



ST. JOHN PAUL II

Primary School & Nursery Class

March
2021

NEWSLETTER

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

Monday 15th March was a great day! The bunting was out and we were delighted to welcome back our P4-7 children on a sunny Monday morning. The smiles were evident and for good reason! This is a huge step towards everyone beginning to look forward to normality again. It has been lovely to meet you all at the gate (or wave at you as you drive by!) The personal connection with our families is something that we have missed immensely since the beginning of this recent Lockdown. However...

WE DO NOT RETURN TO 'NORMAL!' All of the safety measures we have in place will continue until such times as the Government and North Lanarkshire Council tell us that we can ease these. It is therefore just as important now as it ever has been to have everyone contributing to this by sticking to the rules and following local and national guidelines.

Please take some time to ensure that you are fully up to date with what to do if you or anyone in your household develops any one of the identified COVID symptoms. Also, be aware of what you must do if your child is identified as a close contact.

In the coming weeks, we will be working hard to help the children settle back into school and nursery. Our focus will continue to be on the core elements of Literacy and Numeracy as well as Health & Wellbeing. However, we are also working to ensure progress in all curricular areas in the coming weeks and into the final term of this school year.

We have a lot to look forward to in the coming weeks and we have planned a few extra events in celebration and recognition of the fact that we are all together again! I do hope that it will not be long before we are welcoming our Parents/Carers and the wider community into our school building again. There is a Nursery section of our Newsletter for Parents/Carers of children in our Nursery Class, but lots of the other items are relevant to you too!

With renewed prayers and good wishes,

Mr Thomas

Head Teacher



Faith | Respect | Friendship | Trust | Kindness | Equality



DIGITAL LEARNING OPPORTNITIES DURING THE SCHOOL CLOSURE PERIOD

A huge amount of effort from our staff team and a definite increase in pupil participation has meant that, for most, our Digital Learning offer has been successful. We realise that it was a huge challenge at times and that there will have been days when it was the last thing families wanted. However, we do hope that you felt supported throughout this lockdown and that you knew you had somewhere to turn if you needed

St. JP II Digital Learning Opportunities

assistance. We have all been on a steep learning curve! I thank the staff for all that they did to be innovative and imaginative. I thank the adults at home for persevering where possible, and I thank our amazing children who made the effort and hard work worthwhile! Whilst we do not want to be in this position again, if we ever are, we are even more prepared and better resourced.

RETURN OF ALL CHILDREN

Monday 15th March 2021 was the date announced as the return date for our P4-7 children on a full time basis. This meant that our entire school was back together! Whilst we are delighted by this, there will be many who are worried or apprehensive. With each small positive step towards more normal times, there is always an element of worry. However, everything that we have in place is there for a reason - primarily for the safety of children, staff and our families.

When Primary 1 - 3 and our Nursery children returned, I issued updated information to everyone and we made small changes to some of our procedures to build upon our safety measures with the same happening when P4-7 returned.

I am reiterating these to everyone and I ask that you pass this onto anyone who is involved in 'the school run' for your child(ren).

1. **ONLY ONE ADULT should drop off/collect children.** This has been in place since August and reduces the number of adults significantly.
2. **EVERY ADULT must wear a face covering.** If you drive and leave your vehicle, you should wear a face covering. Do not approach any member of staff if you are not wearing a face covering. Staff will have supplies available for those who forget.
3. **Do not enter school grounds until it is your child's drop off or pick up time** (8:50am/2:50pm or 9:05am/3:05pm). If you arrive early by car, remain in your car until the right time.
4. **Do not hang around within the school grounds.** Please drop/collect and go. If your friend's child has a different drop off/collection time than yours do not wait within the grounds for them.
5. **We encourage you not to use drop off/collection times as a period to socialise.**
6. **Stick to the one way system.** We have one gate for entry and one gate for exit. It takes almost no time at all to use the correct gates, regardless of what direction you are walking.



FACE COVERINGS



AVOID CROWDS



CLEAN HANDS



TWO METRES



SELF-ISOLATE



NURSERY NEWS



Message from Mr Thomas...

It has been wonderful to have our Nursery children back (and to welcome our new children to our school community!) It is great to hear their playful laughter when they are outdoors and to meet them in the corridor as they make their way to the playground, To see them immersed in their daily routines in the playroom, not to mentioned chomping away on their lunch in the dining hall! Thank you to all of our Parents/Carers for supporting this successful return and doing all the things we ask of you. I do also want to thank our amazing staff team who go above and beyond on a daily basis. Here's hoping that everything is moving the right direction and we can experience a little more of what is 'normal', soon!

