



ST. JOHN PAUL II

Primary School & Nursery Class

June
2020

NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents/Carers and friends of St. John Paul II,

On 19th June 2020, North Lanarkshire Council published new guidance to school staff and all Parents/Carers on what the opening of schools will be like in August 2020. It is fair to say that our new term in August will look nothing like any other start to a new school year we have ever experienced.

We are aware that there is a lot for Parents/Carers to consider and much of the decisions you make depend on decisions made by North Lanarkshire Council regarding educational provision for your child or children.

I have prepared this newsletter for you - it will be part of a series of newsletters/publications to support you and try to reassure you about what you can expect and what we are doing to prepare to welcome the children back in August.

There are some questions we will simply not be able to answer yet, either because we are awaiting more information from the Scottish Government or North Lanarkshire Council, or because we haven't quite worked out exactly what we can and cannot do about a particular issue.

The information in this Newsletter is offered as a starting point. It will help you to get your own head around certain things and it will help you to begin to talk as a family about school and what the new school year holds for our children.

Rest assured that our staff have been working every day - in the midst of preparing and providing daily online digital learning as well as supporting the Hub - to work things out and make sensible plans to reassure you and to try and make things as easy as possible for all of our families.

The plans which have been put in place by NLC will no doubt not suit everyone and every circumstance. Our building has been changed to maximise classroom space. Our classes are mostly full due to the 50% and 2m rules. Therefore, it will only be possible to accommodate changes if another family is willing to swap. If I can accommodate things to support you, I will. However, I cannot guarantee this and I cannot accommodate every request for every family.

Things are constantly changing and even some of the plans which are already in place may have to change as we move forward to what we hope will be a return to normality in the not too distant future.

With renewed prayers and good wishes,

Mr Thomas

Head Teacher

ANSWERING SOME OF YOUR IMMEDIATE QUESTIONS

Since the announcement from North Lanarkshire about a **Blended Model of in school and home learning** on 8th June, we have had many questions put to us on social media, via email and over the phone. Thank you for listening to our messages asking for some time to digest the information and prepare some answers for you. I continue to ask you for your patience and your understanding. If we do not have an answer, we cannot offer one. Very often, our answers depend on information from NLC or the Scottish Government and so we need to move at a pace which takes this into account!



We have no secrets to keep from you! We will share information we have with you as soon as we can. However, sometimes the answers may not be given within a timeframe that suits every individual family, but we will try!

I ask you to remember that our staff are working in an ever-changing and pressured set of circumstances, just like many of you! Therefore, let's approach each other with respect, understanding and patience.



THE MODEL FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS - *What this means at St. JP II*

Children will attend school for 2 days per week with 10 hours of direct teaching and learning offered as well as a continuation of Digital Home Learning

In order to have social distancing in place (2m) we can only have 50% of our children in each day. This has meant that we have had to change the layout of the school.

A lot of work has already gone into assessing our accommodation within the school. We will have to utilise some additional space in the school in order to achieve this. For example the Music Room and Treehouse.

You will receive a letter with your child's class, their Class Teacher and their allocated days to attend school. This letter will also include your child's report (from last term) which was prepared before Lockdown.

Group A will attend on Monday & Tuesday
Group B will attend on Thursday & Friday.
Wednesday mornings will be for Keyworker children with afternoons for staff non-class contact time.

Children will be split into two groups, A & B, with 50% in each group. We will allocate **Families (siblings only)** to the same group for ease of planning for families. We will have 16 classes (as we did last year) and each class will have an allocated Teacher or Teachers.

Initially, children will participate in a core curriculum of Literacy, Numeracy and some Health & Wellbeing. As we are a Catholic School, there will be a small amount of RE.

More detail will emerge over the coming weeks about how this will look for us and we will continue to communicate with you throughout the Summer Holidays. North Lanarkshire Council has an agreed process for sharing information and messages with families and we, as a school, are guided by this. We can only share with you what we know!

