



NEWSLETTER

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

I cannot believe that I am now writing to you for our June Newsletter. In many ways, this has been a long school year, but in others, it has gone so quickly! I am quite sure that those of you with a child about to make a big transition from Nursery to P1, or coming to the end of P1, or indeed coming to the end of P7 are wondering where all the time has gone! There are 13 school days left until the end of term from today.

In recent weeks we have welcomed a number of new children and their families to our school community. I hope that they have felt welcome and are beginning to feel part of our school. In these times it must be even more difficult to establish yourself in a new place, however, I know that the children and staff in school are doing all that they can to help our new children settle. Our school is growing in number.

We have also said farewell to a few families who are moving out of the area and we wish them all well in their new endeavours.

I met recently with the Parents/Carers of our new P1 children who will be starting with us in August 2021. Our Virtual Meeting got off to a problematic start, but we got there in the end! I am looking forward to meeting with those Parents/Carers again in the next few weeks.

Please take the time to look through our Newsletter and keep yourself up to date with what is happening in our school community for the remainder of this school year.

As you all know, COVID measures are beginning to ease, however, I have included some reminders for you all and I would ask that you continue to do all that you can to keep our community as COVID-free as possible!

With renewed prayers and good wishes,

Mr Thomas

Head Teacher



HOMEWORK

Homework continues to be issued for all children. Following on from our previous survey about Digital Learning and Homework (or Home Learning) we have responded to your comments and feedback. Homework will be issued via Microsoft Teams and all of the information/resources/instructions will be available there. However, the tasks will be a mixture of online tasks as well as written tasks (as this was the preferred option by the vast majority of Parents/Carers). Homework can be submitted either by posting it via the Assignments section or by handing it in to the Class Teacher. Homework Jotters will be issued if they are not already in use.



Please remember that all homework will be a continuation of what is being (or has been) taught in class. If you have any questions or concerns regarding homework, please do get in touch. If you wish to opt out of homework for your child, please let your child's Teacher know. ***This will be the last week for homework.***

COVID RESTRICTIONS AND ROUTINE REMINDERS

With the easing of restrictions in Lanarkshire, it is worth reminding everyone of the expectations placed upon all adults when you are within the school grounds or on the streets/pavements surrounding the school perimeter. The vast majority of people faithfully stick to our routines and rules and from time to time, others need a reminder!

I do want to thank you all for everything you are doing. Please remember that, what happens in the community can often have an impact on the school and the children/adults in it. We are all expected to follow the guidelines for each of the various Tiers or Levels. This is the only way to keep the virus under control.

We have had no cases in the school since October 2020 until last week. You should have received an email with a letter from Public Health regarding this. If we do not have your email address, please contact us to give us it.

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 should 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 in.



FACE COVERINGS



AVOID CROWDS



CLEAN HANDS



TWO METRES



SELF-ISOLATE

MRS MORRIS

Mrs Morris, our Senior Clerical Assistant in the school office has announced her intention to retire at the end of this school year. I have very mixed feelings about sharing this information with you. We are obviously extremely sad to see Mrs Morris leave our staff team, but we are equally delighted that she gets to retire and move on to new things and a happy retirement.



Mrs Morris has worked in Viewpark for 28 years - firstly in St. Columba's and then latterly moving here when the new school was opened in 2006. She has dedicated herself tirelessly in that time, always going above and beyond for our children, our staff and the wider community. In the 28 years she has worked in the community, her job has seen many changes, but Mrs Morris has always accepted them willingly and has always risen to new challenges.

It would be impossible to comment on 28 years of service in a short Newsletter article! Mrs Morris is so much more to us than a Clerical Assistant. She is our friend and colleague; someone to turn to; someone to support us and **always** someone who puts the children first. She is kind, caring and committed. We are forever indebted to Mrs Morris for her years of service and dedication. Sadly, we may not be able to mark Mrs Morris' retirement in the usual ways but we will do our very best to make sure we do what we can to let her know how much she is appreciated.

