

November Newsletter 2020

Good evening

I hope you all had a relaxing October break and managed to squeeze in some family time. I warmly welcome everyone back to school for what is already shaping up to be a very busy term indeed. It is really lovely to have all our children and staff back in school - safe and sound.

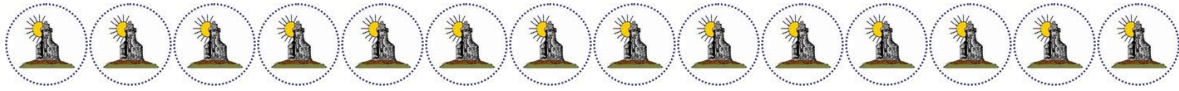
We are living through a very changeable time with information, advice and expectations changing rapidly, it can be tricky to keep up. I am sure that many of you will be aware that updated information was released by the Scottish Government on Friday 30th October that directly affects schools, therefore, I wanted to write to all our families today to reinforce our existing. It has been a while since I spoke to you directly about these and I am hopeful that a refresh will be useful. I would also like to share the new information and what this means for our school community. I will begin with the new information:

New Information

It is now mandatory for staff (unless exempt) to wear face coverings when in corridors, communal areas, the dinner hall and when within a 2m distance of our children. This is a significant change for us all and whilst we will speak with the children about this on Monday, you may wish to prepare your children for this change.

Parents should wear a face covering when on school property (including pick up and drop off) unless exempt. Advice around 2m distancing and making alternative arrangements for collection such as agreed pick up points off site are still very much encouraged and I would like to thank you all for your commitment to keeping each other safe by respecting these recommendations.

Where possible we should keep our children in consistent groups for the duration of the school day and this means we have had to reconsider our arrangements for playtimes and lunch times. In the event of one of our children testing positive for Covid 19, we want to eliminate the need for large numbers of children having to isolate. From Monday 2nd November, we are creating class zones in the playground. We will introduce this to the children at school on Monday. Essentially, this means that they will be playing with their class only for the foreseeable future. As with all



our Covid 19 safety measures, this will remain under constant review. All the decisions that we are taking are in response to Scottish Government and Public Health advice and have the health and wellbeing of our children and staff as the key priority. Again, you may wish to discuss this with your child ahead of the change to help them to prepare for this.

There may be changes to how your child enters and exits school from Tuesday onwards. Mrs Anderson will write to all our families on Monday to share any changes with you all and we will speak with our children about any new arrangements in school on Monday.

Covid – Reminders

Hand hygiene is crucial in the suppression of Covid 19 and our children are using hand sanitiser often during the day. We are noticing that many are becoming complacent with this and we would be grateful if you could remind and encourage your child to wash or sanitise their hands frequently.

Ventilation is considered to be an important factor and we are taking steps such as opening windows and doors to increase this. It is getting colder and we will ensure that minimum temperatures are maintained as well as adequate ventilation. I would suggest a school jumper would be beneficial and there are many beautiful 'pre loved' Laurencekirk jumpers in the foyer for families to take and use. Please help yourself!

Drinking water is of course available if needed. My own personal recommendation would remain the same which is to provide your child with water to last the day to avoid using the drinking fountain where possible.

Please continue to send your child to school in their gym clothes on gym days – this is most helpful.

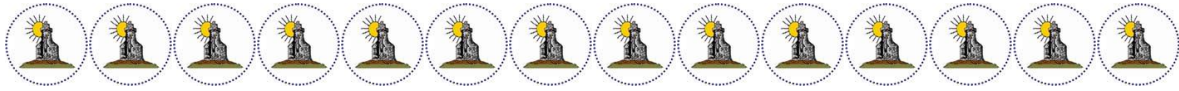
At the moment, we are not in a position to welcome our parents into school. Please contact your child's class teacher via See Saw or call the School Office should you need to speak to the Admin or Senior Leadership Teams. We are always happy to help.

If your child is absent from school and you feel is well enough to engage in some learning, please look at the Home Learning tab on our website for a range of planned activities for your child. These can be uploaded onto Seesaw and shared with your child's class teacher.