NLC are working with all schools to ensure that buildings are as safe as they can possibly be with lots of preparation taking place between now and August. Clear signage, social distancing measures and hand hygiene routines will be in place.

WILL THE CHILDREN BE WEARING UNIFORM?



The short answer to this question is... **“YES!”**

One of the things we are all looking forward to is a return to routine and normality. The most normal thing about coming to school, is wearing uniform. It sends a clear message to everyone that when we come to school, things are different than they are when we are at home.

- ◆ We can begin to re-create the sense of identity and pride in our school.
- ◆ We can show our new Primary 1 children what it means to be part of our school.
- ◆ With a blended model of learning, where some learning days will be at home, we can ensure our children are in the right frame of mind when coming to school for direct teaching.

WHAT SHOULD MY CHILD WEAR?

Our school uniform is quite simple:

- ◆ Light blue shirt, school tie, black trousers/skirt/pinafore.
- ◆ Girls can wear BLUE CHECKED summer dresses if they wish.
- ◆ There is no requirement to wear branded items such as sweatshirts or polo shirts.
- ◆ If you are concerned about your child wearing a school tie, or are unable to buy one for the start of term, then please do not worry about this!

PLEASE DO NOT BRING PERSONAL BELONGINGS TO SCHOOL

Everything your child will need for school will be provided. We have already begun to make up individual packs for every child with a selection of resources. These include jotters, colouring pens, pencils, rubber, sharpener, whiteboard and marker, scissors, glue stick. This will help with infection control!

Children should not bring toys, pencil cases or other personal belongings to school.

SHOULD MY CHILD BRING A SCHOOL BAG WITH THEM?

Yes—children can bring a bag to school. However, please try to keep them as small as possible! These will be hanging on the back of their chair in the class, along with their jackets as we cannot ensure social distancing in the cloakrooms. Packed Lunch Boxes should also be as small as possible.

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD IS DRESSED APPROPRIATELY FOR THE WEATHER. ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL WILL NOT BE PERMITTED BEFORE THE BELL RINGS UNFORTUNATELY.

LUNCH

There will be a limited menu on offer each day with **ONE hot choice** or a Snack to Go. Children with a packed lunch or Snack to Go will eat their lunch in the classroom or outside on a nice day. Only children who are having a hot lunch will be permitted to go to the dining hall. This is to minimize the amount of movement around the school and obviously to ensure that we do not waste valuable learning and teaching time when the children are in school!

PLEASE NOTE - No cash can be brought into school and therefore all payments for school lunches will need to be made using the online payment facility. All children in P1-3 are entitled to a Free School Meal. Children in P4-P7 are entitled if their Parents/Carers have applied for Free School Meals.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT SCHOOL IN AUGUST...

- ♦ The pedestrian gates which you use to enter and exit the campus will operate slightly differently. The one **nearest the roundabout will be ENTRY ONLY** and the one **nearest the crossing patrol will be EXIT ONLY**.
- ♦ Your child(ren) will be allocated a gate through which to enter the playground. They must only use this gate.
- ♦ Each child will be allocated a zone in their playground (colour –coded) with their classmates. This will be next to the entrance door they will use to gain access to the building.
- ♦ A staggered start and finish time will be allocated to each HOUSE GROUP. This is so that families can arrive together and to minimise congestion in the grounds. Your school start and finish time is indicated in the packs you have been issued.
- ♦ Signage and floor markings will guide children to various zones and we will operate a 'keep left' system in the building to ensure social distancing.
- ♦ Parents/Carers will not be permitted within the school grounds or into the building unfortunately. This is not how we normally operate! We have a very welcoming ethos and an open door policy. However, you can always keep in touch with us and we are happy to chat to you on the phone until such times as we can welcome you in person again!



THANK YOU FR MORRIS!

