



Community Connections

Issue 12/20, 10th January 2022

Hello from Mrs Gillespie

We are approaching our Spring half term and this year, the February holiday includes Valentine's Day, closely followed by Random Acts of kindness Day on the 17th February.

Now for some, Valentine's Day has become a day monopolised by commerciality, and for some, it is a difficult day; but for others, it is a day to celebrate that basic human emotion: love.

Love is such a huge concept it seems a shame that we only have one word for it. In Ancient Greece, love was a concept pondered over by some of history's most famous philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle. These philosophers attempted to explain love rationally and categorised the different kinds of love people could feel. This led to a number of Greek words for the different kinds of love we might experience, including love that involves friendship (*philia*), unconditional love (*agape*), and the natural love that family members have for one another (*storge*).

As someone who loves words, I find this helpful. It takes away the mush!

This week is Children's Mental Health Week, with the theme, 'Growing Together'. We have been talking with the children about what this means and reached the conclusion that in order to grow together, we need to care together. Put simply we need to be kind.

Is that a form of love? According to the Greek philosophers, maybe it is....

In the meantime, whatever your thoughts about Valentine's Day, be kind to each other and to yourself and have a lovely weekend.

Take care and stay safe,

Alison Gillespie



Get to know our staff...

Mrs Sharon Thomson, Senior Early Years Education and Childcare Officer



What I am grateful for

I am grateful for my family, friends, and a job that I enjoy.

My Interests

I enjoy walking my dog Mavis who is a little Jack Russell, drama, yoga, and painting.

My Favourite Food

I love my food especially sea food and Italian dishes although I must admit not fond of Brussel sprouts.

Places I would like to Visit

I love travelling and would go anywhere but on my bucket list are Thailand and Vietnam.

What I am learning

At the moment, I am in my 3rd year of my BA in Childhood Studies although in this job every day is a school day and the other day, I had to look up how big a dinosaur poo is!

What I am reading and watching

I am currently reading Big Lies in a Small Town by Diane Chamberlain and watching MasterChef Australia.

Something quirky about me

I used to do amateur dramatics and, in the past, have played the villain "Long Joan Silver" in Old Gourock and Ashton Parish Church.

Whole School Matters...

Our Curriculum Rationale

We recently asked you to help us develop our curriculum Rationale by answering this question: 'What do we want for our children and how will we work together to achieve this?' Our survey will be closing tomorrow, Friday 11th February, so if you would still like to have your say, please do! The more feedback we have, the more robust our understanding of our identity which in turn informs our onward journey. You can find the survey here: <https://forms.office.com/r/e4uVrGcA4p>

Thank you all so much.

Come as You Please Day – Friday 11th February 2022

We are working with the Parent Partnership to raise funds to support class trips in term 4. To give these funds a boost, Friday 11th February will be a Come as You Please Day for all school pupils, with a suggested donation of £1 please. Following feedback from our parent body, we have opened a line on ParentPay to allow families to donate online. Cash can still be paid on the day if you would prefer, though it is our aim to eventually move to becoming a cashless school. Please remember that no football strips should be worn. Thank you.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club has been operating on a 'grab bag' basis since it restarted following lockdowns. From the week beginning 21st February, a sit down breakfast will once again be offered.

The sit down breakfast will consist of the following menu options:

- Cereal – Weetabix, Bran Flakes, Gluten Free Cornflakes
- Toast – Soft grain white loaf, wholemeal loaf, flora original
- Fruit
- Water and milk

Breakfast Club is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8.15am. Children with free meal entitlement can access this provision without cost; those who are not entitled to a free breakfast are required to pay £1, and this must be done using Parent Pay please. If your child does not currently access this facility but you would like them to in the future, then please contact the school office to register.

World Book Day

Thursday 3rd March will be World Book Day. We will of course be marking this day. We have spoken to our children to see what they would like to do and have settled on the following:

- Pyjama Day
- Soft Toy for quiet reading time
- Class based Book Swaps

We will also have an assembly and will have regular stops throughout the day as some of our staff read to the whole school using our radio facility.

Help please....

