

September Newsletter 2020

Dear Families

I hope this finds you all safe and well. I can hardly believe that September is now upon us and Autumn is very much on its way. There is certainly a chill in the air in the mornings. Definitely coat weather now folks!

Staffing

By now, you will all have received the news that Mr Bell has taken early retirement as a result of ill health. I loved working with Mr Bell. We all did and I know how highly regarded he was amongst our children and families too. He was a kind and compassionate leader who wanted the best for the whole Laurencekirk family. It was a privilege to work so closely with Iain and I benefitted hugely from his knowledge, wisdom and experience. Mr Bell was a wonderful colleague but he was also my friend and I know I speak for the whole Laurencekirk team when I say that he will be missed. Iain deserves all the good things that life has to offer and that is what we, as a school team collectively wish for him now and in the future. It is hard to say goodbye to a valued colleague in these circumstances but we look forward to the day that we can welcome Mr Bell back in to our school to say a proper farewell.

Lost Property

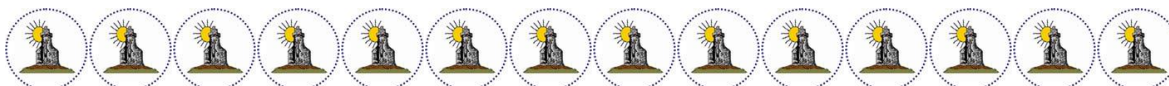
The children and staff are doing an excellent job in matching up belongings to people as we do not have a lost property box in operation. To help with this, it would be really great if you could ensure that ALL belongings are named so that when things go awry we can reunite them with their owner.

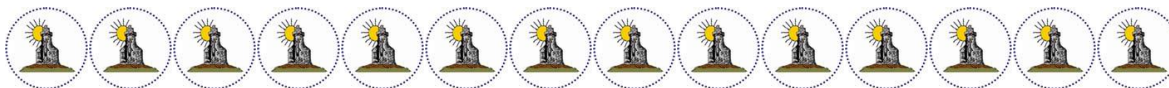
Gym

As a staff we are meeting regularly to talk about how we are keeping each other safe and as part of these discussions, our teachers have requested that on the days the children have gym, could they please come dressed for outdoor PE. This would ideally be a pair of joggers and trainers with the usual school jumper/Tshirt combo on top. Teachers will let you all know via See Saw what day this will be for your class.

See Saw

We are so thrilled to be extending See Saw throughout all our classes in the school. See Saw is a fantastic way for us to share your child's learning and school experience. By signing up to this you will see learning happening and gain deeper insights into your child's school experience. I love the fact that parents can comment on their childrens learning, how motivating for our young people and a great way of cheering in unison! It is also a great two way communication tool between home and





school. We are not using our home diaries at the moment but have opened up the messaging service on SeeSaw to enable our families to contact their child's teacher. Please do continue to use the Office for absences and use SeeSaw as you would the home diary. Responses won't be immediate as our teachers are teaching but they will respond to you when they can. If you have not yet signed up to See Saw, I would highly recommend it. Covid 19 has certainly taught us about the importance of human interaction but at the moment when there are still restrictions on how we can work together to support our children, See Saw is an excellent communication bridge between home and school.

Absences

Our attendance remains high in school and is improving all the time. I am delighted about this. Please do let the School Office know if your child is absent from school and the reason behind this absence. This is always appreciated but even more so at the moment.

We are very aware that some of our children may have to spend some time away from school due to self isolation or awaiting tests/ results. We are keen to support our families by providing opportunities for all our children which will enable learning to continue under these circumstances. I have set out our strategy below. As you all know, this situation is ever-changing and we are constantly evaluating and reviewing our approaches in order to ensure we are doing the best that we can for our Laurencekirk family. I hope the information below is clear and helpful.

My child/member of my household has symptoms of Covid – what should I do?