On Monday 18th May, 2020, Fr Morris celebrated a beautiful online Mass to mark the 100th Birthday of our Patron, St. John Paul II and then on 22nd June, we celebrated our P7 Graduation and End of School Year Mass. We were able to make it extra special by having staff record readings, bidding prayers and music. We even had a lovely virtual appearance from our school choir!

In these times, it is important to remember to pray for our community and all of our families. It is important to be grateful for the special times we have shared in the past and to look forward to more special times in the future... even if they will look a little different to what we are used to. To view the Masses, got to

www.churchservices.tv/viewpark



SOLIHULL APPROACH

The Scottish Government announced free Solihull Approach online access for all parents in Scotland. This is a programme to help parents understand their children better and how to help them cope! There are courses for pregnant mothers, for families with teenagers, you name it.

All our staff have been trained in this, and it's an excellent resource to help you to help your child through these difficult times. Follow the link, and use tartan as the access code. There is more info on the ParentClub website.

PLEASE GO TO THE SCHOOL APP OR THE SCHOOL WEBSITE TO ACCESS THIS INFORMATION.

www.johnpaul.n-lanark.sch.uk

EMOTION WORKS AT HOME

We also have information on our website which provides a link to Emotion Works at Home resources. As you will know, we use Emotion Works in school to provide a focus for developing Emotional Literacy and to support children in

dealing with a variety of feelings and emotions. Please take a look at the website homepage and scroll down to the relevant blog post.

 emotion works



FAREWELL PRIMARY 7



Our Primary 7 children leave us at the end of this term for pastures new at their various Secondary Schools. To say that we are sad to see them go would be an understatement. These children have been an outstanding group of young people during their time with us and they have been proud members of our school community. Like every year group, they have had much fun, learned new skills, developed their talents, improved academically and embraced new challenges. They will all have their own memories and their own highlights.

As their Head Teacher, I want to say a huge thank you to them for the way in which they took on the responsibilities of P7 as buddies and school leaders. It is too difficult to sum up 7 years of Primary School in a few short paragraphs, but the children should know that we are proud of them and that we want them to go off into the future with our love and prayers!

I want to thank the families of our P7s and especially those who we will no longer be working with. It has been our pleasure to work with you and to contribute to the growth and development of your child(ren). To those who have other children in our school, we look forward to continuing to work with you and we thank you for your continued support.

To the P7 Class Teachers; a special word of thanks for your efforts to make the end of term and the end of Primary School so special for these special children! I know you would have wanted to do so much more for them. However, I know that our Parents and the children themselves are grateful for your efforts.

Primary 7... Never forget your time with us! Never forget our Patron, St. John Paul II and his message to ***"Do not be afraid... open wide the doors to Christ."*** When the new school year begins in August and if Government guidelines allow for it, we will welcome you back in some way to mark your Graduation and your time as pupils of St. John Paul II Primary School.

NURSERY TRANSITION TO P1

Many of our Nursery children will be leaving our Nursery Class this June and will make the transition to Primary School. I want to thank our Parents and Carers for their understanding in these times; you know how much we would have wanted a better transition for the children. However, you have embraced what we have been able to offer and I thank you for that!

To our lovely pre-school children... we are so proud of you! We will miss those of you who are going to other schools but we will look forward to welcoming those children who will join St. John Paul II Primary 1.

You have all grown so much and are now ready for this next step in your life. It is always a very emotional time for Parents and the same is true for our staff! They have worked with and nurtured the children and helped to provide them with excellent learning experiences both before and during lockdown. I think the staff for all of their hard work and support.

Thank you to all of our Parents and Carers for the supportive way in which you have worked with us this school year and beyond. We hope that you all have a relaxing Summer and that we will see you all again soon.



WE BID A FOND FAREWELL TO THE FOLLOWING STAFF

Mrs Cameron is one of our Additional Support Needs Assistants and, after 7 years of loyal service to our community, she is leaving us. Mrs Cameron has been a wonderful support to many staff and children. She has been a valued member of our staff team and we will miss her very much! We wish Mrs Cameron all the very best in this new chapter in her life.

