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MASTERTON NEWS

DESIGN: THANA MITCHELL

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Water in Class

Pupils are only permitted to drink water in class – or milk which can be ordered termly, via the online lpay system. Water may be brought in a water bottle. We have a number of water coolers across the school where pupils can refill their water bottles. If a pupil forgets their water bottle and is thirsty, all classes have plastic cups which pupils may use to get a drink of water.



I was recently updating the School website and hoped no one happened to be on it whilst my update was taking place. I successful managed to ensure that when Mrs Heaton typed on her page it also appeared on the P.7a page erasing anything written there. I managed to delete all the menus, reinstate them on top of each other and then finally end up with a spelling test becoming the front page. Clearly a career in IT is not for me!

Staffing

I thought it worth listing the staff for this session as I don't think I sent out an update after we returned from the summer holidays. I have updated it on the school website.

Mr S Humphries (HT) Overall responsibility but with a focus upon P.7
Miss E English (DHT) P.4 - 6
Mrs N Mohammed (DHT) P.1 - 3

P.7a - Mrs. L Colburn (Miss N Collins on a Wednesday)	P.3a - Miss T Mills
P.7b - Mrs G Wilson	P.3b - Mr A Cardus
P.6a - Mrs L Stirling	P.2/3 - Miss M Llewellyn
P.6b - Mrs J McNeil	P.2 - Mr R Hopper
P.5a - Miss A Ireland	P.1/2 - Mr M Bissett
P.5b - Mrs M Ferguson	P.1a - Miss G Swift
P.4a - Mrs. S Dickson (Monday - Wednesday) Mrs A Murray (Thursday - Friday)	P.1b - Mrs K Beck
P.4b - Mrs K Heaton	

Mrs J Mitchell (SfL)* Monday - Thursday
Miss E Scott Thursday - Friday
Miss N Collins Wednesday - Thursday
Ms N Roy Monday - Tuesday
Mrs L Dargie Wednesday - Friday

Mrs M Hance (PSA)** Monday - Friday
Mrs I Kenny (PSA) Monday - Friday
Miss K Gray (PSA) Monday - Friday
Mrs R Newton (PSA) Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday
Miss M Franklin (PSA) Monday - Friday

Mrs L Stevenson Administrator
Mrs L Brown Clerical Assistant

*SfL - Support for Learning

**PSA - Pupil Support Learning

Parent Council

We had a good start to the year at the Parent Council. Lots of ideas were shared and a plan for the work we carry out was put forward. One suggestion was made regarding the entrances for the Shared Start.

You said....

The wait to get in at Shared Starts was very long. The queue often snaked around the school from the front door all the way to the infant playground. This meant that parents lost the opportunity to spend time in their child/ren's classes. Following this conversation, we timed how long it took for the last person to enter the school during a shared start in June (7 minutes).

We did....

We introduced 2 entrances for Shared Start. One for the Upper School and one for the infants to reduce the wait and to maximise time spent in class.

Although a small change it did make a significant difference to the time taken for parents to get in. It took around 3 minutes to get everyone in. This is a change we will make permanently to ensure that time queuing is reduced.

The Parent Council / FROMPS have set us up for the ASDA Cashpot for Schools scheme. As you will have seen from the Facebook posts, if you are signed up, every time you go shopping in ASDA they donate 0.5% of your shopping bill to the school's cashpot. So far this has raised over £298 which will be spent on resources for the pupils.

Recording & Photographs at School Events



A quick reminder about school events. Whenever we have school events (e.g. assemblies, Christmas Performances, the Masterton Mile etc.) recording and photographs are not permitted. We always remind parents at the start and try to ensure that they have time to take pictures of their own child at the end. Recording of something like the Masterton Mile will undoubtedly have other pupils in the filming which is not permitted. We do have a private Facebook page in the school where we will share some pictures but permission will always have been given to share these pictures.

Mobile Phones



Whilst the Scottish Government has issued new guidance on mobile phones in schools, we remain happy with our approach to them. As agreed with the Parent Council a number of years ago, any pupil bringing a mobile phone would place it in their classes container and then they would be kept at the office. This keeps the phone safe and secure. At the end of the day they would then collect it from the office. This has worked for the last few years and will continue to be our policy.

PE

All pupils should continue to come to school in their PE kit on days allocated for gym. This reduces time for getting changed. PE kit should be a simple t-shirt and shorts or tracksuit trousers. Expensive designer gear, crop tops, football tops etc. should not be worn. Jewellery should not be worn during PE as earrings, chains or rings can get caught on apparatus leading to serious injury. If a pupil has recently had their ears pierced and cannot remove them, then parents should send in some simple micropore tape to cover them thus reducing the possibility of injury.

