

## October Newsletter 2020

Dear Families

We are fast approaching the end of our first school term of the year which has certainly been far from ordinary. The challenges we have had to overcome have forced us all to live and work differently but together we are achieving great things. I write to you with feelings of immense pride at how our Laurencekirk School community has progressed over this first term and I am especially proud of how our staff have responded to these unusual circumstances to ensure that our children are happy, safe and engaged in their learning.

Today I would like to share some information and reminders that I hope will be helpful.

### Arrival at school

Please arrive as close to 9am as possible, especially if it is raining in the morning. We are not able to gather large mixed groups in the hall just now. Also, it is getting colder and we do go outside often to learn so please do make sure that your child is equipped for the weather with a cosy, waterproof coat. Also, we have noted a rise in parents and pupils using the school office door. The rules remain the same – there should be no unannounced visitors approaching the school and pupils should not be using the School Office door. Thank you for your understanding.

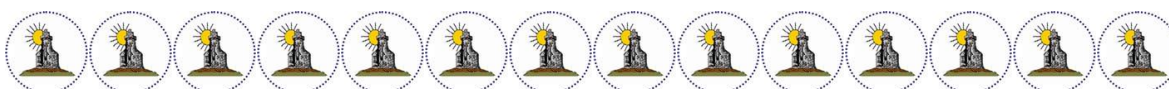
### Lost Property

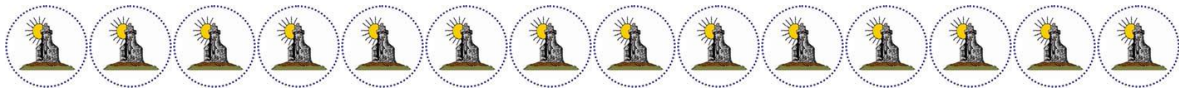
Please do name all items that are coming into school. We are working very hard to reunite property with its rightful owners but we are generating quite a pile of unnamed clothing and it is impossible to work out what belongs where.

### Being prepared – lockdown learning information

We are prepared for possible intermittent closures and have a continuity of learning plan in place should we need to use it. Should we return to lockdown or a blended approach between home and school, we will be using See Saw to share learning and communicate with our pupils and families. I really hope that this does not become a reality but we do need to be prepared for every eventuality.

If you have not already done so, please can you return the permission slips for the video conferencing via Teams. This is the permission that we require to deliver remote teaching via video should we go into a lockdown situation again. If we





were to close our school we would endeavour to deliver direct teaching daily and this is the platform we would use to do so. We must have the relevant permission slips back in order to work with your child in this way. Thank you to those who have already returned these.

### Support for learning at home

We have had consistently high attendance in school which is very pleasing. Please do remember that if your child is absent from school due to isolation or awaiting test results and they are well enough to engage in some learning, there are home learning activities on our website. These can be completed and returned to your child's class teacher via See Saw. If your child is in Primary One then please look at early level tasks, P2-P4 please see First Level tasks and finally P5-P7 please see Second Level tasks. Of course, there is no obligation at all, this is just if you feel this is appropriate. As always, promoting reading remains one of the best ways to encourage your child to learn. Reading improves memory skills, concentration, imagination, spelling ability... I could go on and on about this forever! (I won't!)

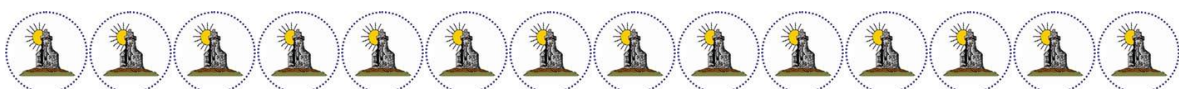
### Leadership Opportunities

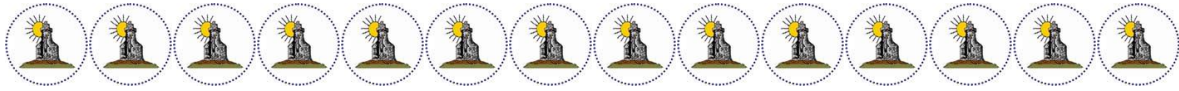
We are creating pupil leadership opportunities in Primary 6 and Primary 7 through improving our Cheery Chum programme and through introducing house captain roles. This work is linked to supporting our children to develop skills for learning, life and work. Our Cheery Chums play an important role in our school. They support our younger children to enjoy their playtimes and lunchtimes to the fullest by organising games for them to play, joining in with their activities and just generally being amazing roles models to look up to. We are providing our Primary 6s with training to support them and they will learn about skills, attributes and job applications as part of this process also. Our Primary 7s who wish to become House Captains are currently engaging in an application process and informal interviews will take place also. Thank you to Laurencekirk Primary Partnership who have agreed to support us with these interviews albeit remotely at the moment.

### Reporting to Parents and Carers

We are committed to ensuring that our parents and families have access to the information they need which enables them to form a clear understanding of how their child is progressing and the information they need to play a key role in supporting this. Our See Saw app forms an important part of our continuous reporting process and I am delighted that almost all our families are now signed up and enjoying and benefitting from this approach to information sharing.