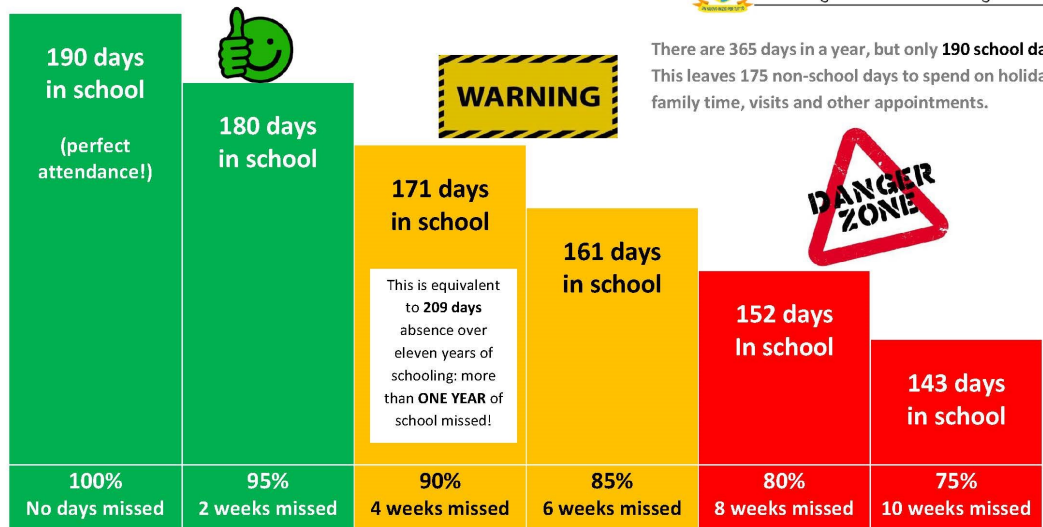
We are lucky to have such a great team of people in our Office - who are the first to greet anyone who comes to visit our school. They are always commended for the warm welcome and professional manner they adopt when dealing with our visitors.

There will be lots more to say about Mrs Morris, no doubt and I always enjoy an opportunity to wind her up! However, for now, I simply wanted to share her news with all of you Parents and Carers and to publicly congratulate her and thank her for everything. We will miss Mrs Morris immensely.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN THESE LAST FEW WEEKS

It is important that children attend school - especially since there has been so much disruption to the last two school years. Can I please appeal to you all to ensure that your child attends the maximum number of days possible and that you try to make appointments outwith school hours if at all possible?

Understanding your child's attendance percentage



Please also try and keep late arrival and early collection to a minimum. The school day is already a little disrupted because of all of the staggered start/finish times and staggered intervals and lunches. Thank you for your co-operation in these last few weeks of school!

This level of attendance gives your child the **best possible chance** of making good progress and having success in their learning

This level of attendance is **worrying**. It will make it harder for your child to make good progress and they are less likely to have success in their learning

This level of attendance is **extremely concerning**. It will be very difficult for your child to make good progress in their learning and there is likely to be a serious impact on their success in school



ATTENDANCE MATTERS... every school day counts!



NURSERY NEWS



Message from Mr Thomas...

The children continue to be very busy in the Nursery! They have continued to make good use of all available play space and learning environments. They use the playgrounds and pitch each day and I know that they love a go on the Trim Trail! If you have a keen eye for detail, you will see some of the changes being made to their own outdoor play area. Thank you to the staff for all that they do to keep this area stimulating and ever-changing. Transition for our pre-school children will very much be on top of the agenda in the coming weeks and I look forward to meeting with those of you whose children will be joining our P1 classes next session.

TRANSITIONS

The staff are currently planning various activities and different experiences for the children as they prepare to move on to Primary School. We are participating in the North Lanarkshire Transition Initiative, whereby all nurseries are using the story of the *Everywhere Bear* to stimulate learning and encourage the children to think about moving on to school. You will hear more about this in the coming weeks too. The idea is that, when the children move to P1, the story will also be used by their new Class teacher. Please look out for further information regarding what Graduation arrangements are put in place. Unfortunately, the Scottish Government and NLC guidelines state that Parents/Carers cannot attend these events in person. We are really sorry that this is the case.

LEARNING CONTEXT

The children have been reading the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to stimulate their learning. They have been enjoying learning about the life cycle of a butterfly and have been Junior Scientists, watching how the caterpillars we have in the nursery are growing and developing. It is very exciting!

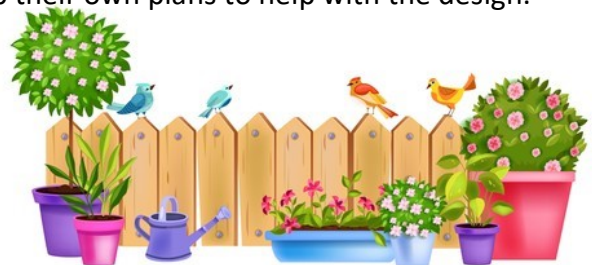


THE VERY
HUNGRY
CATERPILLAR



NURSERY GARDEN

As previously mentioned, everyone has been working very hard in the Nursery Garden and Outdoor Area. It is not a huge area and so it needs a bit of effort and innovation to turn it into a stimulating place for the children! The children have enjoyed sharing their views and opinions on what would make it a pleasant space. They drew up their own plans to help with the design.