PARENT TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS

Please speak to a member of staff to make your time to discuss your child's progress and how they are settling in. The appointments are available next week and a time can be made that is mutually suitable! The staff are looking forward to the opportunity to meet with you, albeit over the phone!

WEEKLY DONATIONS

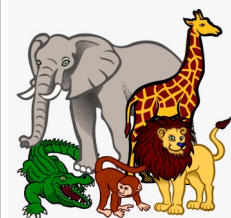
As you are all aware, we ask for a weekly donation from each family. We say £2 per family, but in all honesty, any donation is gratefully received. We understand that not everyone may be able to pay every week. However, if you contribute when you can, this will help a lot! The donations go towards the daily snacks that the children get. We do not receive any additional funding in our budget for this and, even though the children are having lunch, they are offered a snack in the afternoon as well as in the morning to keep their energy levels up! Longer days = hungrier children! We also use any donations within our general fund to subsidise other activities and events (for example at Easter and Christmas and the end of the Nursery year).

There is no judgement upon anyone who does not donate! We just like to remind everyone from time to time.

LEARNING CONTEXT

The children have been learning about Amazing Animals and this theme has been taken on and developed in conjunction with the children. They are thoroughly enjoying it and are having lots of great experiences within many curricular areas as a result!

The outdoor space is being developed and prepared for the better weather.



The children are assisting with this too! Many thanks to one of our families for their kind donation towards making our outdoor area a lovely place to learn and play together.

THE LAST DAY OF TERM

As you may know, we have an early finish in the school on the last day of term and the staggered finish times have been adjusted to support this. The school day will end at 2:30pm. If you require the service to go beyond this, we can certainly accommodate this. Please let one of the staff know if this is the case. However, if you would like to collect you child earlier from Nursery on the last day of term (particularly if you have children in the primary classes) then you are free to do so.



PRIMARY 7 NEWS

It is hard to believe that we are in the process of preparing our Primary 7 children for their transition to Secondary School. This work began some time ago and it has been great to see the Class Teachers and P7s engaging online with the staff of Cardinal Newman High School. I know that a few of our children are moving to different High Schools, and they too will be involved in various activities.



THURSDAY 18TH MARCH @ 6:30PM *Cardinal Newman Virtual Roadshow*

Mrs Murray, Depute Head Teacher, led a meeting for Parents/Carers and our P7 children and she was also joined by Miss Morrison (Pupil Support). They explained in a little more detail what you and your child can expect in the next few months before the children transfer to Cardinal Newman.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION WEEK AT STRATHCLYDE PARK 19th - 23rd April 2021

Information about this week-long event was sent out before Christmas. We had originally planned to attend this in February, but were able to secure a new week due to Lockdown. On Monday 15th March, further information was sent to all P7 families, which included a registration/permission form. Please complete the registration form and send it back to school by 29th March 2021. Our Parent Council have very generously agreed to subsidise this experience for the children and we are very grateful to them!

INFORMATION MEETING: To provide you with further information about the above event, Mr Thomas invites you all to attend an Information Meeting via Microsoft Teams. This will take place on Monday **22nd March 2021 at 7pm** on Microsoft Teams. The children will be able to access this via the Assemblies Team and all Parents/Carers are invited to join us to find out more information.

If you need any support regarding the finance of this week-long excursion, please contact Mr Thomas. Finance should not be a reason for any child to miss out. The school has some finance available for events such as these.



SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION (FIRST CONFESSION & FIRST COMMUNION)

As you know, the global pandemic has caused a great deal of disruption on so many levels. Even the celebration of the Sacraments of First Confession and First Communion have been affected. Many of our Primary 5 children from St. Columba's Parish have still to make their First Communion. The church is nearing completion and we look forward to the official handover back to the parish, once the building work has been assessed and passed. We are currently in discussion with both Fr Morris and Fr Bogan about how they would like to proceed with arranging the celebrations of both First Confession and First Communion. Parents from St Columba's Parish will have received a letter this week from Fr Bogan outlining his position on First Communion.

However, if you would like to discuss anything with either Fr Bogan or Fr Morris, I am sure they would be only too happy to hear from you.

From 26th March, churches can reopen for communal worship. They have been closed since 27th December. However, there will be a maximum of 50 people permitted to attend any church service/celebration of Mass (20 for Funerals). This does restrict our ability to put plans in place and I know that both of our Parish Priests are keen to ensure that, whatever we organise, we can celebrate safely and in the best possible way. More information will follow soon.



