



# Community Connections

Issue 4/20, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## Hello from Mrs Gillespie

Last time, I shared with you my own personal values: growth, potential and compassion. These values, together with our school values, underpin my vision for our school and nursery.

Now I am ready to share my vision with you. Here it is:

My vision is that Wemyss Bay Primary School and Nursery Class will be the heartbeat of the community, where all are welcomed, nurtured, supported and challenged to achieve their potential, and become curious, creative, confident citizens, through irresistible learning experiences.

Over the next few editions of Community Connections, I will break my vision down to help make it more meaningful and relevant, in the hope that you will gain a deeper insight into what this could mean for us.

So let's start at the beginning...

My opening statement stresses the importance of **community**. Interestingly, if you google a map of our village, our school and nursery lie right under the teardrop symbol; geographically, we appear at the centre – the heart - of the village. My vision is that we are more than a geographical symbol however; I see our school and nursery as the vibrant, energetic, beating heart of Wemyss Bay, where, like a continuous pulse, there is always something going on. I see our school as a place that welcomes the community in, reaches out to access and be involved in the community and works in partnership to improve our community.

Now this is all in the context of recovery from the pandemic, but I positively believe it is achievable within the next three years.

And I believe that it is needed. I know that the strengthening of community activity once again will provide that sense of belonging and connection so critical to our wellbeing.

Now this is not new!

## Get to know our staff...

Mrs Amy Arthur, Teacher



### What I am grateful for

I am grateful for my family and delighted that I can see my extended family and friends again with the easing of restrictions.

### My Interests

I love cooking, going to the gym and walking. I also love going to watch my children playing and participating in their sports and quite often have to travel around the country for this.

### My Favourite Food

My favourite food is anything with chicken in it!

### Places I would like to Visit

I would love to go on holiday again soon. I would really love to go to Italy.

### What I am learning

I have been involved in some online course about self-worth and mindfulness and I am finding these really interesting.

### What I am reading and watching

I am currently watching Vigil on BBC and really enjoying it. I have been reading lots of interior design magazines and blogs as I am currently decorating my house.

### Something quirky about me

I once played the flute at the Millennium Dome - now the O2 Arena in London.

We have had meaningful community partnerships before – and still do.

What I am looking forward to is the rekindling some of these partnerships and to the steady growth of community activity, engendering a sense of purpose as we move forward together.

I hope that this excites you and that you can see your role and place in this aspect of my vision.

Take care and stay safe,

*Alison Gillespie*

## Whole School Matters...

### Spotlight on our Values

As part of our focus on the school and nursery values, each class is doing a 'deep dive' into one of the values and providing an insight into what they learn and agree as being important.

Please check out what P7 feel about the importance of **honesty** by looking at the document attached to this email. P7 are also making a short video – link to follow. Thank you Primary 7.

### School and Nursery Staffing

Further to the previous update on staffing, we can confirm that interviews for our 0.5 teacher post took place on 30<sup>th</sup> September and the appointment is in the process of being confirmed.

### Vision Checks

Vision checks for pre-school nursery children will take place on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Consent forms have been issued – please ensure they are returned by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October. Thank you.

### Flu Vaccinations

Flu Vaccinations are scheduled for Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November. The vaccination is administered in the form of a nasal spray. We will of course be preparing the children using the NHS resources prior to this date. Consent forms have been issued – please ensure they are returned by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October. Thank you.

### Parent Partnership

The Annual General Meeting of the Parent Partnership took place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021. Office bearers for the coming sessions were appointed as follows:

Chairperson	Beth Macleod
Vice Chairperson	Linda Knox
Treasurer	Gemma Williams
Secretary	Laura Gibson

### Communication

We endeavour to communicate all matters of importance to you regularly. We accept, however, that sometimes, information may not be communicated clearly and we apologise if you feel this has happened recently. Please remember that we are here to help if you have a query and we will respond to phone calls or emails where clarification is required. It would help us to know if there is a problem otherwise we can't address it so please let us know.

We use texts, email and Twitter as our main platforms for communicating general information. If you do not already follow us on Twitter, then please consider this as a way of keeping in touch: [@WemyssBAySchool](https://twitter.com/WemyssBAySchool)

Our website is updated regularly too, with our latest newsletters and information:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/in/wemyssbayps/>

## Learning Matters...

### Maths Week Scotland

Thank you for supporting Maths Week Scotland. The children certainly enjoyed their challenges as they explored the relevance of maths in the world around them.

### Learning Events in October

A reminder that as we move through October, there are number of special learning events. These were explained in detail in the last edition of Community Connections, but in summary, they include:

- Black History Month – this includes Show Racism the Red Card Day on 22<sup>nd</sup> October when we are all invited to wear something red in support of this initiative. No money is required.
- Dyslexia Awareness Week (this week)
- Writing Assessments (school pupils)
- Digital insight into Health and Wellbeing – P2/3 pupils and families (link will be shared on 25<sup>th</sup> October)

### Halloween for school aged pupils

We have had feedback from families regarding how we mark Halloween in the school. Whilst I have been here at Wemyss Bay, Halloween has provided the context for our learning for one day, and there have been Halloween themed activities including mask making and 'dooking' for apples, with a Halloween fancy dress disco run by our Parent Partnership in the evening.

We have been asked to reconsider this – partly because the disco which provided the opportunity for children to wear their costumes, cannot take place. In response, we consulted with our children. They shared their opinions very eloquently, expressing the following:

- Some children like to dress up and others don't.
- Masks can be scary
- Halloween costumes can be 'overwhelming' for younger children and they might be a bit frightened
- Halloween can be fun
- It's nice to dress up
- Most of us don't like fake blood
- Some people don't celebrate Halloween but others do and like it
- Not everyone likes it when things are different

We have listened to our pupils' opinions and their ideas and have taken all of this into consideration. As such, the afternoon of Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October will include classroom based Halloween activities as before but the children may bring in costumes to wear on that afternoon if they wish. The children themselves have suggested that these should not include masks, fake blood or props that may cause children to feel scared and we think that these are sensible guidelines.