MICROSOFT TEAMS

Keep an eye on Microsoft Teams for updates, photos and upcoming dates. If you need support or a reminder of login details, just ask one of the staff or call the school office.

WEEKLY DONATIONS

As always, we are grateful for any donations you can give towards our Nursery Activities. Please hand in your weekly donations to the staff. Thank you for your continued support.

PRIMARY 7 TRIP TO STRATHCLYDE PARK

Our Primary 7 children recently attended a week of outdoor learning and activities at Strathclyde Park. They returned every day exhilarated but exhausted! This just goes to show that they had an action packed week. I am sure that every one of them tried something new or pushed themselves to do something they found challenging. I am certain that they all had fun and I have enjoyed hearing their tales from the week.

By all accounts the children were outstanding ambassadors for our school and they conducted themselves so well during the week. Both our own staff and the Active Schools Instructors were very impressed by them! I myself am very proud of our young people and I thank them for representing our school so well! I have to admit to being a little nervous, as this was the first

official school outing since all of the various restrictions came into play, however, thanks to our children, staff and the wonderful organisation at Strathclyde Park, the week was a huge success and I hope the children have made many happy memories together.

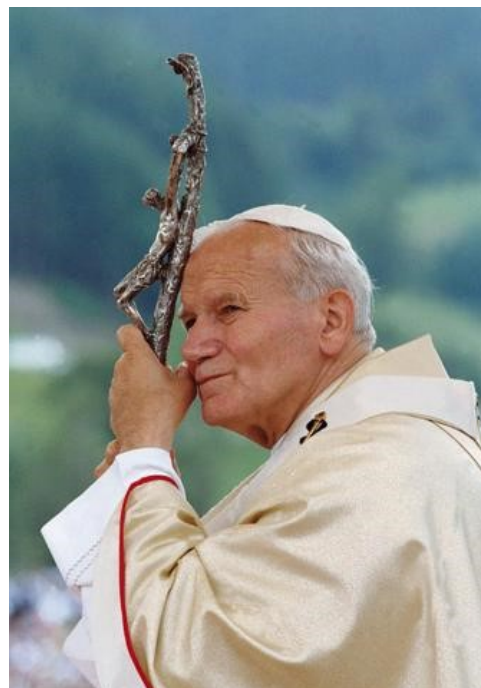


SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION (FIRST CONFESSION & FIRST COMMUNION)

I am meeting with both Parish Priests from St. Gabriel's and St. Columba's to make the necessary arrangements for celebrating the Sacraments. I am aware that some of you will have been frustrated, given that other parishes have celebrated their sacraments in recent weeks. However, our focus should be on our own arrangements and moving forward together with the children and the Sacrament at the fore. I will issue information, mindful of restrictions, for all children involved by the end of the week and this will outline dates and times for you all, giving you the necessary time to make whatever arrangements are necessary. The children, as you will know, have continued with their preparation at home and this should be evident when they bring their workbooks home. Thank you so much for your support with all of this and for being so understanding. It has been challenging and, I'm sure, disappointing at times. It is important to note that we all want things to go well and we all want the best for the children. I hope that, once the arrangements are in place, we can celebrate with them in a prayerful and fitting way. God willing!

A QUOTE FROM OUR PATRON, ST. JOHN PAUL II

“Meet often... as often as you can with Jesus, through the Blessed Eucharist and the Sacred Gospels. Because, you know, the more you meet him; the more you'll get to know him; and the more you get to know him, the more you'll come to love him and the better you will serve him in love. And he will enrich your whole life. Jesus Christ, be praised! Now and forever. Amen!”



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY AT ST. JOHN PAUL II

You could be forgiven for saying that you have no idea what our School Values are! Unless you are learning about them, discussing them and trying to make them part of your daily lives, it would be quite hard to recall them! However, they appear on pretty much everything that comes out from our school. They're posted around the building, they appear on our PowerPoints, they are on the front of this very newsletter! They are the foundation of everything in our school community and they help us to focus on creating the right ethos for everyone, not least our children.

One of our values is **EQUALITY**. This means that we believe that everyone has the right to an equal offering in school, be it curricular or learning, support and assistance, opportunity or endeavour.