Forgotten Items

If you have forgotten something and wish to hand it into the office please can I ask that you only do so if essential. We used to always accept forgotten items but over the years the number of forgotten items increased to the point when one day we had over 25 items handed in. As you can imagine, apart from trying to ensure that a pupil received their forgotten item, it was taking 40 – 50 minutes to hand everything out.

We will accept medication, glasses and other medical items (e.g. if a pupil has a dietary condition and can't have any other food).

However, if say a packed lunch is forgotten we can ensure that a pupil has a school dinner choice made. If a water bottle is forgotten we have cups in classes. If they forget their pencil case we have lots of pencils in class. If they forget their coat we have lots of spare coats.

We rarely turn things away and usually remind the person handing things in that it is school policy not to accept items. However, I do ask that you please help us to reduce time being wasted in the school office especially now that the school is the biggest it has ever been. Thank you.

School Improvement Plan 2024 2025

Every year we write an Improvement Plan for the school for the year ahead. In this plan I detail some of the areas we are working on improving. Not all areas are covered in the plan but the key areas upon which we are focused. I've summarised the areas below. Just to say that the full School Improvement Plan 2024 2025 and the Standards and Quality Report 2023 2024 are on the website and the links are also below:

[School Improvement Plan 2024 2025 Final Version](#)

[SQR 2023 2024 Final Version](#)

Mental Arithmetic – Improvement Priority

Over the last 3 years we have had a significant focus upon literacy in the school. We achieved our Reading Schools award this session (2024), put in place a new reading scheme and revamped the novels up the school (this is still in process). Our attainment in reading has risen and is now very good. For example, last session's P.7 pupils scored twice the national average in the top band for their National Standardised Assessment in reading (Masterton top band 31%, National average 16%). In numeracy whilst our attainment is good we are scoring just slightly ahead of the national average. I am sure that after some focused work we can improve this, just like in our reading.

On this basis we are going to focus upon improving pupils' mental arithmetic. The focus will be age dependent but areas like number bonds, times tables and memorisation of mathematical processes will be a priority.

Planning and Tracking – Improvement Priority

Fife Council is in the process of introducing a new way of recording pupil progress across all areas of the curriculum. The aim is to improve the tracking of pupils throughout their school career and to support pupils in areas where they are having difficulties. We currently do track children's progress, and always have, but using a different system. As part of the new tracking process we will also be reviewing our planning across the school to ensure it is compatible and up to date.

Rights Respecting Schools

With the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child now enshrined in Scottish law we felt that it was important that the parents, staff and pupils at Masterton all worked at this to ensure we know what our rights and responsibilities are. We are aiming to achieve our Bronze Award this session and to build on this over the coming sessions. A Pupil Council has been set up with a focus upon leading our Rights Respecting School agenda.

House Captains

As usual during Term 1 we had our House Captain elections. This year we had over 40 P.7 pupils putting themselves forward to become House Captains. This is by far the most we have ever had. We were so pleased that so many pupils did so. Although not hearing all the speeches I was informed that the standard was extremely high and that some of the speeches were amongst the best the teachers had ever heard. After a whole day of speeches the following pupils were elected as House or Vice House Captains.

House Captains (Cont'd)

CANMORE	House Captain: Matthew Reid Vice-Captain: Amber Swanson
WALLACE	House Captain: Zara McLuckie Vice-Captain: Calum Cuthbertson
BRUCE	House Captain: Ella Mangto Vice-Captain: Brodie King
CARNEGIE	House Captain: Emmi Loudon Vice-Captain: Jessica Colburn

Well done to all the pupils involved. I know many were disappointed not to be chosen as House or Vice-Captain but they did themselves proud. What I will say is that we are providing even more opportunities to represent the school than previous years so if you were not successful in being a House Captain there will be many other opportunities.

Reading Ambassadors

One of these other opportunities was to become a Reading Ambassador. Across the school pupils were asked to fill in an application form to become a Reading Ambassador to explain why they should be picked. Out of this the following pupils were chosen. Pupils in P.1a and 1b will have the opportunity to become Reading Ambassadors later on in the year.

