

Maidenhill Primary School

Head Teacher's Bulletin



Friday August 28 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

Another week down and it's almost as though we have never been away!

I am incredibly proud of all of our Maidenhill children- they are a no-nonsense/ no fuss bunch if ever there was one! Yes, there can be occasional wobbles for some of our younger children as they adjust to a new environment and new routines but certainly no more (and arguably significantly less) than we would see in any 'normal' year. I continue to be struck and impressed by the manners they show, not only to adults but to their peers as well. Manners and consideration don't always come naturally (some would argue they go against basic 'survival of the fittest' instinct). Rather, they have to be taught and modelled and it is parents and carers who always lead the way in this regard. I think you would share in my pride if you were able to witness how your children conduct themselves during the course of a day.

Various media reports have talked about the full process of educational recovery resulting from the pandemic and lockdown potentially taking up to 2 years. I am heartened to hear from several of our staff that many of our children already appear to be in a very good place in terms of the prior learning they have retained and the degree to which learning has advanced over the period of lockdown- due in no small part to the admirable support, guidance, ingenuity and patience of their parents and carers. This certainly bodes well and I feel confident that attainment and achievement will be back on track long before the 2-year prediction!

Face Coverings

The Scottish Government has published updated guidance on the wearing of face coverings in schools and I have attached it to this bulletin. There continues to be no expectation that children in primary schools or nursery classes will wear face coverings during the course of the school day, however anyone at Maidenhill is free to wear a face covering at any point if they wish.

This updated guidance does set out the expectation that all children over the age of 5 travelling on school transport (bus/taxi) will wear face coverings for the duration of the journey and that they should have the opportunity to wash their hands before putting their face coverings on and taking them off. This comes in to place from Monday August 31st.

At the end of each day, all of our children wash their hands before going home and I will encourage our bus/ taxi children to put on their face coverings whilst their hands are newly clean. When children get off the bus each morning they will be allowed to enter the building to wash their hands before removing their face covering. We have some supplies of face coverings which may be used if anyone forgets to bring their own.

Most children will be, by now, well-used to the idea of wearing face coverings and some are already doing so on the bus, but I will go over the new Government guidelines and routines with our regular bus and taxi children today so that they know about the national change in expectations before Monday.

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Public Health

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde asked all schools to issue a letter which was e-mailed to you yesterday. This letter aimed in part to clarify some confusion over the need for testing as part of Test and Protect procedures. It clearly sets out that testing should be for anyone exhibiting any one or more of the symptoms of temperature or fever, new and persistent cough and/ or loss of taste. We have had several conversations over the course of the last week with parents/ carers asking our advice on whether we think their children should be tested. We will always help out where we can, but I would urge you to ignore me at any time I start dishing out medical advice! Follow the NHS guidance and make sure you seek a test if your child has any of the symptoms.

The guidance is also clear that there is no requirement for a test for anyone not exhibiting symptoms, however the entire household of anyone exhibiting symptoms must strictly follow self-isolation guidance.

Time to Talk

We will shortly be rolling out our Time to Talk initiative from Primary 1 to Primary 7. Many children often welcome the opportunity to have a quiet 1 to 1 chat with an adult outwith the classroom setting. This may be to highlight a worry or concern, to have a short discussion about their learning or to share an achievement or some news. Children will be able to post a slip in a classroom box or one of two central boxes to request a quiet chat, most usually with their class teacher but also with the option of a member of the Leadership Team, business support staff, catering or facilities staff if they wish.

Holidays for 2021/2022

Despite this session having only just begun, school holidays for Session 2021/2022 have been agreed at LNCT level and I have attached them within this e-mail.

If recent times have taught us anything, everything is subject to change! However, changes prior to this year have been extremely rare and I would take these dates as read and use them for all future planning.

Nursery Class

Learning in our nursery class is going from strength to strength and it is great to see how well our returning and new children are settling and making new friends. Children are based in one of three zones when indoors but are free to explore and play across the full range of our outdoor provision. Children have a 'free-flow' opportunity to move between indoors and outdoors at every point of the day.

The logistics of drop-off and pick-up have been a challenge as our normal practice of welcoming parents/ carers into the nursery at the beginning and end of each day is unfortunately no longer possible. Our team have worked hard to make sure our children are handed over safely and calmly and have already reported seeing an increase in independence in how children manage their own belongings in the cloakroom- every cloud! The increased requirement for staff to manage this process means we need to have clearly identified drop-off and pick-up times within the day. This enables us to ensure that the provision and adult interaction for our children in the nursery is not disrupted throughout the course of a session and we have greatly appreciated your cooperation with this.

Although the Scottish Government have suspended the requirement for local authorities to provide 1140 hours of nursery provision and have advised that the money ring-fenced for this should be used for COVID recovery, East Renfrewshire Education Department made the decision to continue with the roll-out. This highlights the importance being placed on our early learning provision at a local level. Unfortunately, current circumstances mean that the lunch provision as part of the 1140 initiative is not currently possible- like so many things in life at the moment, nothing is quite as we once had planned! Thank you for providing your child's lunch and snack in the meantime and I will let you know as soon as circumstances change.

Diary

Tuesday 15 September; 3.30– 8.30pm approx.– first (virtual) Parent Consultation Meeting– tbc.

Wednesday 23 September; 3.00pm– school closes for September Weekend

Tuesday 29 September, 8.55am– school re-opens

Friday 9 October, 3.00pm– school closes for October Week

Monday 19 October– INSET Day

Tuesday 20 October– school re-opens

Friday 18 December– school closes for Christmas holiday

I strongly believe that the positive relationships we were all able to form over the course of last session really set us apart as a school community. As we welcome a significant number of new faces to our community and continue to cope with the sacrifices and adjustments to routines that we are all having to make, we face unprecedented challenges in terms of maintaining and enhancing those relationships for the benefit of our children.....but just because something is challenging, doesn't mean we aren't going to try! Have a great weekend.

Take care,

Alasdair McDonald
Head Teacher