

**Whitehirst Park**

**Primary**

**Newsletter 1 – August 2017**

**Dear Parents and Carers,**

Welcome to the first Newsletter of session 2017/2018. The first few weeks have been a whirlwind of activity in the school and very quickly the children and teachers have all settled into their new routines. It is great to see the children wearing their school uniform and looking so smart.



 **Administration Forms**

At the start of the session there are a number of administrative tasks we must undertake to update our records. **Please find the Annual Data Check Form enclosed with this newsletter to be returned to school by Monday 11th September.** It is essential that a completed data form is returned from each child. Throughout the session, we organise educational visits for certain classes. NO child can leave the school unless we have up to date contact details and a completed, signed permission form held in school. I would ask that you ensure you have completed and returned these to school. It is essential that parents inform the office of any changes to phone numbers – including mobile numbers. This will ensure we have up to date contact information in case of emergencies.



 **Staff Update**

As detailed in the previous brief newsletter I mentioned we had a number of teaching vacancies at the end of last session and I am delighted to welcome some new members of staff. Miss Emma Dobson will be teaching P2; Mrs Suzanne Brown will be teaching P5/6 every day, except Wednesday when Mrs Susi McGregor will teach the class; Mrs McGregor will also teach P7b on a Thursday and Friday to allow Miss Johnstone to complete her Principal Teacher remit. Mrs Lynsey Rowan will provide pupil support. Mrs Claire Williams will teach P.E. across the school on a Tuesday and Wednesday and provide pupil support on a Thursday.

**Homework**

In Session 2015-16 we involved pupils, staff and parents in evaluating our approach to homework. As part of this we decided to agree starting and stopping times for formal homework. This session, as a staff, we have agreed:

Term 1 – 21st August to 29th September Term 2 – 30th October to 1st December

Term 3 – 15th January to 23rd March Term 4 – 23rd April – 25th May

 **School Improvement Plan**

We are currently working on our Improvement Plan for Session 2017-18. Our priorities for this session will be to :

* *Cultivate a ‘nurturing schools’ approach to meet the needs of all young people.*
* *Align Numeracy planning and assessment with experiences and outcomes and benchmarks to enrich the quality of learners’ experiences and raise attainment in Numeracy.*
* *Align Literacy planning and assessment with experiences and outcomes and benchmarks to enrich the quality of learners’ experiences and raise attainment in Literacy.*
* *Use whole school self evaluation systems and processes to support quality improvement.*
* *Increase Parental Engagement through effective reporting to parents and Family Learning.*
* *Refine school self evaluation systems and processes to support quality improvement.*

 The completed plan will be placed on the website as soon as possible.



**Parent Council**

We are lucky to have a very active Parent Council and I am grateful for the commitment that all members give to the school. As always we are looking forward to sharing our ideas and working together for the benefit of all the children in the school. This session we have a few vacancies. If you wish to be considered look out for a letter from the chairperson, Lynne Gibson and return the reply slip to school. You can contact the Parent Council via the chairperson at whitehirstparkparents@gmail.com.



 **Fundraising Committee**

As well as an active Parent Council we have a very busy Fundraising Committee. The first meeting of the new session is on Monday 11th September at 6.30pm in the school. The committee is very keen to welcome new members and all parents, grandparents, aunties etc are welcome to join the very informal meetings to discuss the fundraising plans for the next session.

Thanks to the efforts of our Parent Council and Fundraising Committee we were able to make a good start to improving the outdoor environment. We now have permanent goals in the upper playground and an outdoor seating area and path in the Eco Garden. We also used our Awards for All grant to install a Play Trail for all ages. We are in the final process of having this signed off and the children will be able to use this soon following a safety induction for each class. We are looking forward to making more improvements over the course of this session!



 **Child Protection**

As you know, the school has a duty of care towards all children within the school. All staff within Whitehirst Park Primary are fully trained in child protection. Where the school has concerns over the wellbeing or care of a child, we have a legal obligation to follow North Ayrshire Council’s Child Protection Guidelines. Should any parent wish to see these guidelines, please feel free to contact the school. Further information on Getting It Right For Every Child can be found on the school website.

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**Health**

**Administration of Drugs and Medicine**

School staff cannot administer medication to pupils without parents completing a medical consent form. Special arrangements can be made for pupils with conditions requiring medication. Please contact myself or the school office to complete the necessary forms. **Children should not be given medication to take to school without making arrangements with the school office.** Please note children who require an inhaler (even only occasionally) must take their inhalers on all school trips.

**Head Lice**

Most families with nursery and school age children will suffer from head lice at some time. I would therefore urge all parents to be consistently vigilant in checking their child(ren)’s hair and follow the recommended procedures for dealing with this. For further advice please contact the school nurse on 551316.