We really value the opportunity to meet with parents individually to discuss progress, engagement, effort and enthusiasm for learning and this year we would like to offer all our families the opportunity to meet for a virtual parents consultation. We are not able to invite our families into school at the moment so we feel this is a viable alternative! The meetings will be 10 minutes long (the same as in school) and you will be asked to sign up for a Teams Meeting slot. We will be using Parentsportal.Scot to book the Parents Evening slots so please ensure that you have signed up and been approved prior to the Parents Evening Booking System opening on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October. At your allocated time, you will simply join the teams meeting and





your child's teacher will admit you when he/she is ready. The dates that we have set aside are 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of November from 4:00pm – 6:30 pm. Please do not worry about this as more information will follow separately about this on the first day back. I just wanted to let you all know that there are plans in place and to issue a save the date!

### Swap Shop

I am really pleased that our Primary Parent Partnership are developing a Uniform Swap Shop in our foyer. It is very much a work in progress but I hope that this will become our first stop shop for 'new to me' jumpers. Jumpers that your child has outgrown can be handed in and new ones taken away. This just makes so much sense on every level and I am excited to see this grow and develop.

### Rights Respecting Schools

Ms Leslie is working with all our classes to teach all our children about children's rights and how to put these into practice. This involves promoting the values of respect, dignity and non-discrimination and is a very important part of our curriculum. This work supports our children to understand how they and others should be treated and equips them with the powerful language needed to express themselves and to challenge the way they and others are treated. We are hoping to work together to achieve a special award in this area but our main goal is to create a safe and inspiring learning environment where children are respected, nurtured and able to thrive and we all have a part to play in this. I will update you on this work as it progresses. It is feeling very promising already!

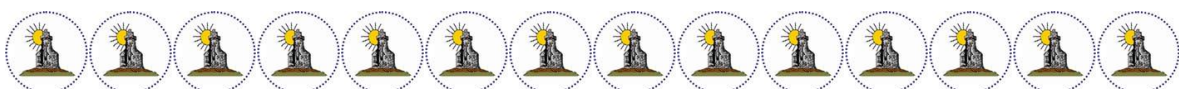
### Harvest

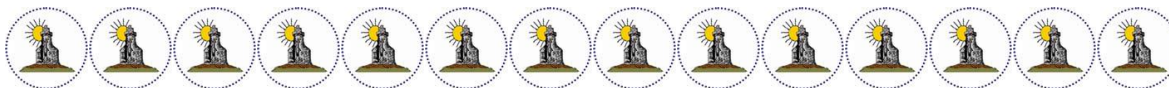
Thank you so much for your incredibly generous donations to our harvest table. Every year I feel humbled by the response. Laurencekirk is such a wonderfully supportive community and this is definitely shown in our donation table. These donations will be made into 'meal in a bag' kits and handed out around the community. This was a project that started during lockdown designed to get families cooking together and to share new tried and tested easy to make recipes. It was a huge success and your donations mean that this important initiative can continue to grow.

### Parental Voice: Improving our school

Thank you to everyone who completed our recent survey. We have read all the responses carefully and your thoughts and opinions really do help us to work out what our priorities are and the steps we must take to achieve our goals. We asked the following questions:

- What should our curriculum look like?
- What would effective remote learning look like?
- How can we promote good health and wellbeing?
- How can we build relationships and communicate effectively with our families?





There were similar themes emerging across the board and I have captured them below under broad headings for your information.

Question	Broad response
What should our curriculum look like?	Core values Clear focus on literacy and numeracy Homework STEM subjects Outdoor learning Focus in health and wellbeing
What would effective remote learning look like?	Help to support my child Access to technology Flexibility Direct teaching Video
How can we promote good health and wellbeing?	Promote teamwork and belonging Hand hygiene Daily mile House challenges Worry tree Mindfulness Positivity
How can we build relationships and communicate effectively with our families?	Seesaw Social media

### Pupil Voice: Improving Our School

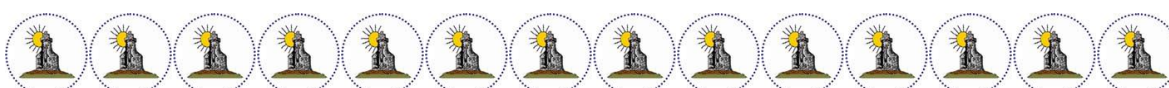
It is important that our children have a say in how well our school is doing and how it can be improved. I am working with a group of children who are supporting me to plan activities in order gather views and opinions of their whole class on matters which affect them. This is our 'wee HGIOS group.' HGIOS stands for – "How Good is Our School?" We also have a Rights Respecting Group and an Eco Group established and I look forward to sharing the work of these groups with you all as the year progresses.

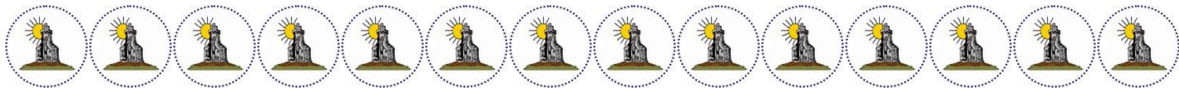
### Flu vaccination

The school nursing team will be with us on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October to implement the flu vaccination programme. Please ensure that the relevant documentation is returned to school prior to this date if you wish your child to be included. Thank you.

### Nursery

We are delighted to be increasing the number of hours we can offer our nursery children from 600 to 900 hours after the October break. The quality of care and education delivered in our nursery is wonderful and this will make a positive difference to our children and their families, I am sure.





And Finally....

These are very unusual times and one day when this is all over I know that our children will be telling their children about the time that our brilliant school and community stuck together to help and care for each other. I remain fiercely proud that our school is a powerful force for positivity and look forward to navigating next term together. I wish you all the happiest of holidays. Take care and stay safe.

Kindest Regards

Jill Smith

Head Teacher (Acting)

