

February 2024

NEWSLETTER

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

This is our first full newsletter of 2024, although we have sent out a few updates via our Social Media, text service and website to keep you updated along the way. I hope that 2024 has started in a positive way for you and yours!

We have had a busy start to the term with our final group of Parents as Partners events. I will say more about this in the newsletter. Suffice to say, we are delighted that so many of you managed along to each of these, whether before or after Christmas (or both!)

As we begin this new year, we are looking to review our Mission Statement, Aims and Values. This is a useful exercise as it helps us redefine and reaffirm what we are trying to achieve as a school and for our children with the support of our families and the wider community. Please click <u>HERE</u> to complete a short survey and give us your opinions on this aspect of our school improvement.

There are quite a few items of interest in our Newsletter, so please take a little time to note them and follow through on anything relevant to you. However, as this is our first Newsletter, I have also included a few reminders for you all as well as some appeals for your support. Please do try and respond to these favourably.

On top or our Annual Improvement Priorities, we have some additional priorities which we are focusing on:

- ATTENDANCE, LATE COMING & EARLY COLLECTION
- PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT WITH PARENT PORTAL
- ST JOHN PAUL II: A MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL

I look forward to meeting with you all at the various events in the coming term and, as always, I urge you to get in touch if there is anything I can be of assistance with.

With renewed prayers and good wishes,

Mr Thomas

Head Teacher



Faith Respect Friendship Trust Kindness Equality

P1 & P7 DENTAL CHECKS

The National Dental Inspection Programme will be coming to St. John Paul II on **19th February 2024** and all children in P1 and P7 are entitled to have their dental check on this day.

You can find out more about this and also view the letter to parents/carers as well as a video to explain the process by clicking <u>HERE</u>.

FEBRUARY HOLIDAY WEEKEND

Please remember that we have our February Holiday Weekend coming up. The details are as follows:

Monday 12th February HOLIDAY
Tuesday 13th February HOLIDAY
Wednesday 14th February INSET DAY Pupils
should not attend.

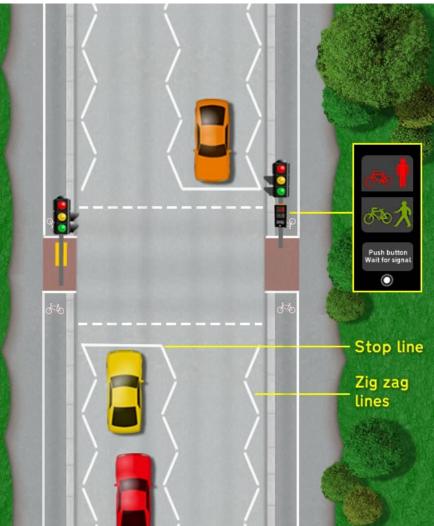
Thursday 15th February SCHOOL RESUMES at 9am with Breakfast Club from 8:15am

FEBRUARY HOLIDAY CLUB 365

Club 365 is running at the Viewpark Community Centre on Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February. Sessions start at 11:30am and finish at 1:30pm. There is no need to book and the children are offered lunch, sports, games and fun. What a great way to spend a few hours on these days!

REMOVAL OF CROSSING PATROL, REMOVAL OF ZEBRA CROSSING & INSTALLATION OF NEW TOUCAN CROSSING ON LABURNUM ROAD

As you will know, we have had a Zebra Crossing directly outside the school gates for the last few years. This happens to be exactly where our School Crossing Patrol operates from before and after school. I



have recently been informed that the existing Zebra Crossing is to be replaced by a Toucan Crossing (as pictured here). As a result of this, North Lanarkshire Council are relocating the Crossing Patrol and, therefore, John will no longer be stationed outside the school gates. Please note the following:

- The section of road outside the school up to Old Edinburgh Road will be **completely closed** from 10th February. They hope to complete works in time for the children returning the following Thursday 15th February.
- We will take the children out in groups to demonstrate how to safely use the crossing. John will remain in post until the end of February and will help us with this.

We thank John, our Crossing Patroller, for his dedicated service and for taking such good care of us as we cross Laburnum Road!



At St. John Paul we like to celebrate our faith and put it into action. Here is an update on some of our activities as well as some information about our plans for this year's Lenten Journey. We hope that you will be able to join us during Lent! #LivingOutLent

NEW MINI VINNIE GROUP ESTABLISHED

Miss Williamson and Miss Millar have established a new P5 Mini Vinnies Group in our school. This is something that many schools across the Diocese of Motherwell have done in recent years and we are delighted to finally have our own group. Mini Vinnies is a youth version of the St. Vincent de Paul Society (SSVP). Many parishes across the world have an SSVP Society which serves those in need in their local area. They work to ensure social justice for all. Father Bogan is the Spiritual Director of those groups in the Diocese of Motherwell. This is why it is fitting for us to have a group here at St. John Paul II. We look forward to hearing what the Mini Vinnies are planning to do in our school and local community. They are already planning some litter picking in the local area.