**Infectious Illnesses**

Another reminder to please contact the school office immediately to inform us if you are aware of any infectious illnesses such as chicken pox and measles within your family. We have a number of pregnant staff and children with low immunity who must know immediately if they are being exposed to any infectious conditions. Your co-operation with this would be very much appreciated.



**Smoking**

Please remember that there is a no smoking policy in place in all areas of the school grounds.



**Dogs**

No-one loves dogs more than me, but I appreciate not everyone feels the same. Therefore I would ask you to refrain from bringing dogs into the playground in the morning or after school.



**Flu Vaccinations – Primary 1-7 Pupils**

As you will be aware, children in P1-P7 will be offered the Flu vaccine this year. This is painless and is administered by a nasal spray. School nurses will be in the school on 21st November to undertake this. Information will be issued to parents, and I would ask that the consent form is returned to school by 4th September. (Even if you do not wish your child to have this) Should you require further information, the school nurse can be contacted on 01294 551316.

**Harvest**

Our Harvest Assembly is planned for Wednesday 4th October and in the lead up to this we are inviting children to bring donations of non-perishable foods, to be donated to a local food bank. Donations for this can be sent to school any time now. We are seeking donations of tins, sugar, tea, dried foods etc. I thank you in anticipation of your support. The Charities Committee will co-ordinate this and send out further guidance soon. We will also make our usual donation to our friends at West Doura Court.



**Lost Property**

In our continuing efforts to minimise the amount of Lost Property in school can I please appeal that **all** items of clothing and footwear are labeled with your child’s name and class. There are already several unclaimed jackets and jumpers in the upper department.

 **Communication**

As always, Whitehirst Park is a busy school, in which we provide high quality learning experiences for our pupils. It is the partnership between home and school which supports this.

Communication is key to an effective partnership between school and home, and I am grateful to the large number of parents who support this. There are times I am unable to see parents immediately or take a phone call. In these circumstances, office staff will attempt to direct your requirements to another promoted member of staff.

Where you have a query about your child’s learning or behaviour, in the first instance the link would be with our Depute Head Teachers, Mrs Davidson (P1-3) and Mrs Dickinson (P4-7).

As always, should you have any queries about anything within our newsletter, or in connection with your child’s learning, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

We are regularly updating our website, facebook page and twitter feed, and would ask you make use of this. We are always happy to receive feedback on this, and would welcome ideas and suggestions on how to improve this. The website, facebook group and twitter feed can be found at:

<http://www.whitehirstpark.northayrshireschools.co.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/whitehirstparkparents/>

Follow us on twitter too - @WhitehirstPs

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**School Meals**

All school meals for P4-7 pupils should be paid in advance. Payment can be made by cash or cheque made payable to ‘North Ayrshire Council’ using a school dinner wallet. Please also note that if using the internet method of payment you must allow four working days for it to show in your child’s account. For further information about school meals and menus follow the link on the school website. The way you pay for school meals will be changing soon. Parent Pay is being rolled out across all schools and should be in place by October. Look out for information in school bags soon.



**Parent/Teacher Meetings**

Following a review of our procedures for Reporting to Parents we will be piloting a new system this session. Parents and pupils will be invited to meet with the teacher three times over the session and will set targets for the term ahead. We are also hoping to change to an electronic appointment booking system in an effort to tackle the associated bureaucracy and to reduce our carbon footprint so watch this space! Further details will follow soon. The first meetings are scheduled for Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st September so be sure to keep these dates free.

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**Parking**

Many thanks to all parents who adhere to our drop off only zone in the car park. To clarify, *there should be no parking between 8.45am and 9.15am and 2.45pm and 3.30pm*. Please share this with all adults who drop off and pick up children. We have two allocated disabled spaces in the staff carpark, beside the electricity sub station, which are available to registered blue badge holders on a first come first served basis. We are constantly reinforcing that children should use the pedestrian crossing areas to cross the carpark and I would appreciate it if all adults could follow this too. Please also remember that the Church carpark isn’t available on a Thursday due to an ongoing let they have.

**Diary Dates**

I have also provided you with a list of holidays and diary dates that we have so far for this session. This is to give you advance notice, however, these may be subject to change and I will still give you reminders of forthcoming events in future Newsletters, on the School Website, Twitter Feed and Facebook page.

I am very sure this will be another exciting session and hope that we can all work together as Whitehirst Park continues on it’s journey to excellence!

[*Excellence is doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/j/johnwgard132801.html)

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Kind regards,

Lynn Robertson

Head Teacher