We are fast becoming a **MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL** which is a real cause for celebration! Our community is more diverse than it ever was and we embrace and welcome all families and all children in our school. We celebrate the different cultures, religions and countries of origin whilst we share the same pride in our Scottish heritage and our Catholic Faith.

We plan to include more opportunities for our community to celebrate the diverse nature of our school population. We want our children to learn more about the cultures beyond that which their families are based on. This is how we prepare our children to become fully developed, accepting and tolerant members of the world today. This is how we prepare our children for the future and for Global Citizenship.

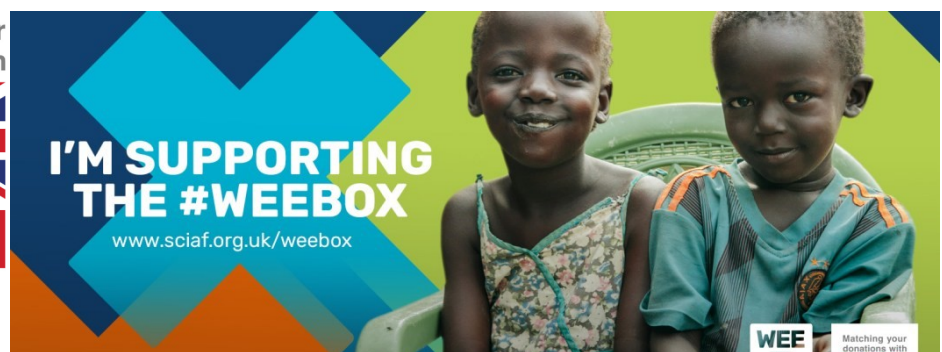
We want to build this into our curriculum, which should reflect the diverse nature of our school. By learning about new and different cultures, our children will grow stronger in their knowledge of the world and secure in their own heritage, whilst realising that 'all are welcome here' and everyone is equal.

We look forward to including our Parents/ Carers and wider community as we journey together!



SCIAF LOVES ST. JOHN PAUL II PRIMARY!

We recently handed over a cheque for £1100 to SCIAF as a result of our wonderful Lenten Charity Day. Thank you so much to you all for your donations and support! As a result, the UK Government doubled this amount to £2200, which is an amazing amount. Mark Booker visited the school (outdoors) to receive the cheque. He emailed to thank us and is including an article about our school and our links with SCIAF. We will keep you posted on where to access this article. Well done to all of the staff and children for their charitable efforts!



PARENT COUNCIL

The Parent Council met on 18th May for their AGM. It was great to see a couple of new Parents/Carers joining in and it was lovely to welcome along Councillors Mooney and Loughran. At the meeting I gave a report on the progress the school has been making and how things have been progressing under the circumstances.

We also elected the Office Bearers for our Parent Council. They are:

Chair Person: Anna Louise Coyle

Vice Chair: Anne Bronsky

Treasurer: Julie Gordon

Clerk: Mr Johnston from our School Office will be the clerk of the Parent Council going forward. We thank Mr Johnston for willingly giving of his time to this role.

We thanked a number of people who were leaving the Parent Council as their children are moving on to Secondary School. Their support has always been very much appreciated.

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

If you are interested in finding out more about the Parent Council, or would like to attend the next meeting... Look out for dates and alerts at the start of the new school year. Everyone is welcome!

WELCOME TO MR CAIRNS

We recently welcomed Mr Cairns to our staff team. Mr Cairns has previously been Janitor in St Aloysius and Chapelhall Shared Campus. He is taking over the position following Mr McGroarty's departure. I am sure you will all join with me in warmly welcoming Mr Cairns to our St John Paul II community and wish him much happiness in his new role.

Mr Cairns has been quickly getting to know the staff and children and we are delighted to have him with us.



HEALTH WEEK 2021

Each year, we hold a Health Week which culminates with our annual Sports Day. **Please note that we are changing the dates for Health Week and this will now take place from 14th June until 18th June 2021.**

Sports Day (for children only) will be on Friday 18th June. This will also be a Fun Day with some activities planned alongside a small fundraiser for school funds.



More information will be issued about this, but similar to previous years, the children can come to school each day in their PE Kit (suitable for outdoor exercise!)

NURSERY TO PRIMARY 1 TRANSITION

We have enjoyed getting to know more about the children who will join us in the new school year. This work will continue until the end of the term and in preparation for August. I would like to thank Mrs Byers and Mrs Murtagh for all of the hard work that they are putting into this.