ARRANGEMENTS FOR LENT 2021

We have a long tradition of marking the season of Lent by our efforts to **Pray, Fast and Give**. This year, it is much more challenging to achieve this. We cannot offer our daily Mass before school and we cannot conduct our fundraising for Lenten Charities in the same way. We do, however, want to attempt to raise money for SCIAF.

During our Assembly on Friday 12th March, Mark Booker from SCIAF joined us on Teams to talk to the children about their Lenten Campaign. He told us that the government would **double** any donation we make as a school.

Lenten Charity Day - Thursday 1st April 2021

Non Uniform Day

£1 per child or a donation per family

Guess the Easter Bunny's Name £1 for 2 guesses.

Easter Egg Raffle (lots to be won!) £1 per strip of tickets

Prize Raffle (Various great prizes) £1 per strip of tickets

Outdoor Easter Egg Hunt (Free to enter)

Guess the baby Bear's Birthday £1 for 2 guesses.

Guess the sweets on the cake £1 for 2 guesses.

The last day of term will be our Lenten Fundraising Day. We are not organising this on the same scale as in previous years. We will have just a few events that the children can enjoy, whilst raising money for SCIAF. We continue our tradition of



Matching your donations with



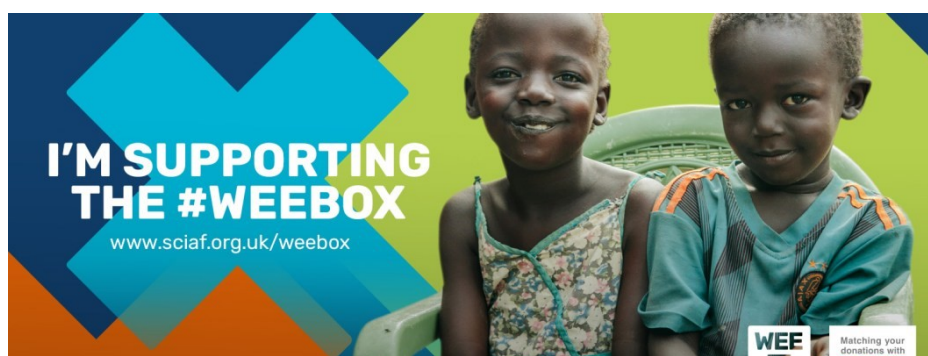
Community Prayer during Lent by praying the Rosary every Monday and the Stations of the Cross every Wednesday.

We began to do

this online as part of our weekly virtual meetings, but we can now do this in person. Our P6 & P7 Pope Francis Faith Award children will continue to lead these.

The SCIAF Wee Box Appeal is ongoing and we will have a Wee Box in every class for the children to place any spare change they may have. This will be added to our over all total from 29th March.

TICKETS AND GUESSES WILL GO ON SALE WEEK BEGINNING 22ND MARCH and we will have things in place to ensure COVID safety.



PARENT COUNCIL

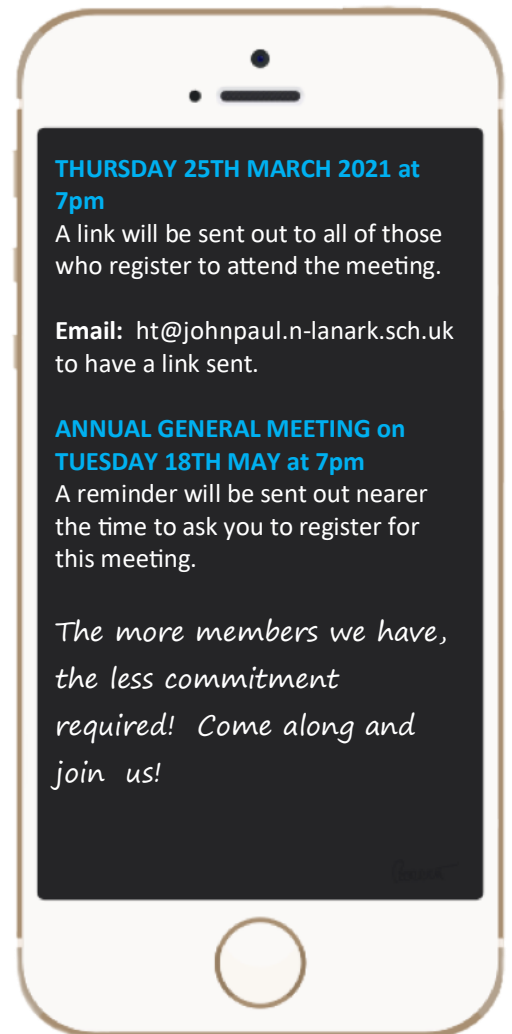
Our Parent Council has obviously been limited in what it can do due to the recent restrictions. However, have met previously online and are planning two further meetings. All Parents/Carers are welcome to attend these meetings.