As detailed in previous editions of our newsletter, we have had some areas of our school refurbished and plans are being developed for further work, all of which is very exciting. The refurbishment of the pupil toilets was a huge undertaking, but resulted in a refreshed suite of facilities that ensure privacy and dignity. Sadly, keeping the toilets in that state has proved to be a bit challenging. We would ask you, please, to encourage your child / children to respect our toilet facilities, and to treat them in the way they would their home bathrooms, so that they remain clean and safe for all children to access and use with dignity. Thank you.

More help please....

Our work to improve and develop our school estate extends to our outdoor spaces. We have recently taken delivery of a number of whisky barrel planters and compost, thanks to connections made with local community partners – a big thank you to those involved in securing these for us. Upgrading our outdoor raised garden beds is another priority and we have teams of children who are keen to take care of these as part of our Outdoor Learning programme. If you have the skills and the time to support this piece of work, please get in touch. Thank you.

Parent Partnership

Our Parent Partnership continue to support our school and nursery. Their next venture will on Tuesday 1st March, which is Shrove Tuesday, more affectionately known as Pancake Day. Pancakes with a range of toppings (nut free) will be available for children to purchase at the cost of 50p each.

The Parent Partnership will also be organising the production of nursery and school tea towels. More information will follow shortly.

Please remember that any parent can be involved in this group. If you would like more information, please contact the school, the Chair Person Mrs Beth MacLeod or the Vice Chair Person, Mrs Linda Knox.

Learning Matters...

Scottish National Standardised Assessments

Primary 1, 4 and 7 pupils will be taking part in the Scottish National Standardised Assessments, starting the week beginning 21st February. Children complete these assessments online and they are marked automatically. The resulting data provides teachers with immediate diagnostic feedback that they can then use to help children progress in literacy and numeracy. You can find more information here: <https://standardisedassessment.gov.scot/parents-and-carers/>

Outdoor Learning

We continue to develop our Outdoor Learning programme. As you know, we access our outdoor environment in all sorts of weathers. Sometimes, the weather changes mid trip and that can prove interesting! Please ensure that your child has a jacket every day and that their shoes are suitable for walking in the woods and on the beach. Can we also ask that pupils have a spare pair of socks in their school bag as a matter of routine? It is the socks that often come off worst when our weather fluctuates, and we are simply running out of supplies – and radiators! This would help us hugely - thank you.

Health and Wellbeing Matters...

Mrs Cushnahan

What are Barriers to Learning?

As part of our Health and Wellbeing Matters, we are focusing on specific barriers to learning. This time we are looking at **dyscalculia**.

Dyscalculia is a specific and persistent difficulty in understanding numbers, which can lead to a diverse range of difficulties with mathematics.

Common signs of dyscalculia may include difficulty:

- grasping the meaning of quantities or concepts like biggest vs. smallest
- understanding that the numeral 5 is the same as the word five, and that these both mean five items

- remembering math facts in school, like times table
- counting money or making change
- estimating time
- judging speed or distance
- understanding the logic behind math
- holding numbers in their head while solving problems

In school we support these difficulties by:

- providing visuals to support learning times tables
- using number lines and 100 square visuals
- use of concrete materials (for example, counters, cubes and clocks)
- teaching maths outdoors
- using drawings to work through a problem
- breaking down questions into smaller chunks

Numbers are everywhere and we often talk to our children about numbers in everyday conversations. Repetition of number work is very important to help children confidently understand numbers and make links. Any type of extra number work will be beneficial to a child. Number games are often enjoyed at home, this could be in the form of board games or internet based games. It is also important to build up a child's confidence with number and for them to achieve success, no matter how small.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/information/dyslexia/numeracy/>

If you would like help or advice on dyscalculia, then please don't hesitate to contact the school to discuss further. Thank you.

Nursery Matters...

Mrs Milligan

Hello!

We have again been very busy in our nursery.

The visit from our community police officers went very well! The children asked lots of questions and even had a look in the police car. PC George Ross has promised to become a familiar face and to come back and see us soon. We were also hoping for a visit from the fire service but unfortunately, they are not doing any visits yet. So, unless we burn the toast (again!) we will have to wait until restrictions are eased.

