



27th September 2011

St Clement's News

Session 11-12 Number 2

Dear Parent/Carer,

The school year is in full swing, with learning programmes and classroom routines now well established.

Critical Literacy

A big focus of our work this year is on encouraging thinking skills and developing independence in the children; this is known as Critical Literacy. In all classes, the children are being encouraged to think for themselves, to problem solve and to use deeper questions rather than just the obvious ones. 'Thinking Hats' are being used to help this across the school now – hopefully your child can explain how these work. Included with this letter is a diagram called Bloom's Taxonomy which shows some of these types of questions, trying to encourage children to move beyond just facts and ideas.. If you'd like to have a go at home, please do – any work you do with your child is a big help to their learning.

Open Events

1. Our regular Wednesday 'drop in' sessions are now back on – please feel free to come in to your child's class between 9 and 9.30. It has been suggested that we could extend this to an afternoon once a week from 3 to 3.15 – more on this soon once we've had a chance to discuss in school.
2. Next **Thursday, 6th October**, we're throwing the doors open in the afternoon for the children to showcase their term's learning to parents/carers/family members who are able to come along. Apologies for the relatively short notice (I can't believe how busy the start to term has been!) The afternoon will start with the **Parent Council AGM** in the Assembly Hall at 1.30. This is a really important event (and pain-free, I promise) and I urge you to make every effort to come along. After the AGM, which should last no longer than 20 minutes, parents will be free to go to their child's class.
3. **Wednesday, 30th November, St Andrew's Day**, will also see us hold an Open Afternoon, this time on a Scottish theme. Here's hoping it's not cancelled by snow like last year!

Consents

Thanks very much for completing and returning the general consent form which was issued earlier this month. This will make organisation of trips so much easier. Watch out for letters with trip details which will be in schoolbags from time to time. These may also include requests for contributions to costs. We'll try to ensure that these are also blogged for those of you with forgetful kids! Please note that if you haven't yet returned the consent form, your child cannot go on any trip until you do.

House System

Our new House System is now up and running (from Monday, 26th September). All of the children (and staff) have been allocated a House (St Andrew, St Ninian, St Columba, St Margaret) and can earn points for their house by showing positive behaviour, by working hard, and by achieving things. Special points will also be awarded for attendance, being on time for school, bringing homework diaries and gym kit, and many other things. This will be part of our Health and Wellbeing programme and the Houses will meet (in two groups each) on a Friday afternoon for an hour each week for activities which will include looking at how we can work together to improve our school. There will also be House Challenges from time to time and an end of session soiled and reward for the winning House. Everyone's really 'up' for this, and the adults are really looking forward to rewarding all of the many great things that go on in school with lashings of house points!

Coats

Now that the generally colder weather is in, I'm a bit surprised by the number of children who don't wear a coat to school, especially amongst the younger age groups. Please make sure that your child wears a coat – I've asked the teachers in P1-4 to insist that these are worn to the playground as well, and P5-7 teachers will also be strongly encouraging the wearing of coats. Please also remember to mark your child's coat clearly with his/her name.

Parent Council Fundraisers

Our small but dedicated band of Parent Council Members (who really could do with your support – see AGM item above) have set dates for some fundraising events for this session. These are;

- Family Quiz – Wednesday, 2nd November
- Beatle Drive – Wednesday, 1st February
- Bingo – Wednesday, 2nd May

I hope you will be able to support these events.

Positive Behaviour

I've been really pleased by recent comments from parents and from new staff members about how the behaviour of our children is generally really good, inside the school and in the playground. We're working hard to ensure that the small minority who refuse to show the expected respect for others realise that this will not be allowed. Please support us in this, and regularly reinforce our three school rights (to learn, to respect and to be safe) with your child.

New School

As you'll know from the Parent Council's Newsletters, things are proceeding according to plan with the enabling works around the school at present. These are scheduled to be complete by the end of October. The tendering process for the building contract is underway, and it is hoped that construction can start in the relatively near future. I'm committed to ensuring that IT provision in the new school is as 'state of the art' as it can be and have started to investigate ways of funding the purchase of new whiteboards and projectors for the new rooms.

Health Eating and Exercise

It is Council policy that all classes in Dundee undertake daily physical activity in addition to formal P.E. lessons. This is happening in all St Clement's classes, in a variety of forms, and it's really important that all the children take an active part. One or two of our older children seem reluctant – please chat to your child about this and convince them of how important being active and fit is.

It's a wee bit disappointing to note that many of our children are still bringing playpieces which don't really fit the 'healthy snack' description. Miss Lawrence and the teachers are working hard to help the children to make healthy food choices – please work with us on this by providing healthy snacks. Please also remember that fizzy drinks are not appropriate for school and that a snack is a small item – many of our children are over-eating at playtimes (not to mention not having enough time to run about) by having too many items with them. I've asked Miss Lawrence to put together some guidance on this – watch out for this in schoolbags soon.

Gym Kit

Please ensure that your child has gym kit on gym days. It might even help if gym kit is kept in school? If your child forgets gym kit on two occasions, her/his teacher will write to you. This year I have decided that, as is done in many Dundee schools including St Paul's HS) everyone will take a part in gym lessons even if they have no kit or a legitimate excuse or parent note – they will be given a task to do related to the gym lesson eg keeping scores or writing about the game rules.

Dates

Enclosed is a sheet of Key Dates from now to Christmas. Again my apologies for the delay with this – see previous excuse! Remember, too, that some key dates are printed in the children's Diaries.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or any matter to discuss. The home-school partnership is very important to your child and we really appreciate all that you do to support your child's learning. More news soon – watch the school bags.

Yours sincerely



Head Teacher