Please do continue to let the School Office know of any absence and the reasons behind this. The answer phone is switched on 24 hours each day and Mrs Clark picks up the messages when she arrives in school.

Contingency Plan

Remote learning remains an important contingency. As part of our contingency plan, we would like to be able to teach our children directly via video. In order to do so, we need the relevant permissions. Thank you to all who have returned this form. If you have not already done so, I would be grateful if you could send it back



to school as soon as possible. I do hope this is not something that we need to utilise but would like to be prepared just in case.

Parents Night

In November we always host our individual parents consultations. We really value this opportunity to meet with our families and discuss progress, success, achievements and next steps. We are offering a digital alternative this year which is uncharted territory for us all. Our staff have been undergoing some inservice training to help them deliver this experience and their commitment to ensuring that this takes place is commendable. I know you will all be patient as we pilot this approach and I thank you in advance for your understanding. We will be trying our very best! If you haven't already done so, please do so by signing up via parents portal at Parentsportal.Scot. 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. The booking system is open now. 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 11th and 12th of November from 4:00pm – 6:30 pm. Mrs Begg will share some information with you about exactly what you need to do on the night, in plenty of time, so please do not worry!

Remembrance Day

We are creating a 'Field of Remembrance' on our school playing fields the week beginning the 9th of November. This is important work in helping us to teach our children to honour the people who have kept us safe and enabled us to live in the world as we do today. Each class will make a silent reflective walk around the poppy field on Wednesday 11th November. This poignant experience will help them to understand the ramifications of war and conflict and the importance of working together to achieve a peaceful and harmonious world for us all. I am looking forward to delivering this experience and hope that you will all pause for a moment of quiet reflection as you pass our special field. We hope to leave the poppies up for the week.

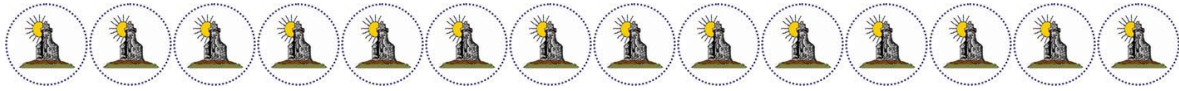
Poppies will be on sale as usual for a small donation to the British Legion.

Harvest

Thank you again for your very generous donations to our harvest table. As promised, we have begun to create recipe bags to share out across our community to get our families cooking and eating together. If you have had a bag, we really hope you enjoyed it.

Assemblies

If you are interested, our assemblies are posted onto the website each Wednesday. This term there will be a focus on Health and Wellbeing. I know lots of you secretly appreciate the songs!



Children in Need

We will be taking part in Children in Need this year on Friday 13th November and Mrs Anderson will reach out to you all with the information you require later this week.

School Shoes

I am aware that as the weather starts to change, the footwear you wish to send your child to school wearing may differ. If your child requires to change shoes (for example, they are wearing wellies on a rainy day) then of course that is fine. However, all belongings must be taken home from school each day and should not be left in the cloakroom areas of classrooms. This allows our team of cleaners to clean the areas thoroughly and your co-operation is really appreciated with this.

Our Newest Recruit

I am delighted to let you all know that Mrs Mackie has given birth to the most beautiful baby girl. Her name is Rowan Elizabeth Kathryn Mackie – Mrs Mackie and Rowan are both doing brilliantly well and Lyall is thrilled with big brother duties. We all look forward to meeting Rowan.

Staffing

We are delighted to welcome Ms Fiona Shoulder to our ASN team four days a week for the foreseeable future. Ms Shoulder is a very experienced teacher who has joined us from a school in the Middle East. She has slotted beautifully into our existing team and we are delighted to have her as part of the Laurencekirk School team. Welcome Fiona!

As always, I am so grateful for all your support, kind words and for your wonderful children. Laurencekirk School is a compassionate community who takes care of each other and I know that together we can navigate this storm and emerge stronger as a result. It really is the best school I know 😊

Stay safe and take care of yourselves and each other.

Kindest Regards

Jill Smith

Head Teacher (Acting)