



Parental Information and Update

19th November 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

I wanted to share an update with you at this time, in order to highlight certain aspects of life in school and also an overview of the weeks to come as we move towards the end of the calendar year.

Since our last school newsletter and returning from our Autumn Break, school life has continued extremely positively. Within national and authority based Covid-19 guidelines, most aspects of 'usual' school life are part of our children's day to day experiences and, since August, it has been wonderful to maintain the continuity and 'flow' of daily life in school which remains so important for our children's learning.

Throughout October and November, and in conjunction with Glasgow's COP26, the themes of Sustainability and Climate Change have been a very important part of our children's learning. This recently included our own 'School Summit', where representatives (or delegates!) from our Pupil Council and Eco-Committee met with some of our House Captains and Senior Leadership Team to consider what our school community can do to support positive change. We will be taking some of the children's great ideas to our School Parliament on the 7th December, in order to agree our next steps.

Much more detail, images and video will be shared with you through our next whole school newsletter at the end of this month, so please do look out for this.

Health & Safety: Covid-19 Implications

There do remain some restrictions of course, most notably perhaps that we are still unable to invite our parents/ carers back on to our school premises. It is unclear as to when this position may change and we will of course continue to take our lead from national and our local authority guidance. It also remains the case that we are unable to hold any larger gatherings within the school, for example such as an assembly or event.

Most of the following guidance points were first shared with you at the start of the school session in August 2021 and remain the case at this time:

- Primary schools will not take a lead on self-isolation identification and this has moved fully to NHS Test and Protect. Importantly, there is not the same expectation that all children in the same class as a confirmed positive test must self-isolate
- Adults still need to socially distance by at least 1 metre or more from others
- Adults will still wear masks in common areas of the school
- Hand hygiene protocols will still be followed as before
- Zoning for break/ lunch times was lifted outside some weeks ago, however children will continue to sit with class-mates on the same table areas for lunch indoors



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- Some cross-stage (year group) learning is permitted, however we are not yet able to hold full school gatherings
- Buddying with pre-prescribed partners across school year groups is now permitted, as are certain cross-class (e.g. a Pupil Group) small group meetings
- Ventilation requirements will continue as before
- Indoor PE is fully permitted

Academy Road

Academy Road's [‘School Street’ trial](#) is ongoing and representatives from our Parent Council and myself continue to meet with representatives from the ERC Roads Department and locally elected members to monitor progress.

Some vehicles with permits and/ or exemptions will continue to use the road at restricted times, so please be aware that the road is not closed and that children should be encouraged to follow full road safety practices, including not playing games in the road. Thank-you in advance for your support.

December/ Seasonal timeline

In the spirit of our School Value of Inclusivity, we remain a multi-faith school community who will aim to respect and celebrate the values of a wide variety of beliefs and religions.

For many in our school community, December brings the joys of Christmas and all of the associated wonder for our children. Last Christmas brought great challenges in the midst of the pandemic and, whilst we remain within it still, at this time Covid-19 guidance will allow us to plan more widely for December in school. I am very pleased to share that the following activities and events are being planned, though these remain conditional on our health & safety guidance remaining the same. As you will appreciate, were this guidance to change it may be necessary to amend and even cancel certain aspects of our planning:

- Stage (or ‘year group’) parties are allowed and are being planned for as in previous years, with appropriate health & safety measures in place. Further information regarding the dates for each class/ stage party will be shared in the coming weeks
- We are also finalising plans for our traditional, seasonal lunch event for our P7 children. Further information to follow for P7
- Pantomime performances are unable to come into schools at this time. However, the Hopscotch production company who we have enjoyed many times before are producing a pre-recorded panto that we can stream through each of the class interactive whiteboards. In addition, the Macastory production company are also creating a pre-recorded, Scots Language seasonal performance which we have also booked for our children to enjoy



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- Our Tree of Kindness gifting project in association with our friends at Orchardhill Church is already underway. Last year, hundreds of gifts were shared and we thank-you in advance for your generosity again
- Our P4/5 Choir are already practising to share some seasonal singing joy with you in the form of 'Singing on the Steps', as we have previously done. Again, more details to follow
- We are planning three separate nativity performances, for our nursery class, P1 and P2 respectively. We are currently investigating what options are available to us in sharing these performances with our parents/ carers and will again clarify further for you, both in terms of format and dates, as soon as we can
- Sadly and as you might have already imagined, we are unable to plan a whole school community service at Orchardhill Parish Church this December

I would like to thank our Parent Council here for their generous support for a number of these seasonal activities which might not otherwise be possible; more information will be shared on this in our newsletter towards the end of the month.

Finally, we understand at this time how difficult it can feel to remain in close contact as a school community and I have discussed this again recently with our Parent Council. Since I have had the honour of being Head Teacher at Giffnock, it has been a joy to watch our school community grow and we have all invested greatly in this, from school events like our Community Cafes, to weekly class assemblies and family workshops and drop-ins. Whilst restrictions remain in place at this time, please do feel free to get in contact with the school about any issues or questions that you may have. Please do not feel that any matter is too small, either in making contact through the school office or even asking 'across the railings' at the start or end of day with one of the Senior Leadership Team who are always there.

I very much look forward to the weeks ahead and the learning, celebrations and fun to come.

Kind regards,

Rob Lawson

Head Teacher