes for end of term	3.15pm