Due to the nature of transition from Nursery to P1, I tend to allocate the P1 Class Teachers at the earliest opportunity (even though I can't assign every other class as yet!) Mrs McDonnell, Mrs Moodycliffe and Miss Byrne will be next year's P1 Teachers and I know that they are excited about working together.

PRIMARY 7 TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

As we move towards the end of the school year, we are hoping to mark this special time with our Primary 7 children in as many ways as possible. North Lanarkshire recently issued information and restrictions regarding graduations, etc. This letter can be found on our website (www.johnpaul.n-lanark.sch.uk) however, I will issue more information regarding what we are doing to mark the occasion. Unfortunately, we will not be able to invite Parents/Carers to these events, but rest assured, we will do everything we can to celebrate and mark the end of P7's time with us in a fitting way. We will also do everything we can to share this with you. ***The good news is that the children will attend Cardinal Newman for a visit on Monday 21st June 2021. We received notification of this on Friday. A separate letter will be issued with all of the information regarding arrangements for this.***

WE'VE HAD SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT LIMO HIRE FOR P7

In previous years, children and their Parents/Carers have made bookings for limos and other vehicles to collect groups of P7 children on the last day. **The school takes nothing to do with this!** I wanted to clarify the position regarding this...

1. These vehicles are not permitted into the school grounds.
2. If a booking is made, it should be made for **AFTER 1:10PM** to ensure that the area is cleared of all other children/adults.
3. No money should be collected on school grounds.
4. It is completely a parental choice as to whether such bookings take place, but please do still be mindful of COVID. I would not encourage large groups to gather at the school gates or in the grounds. **Remember– only ONE ADULT should be involved in the drop off/collection of children.**

PUPIL REPORTS

Class Teachers have been working hard to prepare a final report for every child. The reports will have a new look this year with some layout changes and also a change to come of the content to make it easier to read and to make it as personal as possible.

Members of the School Leadership Team are currently reading over these and adding a comment to each report. We will issue reports during the final week of the term.

You will also receive a link which will take you to a form to offer feedback on your child's report. I would appreciate your support and your feedback so please do take the time to complete the very short survey.

CLASSES FOR NEXT YEAR

I am currently in the process of working out staffing for the next school year. This is a very complicated process with a lot of factors to be considered. I am aiming to issue the information about your child's Class Teacher for next year along with their Pupil Report (if not before).

I am awaiting some further information about staffing from NLC which will assist me in this process.

We will also build in some time for meeting new Teachers, although this will not happen in the usual way, due to COVID. We will hold outdoor sessions where the children can spend some time with their new Teacher.

ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS

Our P1, P4 and P7 children have been participating in the Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) which take place as these groups of children approach the end of a level (Early, First and Second levels respectively). These are online assessments and take place for reading, writing and numeracy.

We are also currently using the Benchmark Tool for children in P1-3 as well as another assessment for those who have been involved in a Literacy Support Intervention. We recently assessed all of the children in Numeracy, which will allow us to map the progress made throughout this year. Despite all of the closures and interruptions, this will give us vital information and next steps.

AS WE APPROACH THE END OF TERM...

Thank you all for everything you are doing to make things safer and easier during these challenging times. COVID is certainly not eradicated and we still need to be careful both in school and out in the community. This means sticking to the rules and not going beyond the easing of restrictions for each level.

WILL THINGS BE DIFFERENT IN AUGUST?

The short answer to this questions is, "I don't know!" We are guided by the information both the Scottish Government and North Lanarkshire give us and therefore, we are subject to the rules and routines they put in place. It will be necessary to keep in touch with you all towards the end of the summer holiday to give you an update.

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:
Friday 11th June	P7 Pizza Party	12:30 - 2:45pm Non uniform for P7 ONLY.
14th - 18th June	Health & Wellbeing Week	Sports Day will be on Friday 18th. Children should wear their Sports Kit each day.
Friday 18th June	Fun Day	Various fundraising activities planned. More info to follow.
Monday 21st June	P7 Visit to Cardinal Newman High School	Bus will leave St John Paul II at 9:10am sharp.
Thursday 24th June	Last day of term	School Closes Early today. Please see below: If your child starts at 9:50am - they should be collected at 12:45pm If your child starts at 9:05am - they should be collected at 1pm <i>Please stick to these finishing times.</i>



St. John Paul II Primary School & Nursery

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Faith | Respect | Friendship | Trust | Kindness | Equality