

Dear families,

Welcome to the December issue of Balmalloch's Newsletter. With Christmas fast approaching, we have a very busy month ahead. We have the Primary 1 nativity and P2-7 Christmas concert very soon, so be sure to get your tickets. The children are in the process of practising and I know they will do a fantastic job with the hard work and encouragement of staff, and of course you! Lots of our children are also practising for 'Balmalloch's Got Talent', organised by Mrs Diamond and Mrs Simpson. A big thank you to them, what a treat we have in store. To thank our children, a movie afternoon has been organised and I am sure by that point the children will be glad of the rest.

Some of our Primary 7 pupils participated in the 'Ecoside' debate at Edinburgh University, getting involved in a current issue researched by our ECO Committee. Thank you to our families for getting the children to the train station for an early start. A big thank you to Miss Paterson and Mrs Hourigan for accompanying our children, a great day was had by all.

One of our Primary 5 pupils recently achieved success climbing Goatfell Mountain, 874m above sea level. Well done Mia, we are all so proud of you. We need more of our children's achievements and how they are supporting our community, recognised through our Community Values Awards from our Primary 7 Leadership Team. I am also so pleased to be approached by a number of children nominating members of their school community for a Head Teacher's Award because they are demonstrating our values in words and actions. It really shows how our children support each other and are happy to celebrate the success of others.

I would like to thank the PTA, staff, pupils and families for the organisation of the Christmas Fayre, it was a great success and every contribution made is appreciated. I want to also thank the PTA for their donation to enable a new interactive board to be purchased for our Digi Den. Mr Paterson has worked very hard to create a fantastic space for children across the school to use and develop their digital skills. Thanks Mr P! The grand opening will take place with our Digital Leaders and invited guests next week, with a session for parents afterwards.

We have had a great start to working towards our Family Learning and Engagement improvement priority. Feedback from families highlights that Parents' Evening and the sharing of children's progress through our new Pupil Progress Profiles have been successful. I will continue to support our families in using these but let me know if there is anything you need help with in the meantime. It has been wonderful to see families engaging in a range of activities with their children that support understanding of our values, encouraging these to be shown in words and actions. Children have shared their creative skills through 'poppies', 'Christmas decorations', school enterprise P7 pupils - thank you to the Class Teachers for their ongoing hand work) and made donations for the foodbank and the 'Wrap-up' campaign in partnership with the Rotary. We have also had a very successful 'Children in Need' thanks to our families. It is time to give something back to you, so we would love you to come along to our 'Biscuit and a Blether' event on Tuesday. We will consult our families and children about other opportunities for our children next term.

I want to say a big thank you to Mr Craik, Mr Stevenson, Mr Hall and Councillor Brannan McVey for their support with our courtyard. They have done wonders in turning it into a safe and usable space again. I would also like to thank our volunteers - parents, grandparents and students, including Mr Beveridge and Miss Hood, for giving their time to support our children.

Please note our 'Pre-loved' school uniform range can now be accessed at the nursery building. This will allow our families to take what they need when it is suitable for them.

It is lovely to receive such positive feedback from volunteers in school, visitors and members of the public about our children. Our choir, thanks to Miss McDonnell and Miss McCarthy, will be performing for the residents in the local care-home and at Tesco, Craigmalloch, I'm sure they will do us proud. Balmalloch truly is the best and I know working together we can achieve great things. Please let us know how else we can work with you to support our wonderful children.

Finally, it is with great sadness that I must announce that Mrs Stark will be retiring at Christmas time. Mrs Stark has been with North Lanarkshire Council for 28 years, with twenty and a half years in Balmalloch Primary School and Nursery Class. We will all miss her welcoming smile when we walk through the door or her support at the end of the phone. Mrs Stark has had such a great relationship with all staff, children and our families and I know we will all wish her well for the future and all the plans she has with her husband, children and grandchildren. We look forward to hearing of all the wonderful experiences she will have.

Wishing you a lovely Christmas holiday,
Miss McCarthy and the Balmalloch Team