P1/2 - Ayush Bhandari	P5a - Finlay Curtis
P2 - Eilidh Jack	P5b - Saachi Chandrasekhar
P2/3 - Cameron Brooks	P6a - Harry Sinclair
P3a - Lochlan Taylor	P6b - Brooke Conner
P3b - Autumn Stewart	P7a - Ari Stewart
P4a - Grace Wale	P7b - Reyaan Boyaci
P4b - Harris Stafford	

Well done Reading Ambassadors! You have a great opportunity ahead of you.

Pupil Council

We have also introduced a **Pupil Council**. In the past our **House Captains** represented all the pupils in their house so lead things like a Pupil Council. However, we want to have a wide range of pupils to lead our **Rights Respecting School** agenda so this will be a big part of their job. The following pupils will make up our Pupil Council.

P.1a - Jessica Fraser	P.1b - Inaya Mohapatra
P.1/2 - Zarah Comerford	P.2 Kalin McPherson
P.2/3 - Arran Stewart	P.3a - Eilidh Thomson
P.3b - Max Darling	P.4a - Theo Parkyn
P.4b - Lauren Read	P.5a - Ruaridh Jack
P.5b - Owen Murray	P.6a - Evan Murray
P.6b - Emma Final	P.7a - Erin Reilly
P.7b - Aaroh Mohapatra	

Eco Committee

We also have our new eco-committee dedicated to all things eco (apart from the seagulls which live in the playground). They are:

P.1a - Maisie Wilson

P.1b - Scott Toye

P.1/2 - Josh Adair

P.2 - Ella Aburrow

P.2/3 - Alex Zvamvamwe

P.3a - Isla Low

P.3b - Murrone Gallagher

P.4a - Lily Somerville

P.4b - Finn Hamilton

P.5a - Arria Sherry

P.5b - Naomi Marshall

P.6a - Iona McDowall

P.6b - Gorgie Gamble

P.7a - Amelie Young

P.7b - James Jeffries

As you can see pupils have lots of opportunities to provide us their views on the school and help guide the best way forward.

Other Things Going on in the School

We've had quite a number of other things going on in the school as well this term.

All four P.6 and P.7 classes have been taking part in an online Spanish course. A specialist teacher leads the lessons and provides game and resources to be used in class afterward. P.7a are also trying out the French course. The courses take place weekly via an MS Teams call with schools all over Scotland taking part together.

P.7 have had a block of hockey coaching with a coach. They will hopefully be taking part in a hockey tournament in October to put their newly learned skills to use. They have also had a number of rugby taster sessions.

P.7 have also had a visit from Barnardo's to help support our drugs education programme.

P.6 have had a block of badminton coaching. They have also had the opportunity to take part in after school basketball, organised by the Active Schools team. This started mid-September.

P.6a have started their Bikeability training which is going well. P.6b will have the chance to do their training later on in the year but obviously Bikeability training is very weather dependant.



Other Things Going on in the School (Cont'd)

P.5 have had a number of visits from the Youth Music Initiative for the 'Big Sing'. This will continue over the next few months on a fortnightly basis. The pupils in P.5 will then have the opportunity to take part in a number of activities related to this and then hopefully share their songs with parents.

P.4 pupils have had the opportunity to take part in football training after school on a Monday. This has been organised by the Active Schools team. It was heavily oversubscribed so names were drawn out of a hat. Anyone who was not picked had their name kept so that if further opportunities arise they will have first pick.

All pupils in P.1 – 3 have also received or will receive their 'Read, Write and Count' bags from the Scottish Book Trust. These are bags which are distributed to families of younger pupils containing free books and activities.

We have had 2 pupils from Dunfermline High School taking part in their modern apprenticeship programme on a Monday afternoon. They have been helping out in P.3b and P.4b. One of them, Katie, is an ex-Masterton pupil so it has been really nice to see her again and hear about how she is progressing.

And finally.....

It's hard to believe that Term 1 is nearly finished already. It felt like we just returned from the summer holidays a few weeks ago. Time seems to have flown past. However, we have managed to get a lot done and have made good progress so far this term.

To be honest I really like the October Holidays. I like autumn and the fact that my garden stops growing. The October break also prepares us before we commence the mad dash towards December. I also know that the staff 'look forward' to our first meeting back after the holidays when the planning for Christmas takes place. Mind you Miss English was full of ideas and enthusiasm about Christmas when it was mentioned. I can't wait.....

The school closes on **Friday 4th October at 3pm** for the October Holidays and re-opens on **Monday 21st October at 9am**. Have a good break – if you're having one.

Regards

Mr S Humphries
Headmaster