- ♦ Everyone is invited to be a part of the Parent Council!
- ♦ The commitment is minimal (4 meetings per year) and you do not have to attend all events/meetings.
- ♦ Some of our new Parents/Carers and those of our current P1 children will not have had the chance to get involved in the Parent Council yet... now is your chance!
- ♦ If you need any further information about the Parent Council, please email or contact Mr Thomas.

The Parent Council has four official meetings per year, which are normally attended by Parent Forum Members, Local Elected Members (Councilors) and representatives if the school.

The Parent Council discuss various matters (both school and community), they are given a verbal report from the Head Teacher and also an input from the local Councilors who attend.

The Parent Council normally has a calendar of social events organised throughout the school year for the children to attend. This is a great way to build upon our community spirit and to bring the children together in their school but outwith the school day.



FAREWELL TO MR MCGROARTY

At St. John Paul II Primary School & Nursery Class, we have two amazing Janitors - Mr Hall and Mr McGroarty! They both work so hard for us and try to keep everything running smoothly so that the school is clean, safe and well looked after.

It is with great sadness that I announce that Mr McGroarty will be leaving us soon. He has been appointed as Janitor at the shared campus school of St. Mary's and Glengowan Primary Schools in Caldercruix. This is sad news for our school but happy news for the schools in Caldercruix as they are inheriting a fantastic Janitor. Mr McGroarty has been our Janitor for about 13 years and some might even say that we taught Mr McGroarty everything he knows!

We know that Mr McGroarty is sad to be leaving us and he also knows that we are devastated to see him go. Mr McGroarty is a good friend and colleague to all of the staff. He always has time for the children and can very often be seen helping and supporting them. He always has kind things to say and he has dedicated himself to our school community in every way possible.

Everyone at St. John Paul II wishes Mr McGroarty and his lovely family all the very best in the future. We hope to see him again but we assure him that he leaves us with our prayers and best wishes for this next leg of his journey! Good luck Mr McGroarty. We will miss you!

We'll
**MISS
YOU!**

NURSERY TO PRIMARY 1 TRANSITION

Enrolment of pre-school children for Primary 1 took place in January as normal, however, this had to be completed online rather than in person. We missed meeting all of our new families (and some of our existing ones) in the usual enrolment appointments. However, we will now start to plan some Transition Events for those children and their families.

Inevitably, we will have to make alternative arrangements for Transition until such times as we are permitted to allow visitors into the building. However, if we are given permission for this in good time, we will certainly make the necessary arrangements.

We will be writing to all of our P1 families within the next week, to officially welcome them to our school community and the family of St. John Paul II.

SAVE THE DATE! P1 PARENT/CARER WELCOME MEETING

This will take place on WEBEX and a link will be emailed to all Parents/Carers of children enrolled to join our school in August 2021. We will need your email address in order to send you a link.

Wednesday 21st April 2021 at 7pm

Webex has been chosen by NLC as their preferred meeting platform.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE FINANCIAL INCLUSION TEAM

The aim of the North Lanarkshire Financial Inclusion Team is help families **MAXIMISE** their income and support them to achieve healthy finances. They can advise on benefits, housing, rent, financial difficulties of all kinds. They also provide budgeting help and support.

You can contact them by email and they will get in touch with you to see how they can help you. Many people are experiencing hardship and have had their circumstances change either due to COVID or some other reason. Please, please get in touch with the team or even contact Mr Thomas at the school and we will make a referral on your behalf. Email: **FIT@northlan.gov.uk**

Please also remember that you can apply for Free School Meals (P4-7) and a Clothing Grant by clicking on this link... [Free school meals and clothing grants | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

GOD'S LOVING PLAN

During your child's time at Primary School, they will take part in an extensive RE and Health & Wellbeing Programme. Part of this will be Relationships and Moral Education. Within Catholic Schools across Scotland, the RME part of the curriculum is delivered through God's Loving Plan which has been agreed by the Scottish Government and the Bishops Conference of Scotland. The resources have been produced by the Scottish Catholic Education Service (SCES) and covers the necessary aspects of Curriculum for Excellence and This is Our Faith.