Miss Williamson and Miss Brady, both Class Teachers, are also leaving us to take up new posts in different schools. Both of these Teachers have been outstanding in their time with us and they have been very committed members of our school team. We wish them both well and hope that our paths may cross once again in the future.

WELCOME TO MISS MILLAR

We welcome Miss Millar to the staff team. Miss Millar will join us as a Class Teacher in August and we are sure she will receive a warm welcome from everyone! We look forward to working with her.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

If your child has a musical instrument and either no longer wants to participate in lessons, or they are moving on to High School, could you please return their instruments to the school? This can be done at any point during the Summer holidays. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE MEDICATION IN SCHOOL?

If your child has medication in school, this should be collected before 1pm on 24th June 2020. This is the last day of term and the school will not be open to visitors during the Summer period. Medication may be discarded if it is not collected.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

Please note that after the Summer Holiday, children will not be permitted to use the 'top up' machines to put money into their lunch accounts. All money will have to be added using the online payment system. We will re-issue instructions in August on how to use this.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND CLOTHING GRANTS

I REMIND ALL P3 PARENTS THAT, IF THEY WISH THEIR CHILD TO CONTINUE RECEIVING FREE SCHOOL MEALS IN P4, THEY MUST COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM. Go to www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals.

Clothing grants can also be applied for here. If your circumstances have change recently, we encourage you to apply for both of these opportunities.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARENT COUNCIL

I wish to thank all members of our Parent Council for their tireless work throughout the year. They have had so much on their calendar before lockdown and, although some of their events have not taken place, they have much to be proud of this year! I want to thank those members who are leaving us as their children are leaving to go to High School. Their support has been hugely appreciated.

The Parent Council, with the support of all of our Parents/Carers has raised some funds this year. With these funds, they are donating money to pay for 3 portable Interactive Screens which will be used in the temporary classrooms we have created. This is a huge help to us when finances are tight and we need to continue to invest in our IT hardware! Thanks to all parents/carers who have contributed over the year!

THANK YOU

As we approach the end of term - on behalf of the school staff - I want to offer you all a sincere thanks for your kindness, your generosity and your co-operation. This has been a successful school year, regardless of the situation around lockdown. Our school inspection highlighted so much that is good about our community. We will work hard to bring things back together in August.

Our Children and their Families are the most important part of our community. You are at the heart of all of our work and all of our decisions.

Our Chaplains have been an amazing support to us and we know that our school community is continually in the prayers of Fr Bogan and Fr Morris.

Our Partner Agencies have continued to work with us in these difficult times.

Our Staff Team is second to none (I am a biased but proud HT!) They have pulled out all of the stops in this current situation; they have worked tirelessly to prepare for and work through an Inspection from HMIE and they have continued to do this for the children and their families. As a staff team, we are immensely proud to work for and with the community of Viewpark. We know how lucky we are to have such an amazing community around us with amazing children at the heart! ***As Head Teacher, I thank each and every one of you! Have a wonderful and well-deserved Summer.***

GOING FORWARD - KEEPING YOU INFORMED

As you know, we normally tend to contact you less during the Summer Holidays. However, rest assured that, if more information comes available to us, we will continue to keep you up to date. As you know, the Government make announcements all of the time regarding this ever-changing time! This can regularly have an impact on nurseries/schools and on education.

Please continue to keep an eye on the following platforms:

- ♦ The school app
- ♦ Our school website

When our App is updated, we will send you a notification. We will direct you to the App/Website from the following platforms:

- ♦ Twitter account (our school and the NLC accounts)
- ♦ Our facebook page (school and parent council)



Good communication is the key to a smooth start in August and this is why we will continue to provide updates at various points throughout the Summer holidays.



St. John Paul II Primary School & Nursery

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Faith | Respect | Friendship | Trust | Kindness | Equality