This must not cause any hardship to any family, and so if you would like help to source a costume, please contact Beth MacLeod and the Parent Partnership will help you out.

We hope that this is clear but if you have any questions, please contact the school.

### Parent / Teacher Meetings

Recent Covid Guidance allows for further changes to the way we do things in our nursery and school, particularly with face-to-face meetings with families to support particular children. This does not, however, include a return to full face to face parent / teacher meetings.

In light of the above, it is our intention to hold parent / teacher updates by telephone next term, during the week beginning 8th November 2021. Further information will follow.

## Health and Wellbeing Matters...

Mrs Cushnahan

Over the next five issues, our Health and Wellbeing Matters will focus on the **Five Ways to Wellbeing**.

Evidence suggests there are five steps you can take to help improve your mental health and wellbeing.

These are

- connect
- be active
- take notice
- keep learning
- give



This issue focuses on **Be Active**.

Mental wellbeing means feeling good about yourself, about the world around you and having the ability to get on with life in the way you want.

Being active does not mean you need to train for a marathon or go to the gym every day! You need to find physical activity that you enjoy and can fit into your daily/ weekly routine. This may be a daily walk to the shops instead of taking the car, a weekly gardening session, some yoga, swimming or a weekend walk.

Exercise is a really effective way to reduce our levels of anxiety and give our moods a boost. As we exercise, our brain chemistry is changed as endorphins are released, which can calm anxiety and lift our moods. These benefits of exercise are felt during and immediately after exercise, meaning that exercise can offer quick relief if we are feeling anxious or stressed.

Many people find that exercise, especially playing sports, can be a lot of fun! Finding the time to do things we enjoy is important for our mental wellbeing. Exercising with others offers us a chance to make friends and connect with other people – which, as one of the Five Ways to Wellbeing, is proven to be excellent for our sense of wellbeing and mental health.

## Nursery Matters...

Mrs Milligan

### Hello!

It is almost the end of term – it has flown by. Thank you for all you have done to support us so far this session – it is appreciated.

### Transitions

The new term will bring some changes. Children from Mrs Thomson's purple group and Mrs Robertson's green group will be moving to the indoor nursery after the October break. Mrs Craig's red group and Mrs Miller's yellow group will be moving to the outdoor nursery. For some, this will be the first time exploring the indoor classroom and for others, this will offer more freedom of free flow play.

### **The benefits of role play outdoors**

Outdoor role-play, and role play in early years settings in general are crucial for igniting a child's imagination and developing life skills. Children love role-play, and it often gives them skills which help them in everyday life.

Taking activities outdoors can be exciting for young children; they get to explore different surroundings, connect with nature, and have space to develop their play. What's more, when children take their role-play adventures outdoors it can really bring the experience to life.

As well as giving them a little more freedom, allowing children to engage in outdoor role-play has huge learning benefits. Being outside means that children can experiment with nature and incorporate items such as leaves, twigs and sand into their role-play. The addition of natural props and being outdoors itself will add to the fun and give them a sensory experience.

Letting children spend time outside in all weathers is essential. Children can use their imaginations to theme scenarios around the weather, allowing them to get used to the different seasons we experience.

Our children love playing outdoors as the pictures at the end of the newsletter today testify. Thank you for supporting this dimension of play.

## **Family Matters...**

### **Come as You Please Day.**

A reminder that Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October will be a Come as You Please day. We would ask for a donation of £1 please. This will support our school fund. Please note that football tops / shorts / tracksuits should not be worn. Thank you.

### **Free School Meal and Clothing Grants**

Life has changed or many of us and for some, that has had an impact on family incomes. We would like to remind you that you may be entitled to help with school meals and clothing.

All children in P1-P5 automatically qualify for free school meals. However, you may wish to be considered for the clothing grant. You may qualify for a clothing grant if one of the following statements applies to your family circumstances:

You are currently in receipt of

- Income Support (IS);
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA);
- income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA);
- Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than £16,105 (in 2021/2022) as assessed by HMRC;
- Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit and have an income of no more than £11,916; as assessed by HMRC or
- Universal Credit, where your take home pay does not exceed £970, as shown on your most recent monthly Universal Credit Statement.

or

- You are seeking asylum and, receiving support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1991;

or

- You look after a child as part of a formal Kinship Care agreement, registered by Social Work Services

A clothing grant is worth £150 for each school aged child in your household. You can apply up to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022.

It may interest you to know that our school currently receives an additionally to our normal budget, and the number of children in receipt of free school meals or a clothing grant helps to determine this. This is called the Pupil Equity Fund and is part of the Scottish Government's Attainment Challenge.

You can find out more here: <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools/clothing-grant-and-free-school-meals>

## And finally....

Some lovely photographs of our youngest learners playing outdoors – just look at the role-play!



## Coming Up

October 2021	Black History Month
08.10.2021	Come as You Please Day
11.10.2021	School and Nursery holiday week
18.10.2021	In-service Day for school and nursery staff
19.10.2021	Pupils return
22.10.2021	Wear Red to Show Racism the Red Card
27.10.2021	P2/3 HWB Video shared with families (Curriculum event)
29.10.2021	Halloween Activity Afternoon

## Outgoing Correspondence

27.09.2021	Public Health Scotland Survey	email
30.09.2021	Invitation to join WBPS Parent Partnership AGM on 05/10/21 via Webex	email
04.10.2021	Family Learning Challenge	email

**Thank you all for your ongoing support - we couldn't do it without you!**