We have also celebrated Chinese New Year when we made an amazing dragon, learned about different cultural traditions, and tasted Chinese foods. During Story Telling Week, we discussed our favourite stories and decorated our book nook with some new soft furnishings and lights.

A big thank you to all the families that took part in the soup making home learning packs and for posting the pictures on Twitter. The children have enjoyed learning new skills and are keen to explore this further. We have been trying new foods at snack and we are currently discussing what we can make next at nursery and at home. As always, we appreciate your continued support.

What is coming up?

This is our consultation week. Group discussions are taking place to find out what the children want to learn and to explore any interests they have. This informs our planning for the next 3/4-week block.

Some of the information or ideas comes from their doodle books. Again, a big thank you to all the families who have been sharing the children's learning and interests from home. The doodle books will be sent home this week with information on what we have been learning over the last 3/4 weeks. Please have a look and ask the children about their learning and add comments and pictures.

We will celebrate Valentine's Day (February 14th) by making cards and talking about our feelings. We are looking forward to enjoying some delicious vegan pancakes on Pancake Day/Shrove Tuesday (March 1st) and to celebrating World Book Day (March 3rd) when all children are encouraged to bring in their favourite book and to wear pyjamas.

Reminders

Regardless of the weather our children continue to enjoy outdoor learning. Therefore, it is important that your child has a bag with at least two changes of clothes, especially socks, please. If you have any spare or unwanted clothes, please hand them to your child's keyworker – this would help us hugely in replenishing our stock.

Thank you!

Family Matters...

Before and After School Care

You may already be aware that there is interest from a private enterprise in establishing a before and after school care facility in the village. We know from talking directly with you and through dialogue with our Parent Partnership that there is a need for this provision, but we are not in the position to comment on how great the need or interest is. A scoping exercise led by the provider will be coming very soon, providing you with the opportunity to express any interest you may have in accessing such a provision. Watch this space for further details.

Internet Safety

Online safety, as you know, is a very important part of children's learning. We marked Safer Internet Day this week with a special assembly and activities in classrooms. We know that it can be challenging to talk about online safety at home and following on from the link shared in our last newsletter, would like to signpost you to these sites too:

<https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/online-safety>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

We would be keen to know if you would be interested a workshop exploring Internet Safety. Please drop us an email if this would be helpful for you and your family.

Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

The 2021-2022 Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census went live on Monday 7th February and will close on Friday 25th February. Inverclyde schools have been asked to take part in this survey. The data generated from the census will be shared with Scottish Government – more details can be found in the letter shared with school families on Monday.

You can find the survey here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Inverclyde-Parental-Engagement-Involvement-Census-2021-2022/>

Covid winter hardship grant

The Scottish Government has announced plans to provide an additional Covid winter grant hardship to support families with additional financial pressures through the Winter. Inverclyde Council has taken a decision to use some of this funding to make a grant payment of £50 for every school aged pupil in receipt of a free school meal/clothing grant. This will be paid ahead of the February break in 2022. Therefore, on or around Friday 11 February 2022, the Council will provide families with a payment for each school aged child in your household who is entitled to free school meals / clothing grant. This payment will be made directly to eligible families through the bank account the local authority hold on file.

Coming Up

11.02.2022	Come as You Please Day
14.02.2022	Holiday
15.02.2022	Holiday
16.02.2022	In-service Day
17.02.2022	School reopens to all pupils
21.02.2022	Scottish National Standardised Assessments begin for P1, P4 and P7 pupils Homework Issued
23.02.2022	P5 Curriculum Video shared with families – Wellbeing focus
24.02.2022	Community Connections Issue 13
03.03.2022	World Book Day
04.02.2022	Homework due

Outgoing Correspondence

03.02.22	Newsletter from St Ninian's Primary to Nursery children enrolled for August 2022	email
04.02.22	Lion King Letter to Parents of P4/5; 5 and 6	email
04.02.22	Update for families	email
07.02.22	Parental Involvement and Engagement Survey 2021-2022	email
07.02.22	WBPS Spring Family Learning Challenge Feb 2022	email
10.02.22	Active Schools Move Challenge	email

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