If your child has a persistent cough, high temperature or loss/change of taste or smell then NHS advice should be followed. Currently this is that the whole household should isolate until the symptomatic person has a clear Covid Test. The alternative is for the symptomatic child/person to isolate for 10 days and the rest of the household for 14 days. Please do keep us in the loop with how things are with you all, we do like to know everyone is safe and well.

My child is at home awaiting test results or is isolating due to a household member being unwell. I feel they are well enough to engage in some learning. What can I do?

Please go to our school website where you will find home learning activities for early, first and second level pupils. These are stored under the 'Contingency Learning' tab. These activities will be added to every week on a Monday. They will never be removed from there so you can dip in and out as the weeks go on.

Early Level = P1

First Level = P1 – P4

Second Level = P5- P7

Once you have completed the activities, please take a photo of the learning and upload it onto your child's SeeSaw profile for your teacher to see. Your child's teacher will be able to comment on it and give feedback this way.

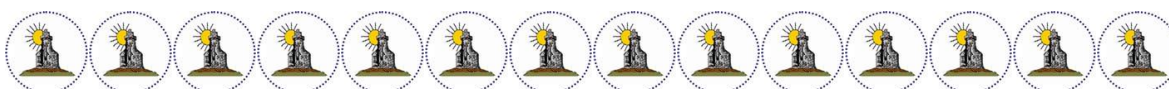
Please be assured that this is provision for those that wish to engage and is in no way compulsory. We are very understanding that this could be a difficult time and we do not wish to make things any trickier. Please do what feels right for your family.

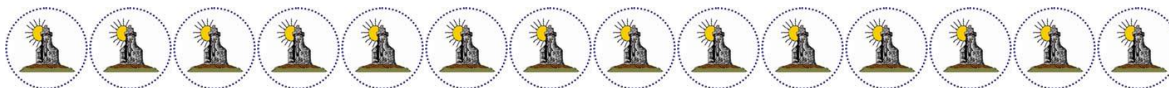
Our school website address is noted below:

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

My child is off school with a Covid related issue but I do not feel they should be engaging with learning. What do I do?

Nothing! That is totally fine. There is no expectation or pressure. Please dip in and out as you wish or not at all. Your family – your decision ☺





Outdoor Learning

Our children are enjoying learning outdoors and this is an area we are keen to explore and develop. Therefore, learning outdoors will be an area of our School Improvement Plan this year. Outdoor environments act as a multi sensory and rich stimulus for creative thinking and learning and we are keen to embed these approaches into our curriculum. Please do ensure that your child has a waterproof jacket with them in school each day.

PARENTSPORTAL.SCOT

Make life easier by signing up to parentsportal.scot - a new online platform which from August 2020 will allow you to receive updates and carry out transactions with school all in one place. You can register by joining myAberdeenshire, which allows you to access a whole host of council services at the touch of a button. Visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/parentsportal for more information.

Forms for School Office

A wee reminder: Please return the flu forms and annual data check (paper or online) as soon as possible please.

And Finally...

2020 will certainly be remembered as one of the strangest years any of us will experience in our lifetime. Dealing with worries about Covid 19, concerns for loved ones and staying at home, isolated from those we love and cherish has been difficult for us all – our children included. It can be difficult for us all as we grapple to cope with the various rules about what we can do and where as well as not knowing when things might change again. It is so important for me to share just how amazing your children are. They have coped brilliantly with our new routines in school and are engaged, enthusiastic and loving learning. Our school is full of laughter, learning, tenderness, enthusiasm and gratitude. It is WAY more than a risk assessed space but a coming together of people who care deeply for one another. I feel very proud of everyone in the Laurencekirk Team.

Please do know that as a school, we are steadfastly committed to supporting all our children. Kindness and compassion drives all we do at Laurencekirk so please reach out and let us know of any circumstances that you feel we should be aware of in order to support your children to reconnect fully with school.

Have a lovely weekend everyone.

Kindest Regards

Jill Smith

Head Teacher (Acting)