Each year, your child will take part in a series of lessons and each year the lessons deal with different aspects of RME which are appropriate to the age and stage of development the children are at.

Before embarking upon the block of learning each year, we will write to you to inform you of this. We will also give you the option to contact us and ask questions to clarify what we are covering. Nearer the time, we will issue more detailed information. We plan to cover this part of the curriculum shortly after the Easter Holiday.

For more information go to [Scottish Catholic Education Service | SCES | God's Loving Plan](#)





Car Park Appeal



**WE NEED YOU ALL TO
CO-OPERATE MORE WITH
US WHEN USING THE CAR
PARK!**

The car park continues to cause school staff and many parents/carers/visitors a lot of worry and concern. In recent weeks, I have received numerous complaints and comments about the unsafe nature of our car park caused by some of the drivers who use it each day.

Those of you who have been parents/carers within our school community for some time now will know that this is always the case. But, just because it has always been that way, does not mean it always has to stay that way!

The car park is still causing concern, even when there are fewer drivers using it due to the staggered start and finish times.

Here is the view of one parent who wrote to me recently...

"I am just sending you an email with regards to my concerns with the parking within the school car park. Each week since the schools have gone back it seems to have got worse. I leave early on the days I am collecting and dropping my child off so I can park in a space. Each day numerous cars are double parking and blocking the cars parked in a space. I have witnessed parents being incredibly rude when being asked to move to allow cars out of their space. There are also cars parked all along the double yellow lines at the bend of the car park which block cars from getting past, and I have even witnessed cars parking on the small zebra crossing within the car park. I am really concerned for the children's health and safety and wondered if it would be possible to have a member of staff to monitor this? I understand staff are very busy at these times monitoring the gate to ensure the one way system is being adhered to and children are entering and exiting the school safely."

Other parents have brought up concerns around...

1. Irresponsible use of Disabled Spaces - we have a number of children with a disability which entitles them to use the space. In some cases the wider spaces are needed to maneuver the child into the car. Perhaps if you own a Blue Badge but you do not get out of your car, you could park elsewhere? If you do not have a Blue Badge, you should not be there in the first place!
2. People parking in front of empty disabled and other spaces, meaning nobody can use them.
3. Access for push chairs and prams in the central pathway of the car park due to over hang of cars parked in spaces. Perhaps you could consider this when parking in the central spaces, leaving sufficient room?

**BE PART
OF THE
SOLUTION,
NOT THE
PROBLEM**

We all have a common goal and that is the safety of our children and the others using the car park.

If you have any suggestions as to how we could make the car park safer, please share them.

*If you drive in and around the school, what could YOU do to improve things? Could YOU make better choices? Keeping everyone safe takes effort from **everyone!***

DATES TO REMEMBER

Please take a look at our school diary and take note of any events that involve you or child. Some dates may be subject to change!

DATE:	EVENT:	DETAIL:
Thursday 18th March	Cardinal Newman Virtual Roadshow	6:30pm on the P7 Transition Team
Monday 22nd March	P7 Information Meeting for Outdoor Education Week	7pm on Microsoft Teams Join via the Assemblies Team
Thursday 25th March	Parent Council Virtual Meeting	7pm on Webex. See Newsletter for detail.
Wednesday 31st March	Parent Telephone Appointments	Appointments should be booked online
Thursday 1st April	Lenten Charity Day (Fundraising Events)	Non Uniform Day (£1 or a donation per family) Various events planned - see Newsletter
Thursday 1st April	Last day of term	School closes EARLY on this day... 2:50pm children should be collected at 2:15pm 3:05pm children should be collected at 2:30pm Start times on this day are normal.
Monday 19th April	Return to school	Breakfast Club open from 8:15am Group one arrive for 8:50am Group two arrive for 9:05am
Friday 23rd April	Earth Day	We will have various Eco School events during the school day. Uniform as normal.
Monday 3rd May	HOLIDAY	Pupils only attend school on Tues, Wed & Fri this week
Thursday 6th May	INSET DAY (Scottish Parliament Elections)	
Tuesday 18th May	Parent Council Virtual AGM	7pm on Webex. See Newsletter for detail.
Friday 28th May	HOLIDAY	
Monday 31st May	HOLIDAY	
7th - 11th June	Health & Wellbeing Week	Sports Day will be on Friday 11th. Children should wear their Sports Kit each day.



St. John Paul II Primary School & Nursery

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Head Teacher: Mr Kristofer Thomas

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