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| t  school logo  St Bernadette’s RC Primary School |  |
| **blend2** |
| Headteacher : Mrs Nuala McElroy  The Orchard, Tullibody, FK10 2SD |
| **Telephone:** **01259 723973** **Fax: 01259 210874** |

28.05.18

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you so much for your generosity in helping the Parent Council to subsidise our very successful school trip. Thanks also to our staff and families who looked after our children so carefully. Our First Holy Communion on Sunday was a beautiful celebration of our Faith with our children, as always, acting as a credit to themselves, their families and our community. We are grateful to our P4 and P7 children who supported them by doing the readings and offertory. Thanks also to Mrs Murphy for the beautiful flower arrangements. Please remember our First Communicants in your prayers.

Thank you for your continued support.

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Nuala McElroy

**Staffing**

There is, unfortunately, a significant degree of uncertainty about staffing at the moment. As soon as I know, I will let you know.

**Composite classes**

Next year’s P1 intake has been smaller than usual so there will be new composite classes. I know that composite classes can cause anxieties and that for the children involved they can cause upset if friendship groups are disrupted but they are a necessary element of life in a small school.

In terms of learning, there is no evidence to suggest that attainment is affected by being in a composite class. We teach our children according to where they are on their learning journey rather than according to their stage. Within a ‘straight’ P6 or P7 class, we often have children whose reading ages range from 7 years to 16+ years. Children’s progress is carefully tracked with termly meetings to ensure that they are making at least the expected progress. Whether a child is in a ‘straight’ or composite class, our ambition for them is unwavering. Our staff are experienced and skilled at dealing with children of differing ages, maturity and ability.

In terms of friendships, our children are strongly encouraged to see our school as a family with close links between classes. When classes are reorganised, it gives children a chance to develop new friends and acquaintances and this provides valuable experience especially in preparation for secondary school life. Where friendships are strong, children do still play with each other, have play dates and maintain close relationships despite being in separate classes.

I hope to confirm the details of the composite classes in the very near future and will inform you as soon as I have definite numbers regarding our new intake. There will be a drop-in session to discuss the composite classes at 6pm on the 6th of June. This will take place just before the Parent Council meeting.

We will composite on the basis of age, the only exceptions being where that would lead to a significant gender imbalance or if an individual child’s additional support needs are such that we need to make an exception. In doing this, we will be following Council policy;

*‘the lead factor in determining the population of the class shall be date of birth, however head teachers will seek to achieve a reasonable balance in terms of gender, and also take into account on an exceptionality basis and relating to sound educational reasons, the additional support needs of particular children.’*

**School Improvement Planning**

Our School Improvement Plan for 2017-18 is a plan designed to last for three years with Numeracy, Literacy, Nurture and Curriculum Design being our priorities. We have submitted our evaluated School Improvement Plan to the authority and will share it with you, electronically, before the end of term.

Our new plan will be based around the same priorities but we will be building on this year’s successes and undertaking professional learning to further develop each priority.

**School Review**

Our school review has been completed but we will not get any formal feedback until you do on the 12th of June. What I can tell you is that the review team were very impressed by our enthusiastic and well-behaved pupils.

**Sports Day**

The timing of Sports Day has been difficult to arrange because we were waiting on Mrs Chance beginning her maternity leave and a replacement teacher being appointed. We have now confirmed that Sports Afternoon will be on the 5th or the 12th of June, depending on the weather.

**Lockerbie Manor**

Our P7 Residential Trip takes place on the 13th, 14th and 15th of June. There will be a short information meeting on the 4th of June at 6pm. If parents can’t make that meeting or if they have any questions at all, they are invited to phone in to the school or to chat to us in the playground.

**Attendance**

Attend Today – Achieve Tomorrow is the theme of Clackmannanshire Council’s new policy on Attendance. There is a great deal of evidence that absence from school has a significant impact on attainment. It also has an impact on friendships and confidence. The figures below show that even an attendance figure that looks high can mean that a lot of valuable learning time has been lost.

If a child has an attendance of 95%, 10 days of learning have been lost.

If a child has an attendance of 90%, 19 days of learning have been lost, almost 4 weeks.

If a child has an attendance of 85%, 29 days of learning have been lost, almost 6 weeks.

If a child has an attendance of 80%, 38 days of learning have been lost, almost 2 months.

Obviously, there are very good reasons why children are absent but it is my responsibility to work with families to raise attendance wherever possible. In line with the new policy, I will be writing to families as soon as attendance begins to become an issue for children and will be inviting families to meet with myself and our Attendance and Welfare Officer, Carol Love.

**Dates for Diary**

These dates are provisional and may change with circumstances.

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| 04.06.18 | Information session about Lockerbie Manor |
| 05.06.18 | Sports Afternoon (if dry) @ 1pm |
| 06.06.18 | Drop-in session to talk about composite classes @6pm |
| 06.06.18 | Parent Council @ 6.30pm |
| 12.06.18 | Sports Afternoon (if we have to cancel on the 5th) @ 1pm |
| 13.06.18 | Lockerbie Manor (P7) |
| 14.06.18 | Lockerbie Manor (P7) |
| 14.06.18 | Mass for the Centenary of Catholic Education in Scotland |
| 15.06.18 | Lockerbie Manor (P7) |
| 29.06.18 | End of Term Mass @ 9.30am |