With Ash Wednesday coming up on Wednesday 14th February (INSET Day) we want to share our plans for our school *Journey of Lent*. We encourage our staff, children and their families to play an active part in Lent by using the motto, *Pray, Fast, Give.*'

JOIN US FOR MASS TO KICK START OUR JOURNEY THROUGH LENT:

Friday 16th February 2024 at 10am in St. Columba's Church. All Welcome. Our Minnie Vinnies will be enrolled at this Mass.



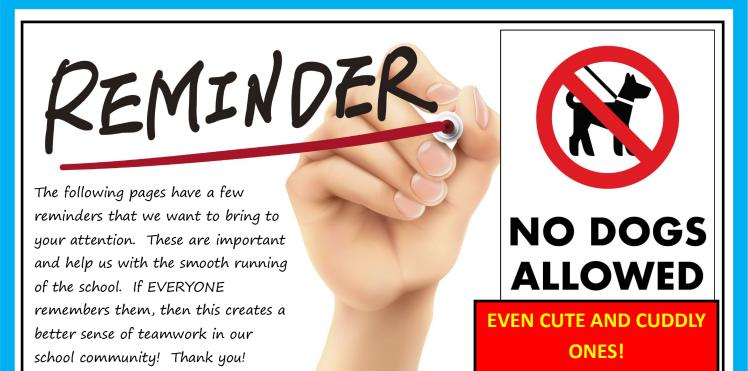
As well as our regular daily prayers, we will have Mass every morning in the Audio/ Visual Room behind the stage. If numbers are too high, we will move to the Gym Hall. Father Morris will say Mass each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday at 8:20am. Everyone is welcome to attend and we warmly encourage family members and parishioners to join us. The first Mass will be on Monday 19th February at 8:20am.



We will be chatting to the children about the idea of fasting and abstinence. Although the children are too young to abstain from food, they can certainly abstain from other things! Perhaps a little less tech time, or less TV or saving pocket money for charity could be something to consider. Whilst this can be a challenge, it also teaches us a lot about being thankful for what we have.



Giving to others is something our school community is very good at! The children will be learning about the SCIAF Wee Box Project for this year as well as raising funds for Missio. Giving of your time is just as important as giving of your cash! We will be offering opportunities for the children to give of their time as part of their *Journey of Lent*.



WE ARE A MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL AND WE'RE ALL THE BETTER FOR IT!

You may notice (when visiting our school building) that we have a *One School, Many Cultures* display at the entrance. This is to highlight the multicultural aspect of our school community. We want to learn more and more about those cultures and how they enhance and improve the Scottish culture. Having such a diverse community helps our children (and all of us) learn about equality and it broadens our horizons beyond our local area. We will be looking at ways in which we can celebrate our diverse community. We will be including this in the children's learning. If you have any ideas to help us, please let us know!



AN IMPORTANT REMINDER TO EVERYONE...

A number of our children run the risk of hospitalisation and serious illness if they come into contact with products containing nuts.

Perhaps this does not involve your own child or children, but if you send your child with products containing nuts, this could cause a serious problem.

ALL products including Nutella products, Kinder products and other more obvious products are not allowed in school.

People with nut allergies do not need to come in direct contact with the actual product. Simply touching the hand or sharing a resource with someone who has eaten a nut product can cause a reaction.

Please do everything you can to help us with this. We will monitor packed lunches in particular. Thanks!

P.E. UNIFORM



We are having a big push on the wearing of **PE Uniform**. Lots of information has been sent out about this towards the end of June, during the holidays and before the beginning of the new school year. We want to discourage children from coming to school on PE days dressed as though it is another non-uniform day! It is not good for their work ethic or the ethos of the school and it also places unnecessary pressure upon families to be providing expensive gear to wear to school!

If you stick with the suggested **PE Uniform**, then your child is dressed for a day at school! There are plenty of opportunities for children to dress down on fun days, non-uniform days, parties and Halloween.

PE UNIFORM IS:

Plain black jogging bottoms/leggings/shorts, pale blue school polo shirt, royal blue sweatshirt/cardigan. It's up to you if you want the badge to be on any of these garments.

Some children are coming to school wearing school hoodies. <u>This is a privilege reserved for P7 as a leavers' treat!</u> **Please note that HOODIES are not part of school uniform**, but could perhaps be worn on PE days, if they are school colours (royal blue) and you have already made the purchase.



IF YOU NEED ANY HELP OR SUPPORT WITH THE SOURCING OR PURCHASE OF ANY ITEMS OF UNIFORM, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH! WE HAVE WAYS TO SOURCE HELP AND THIS CAN BE DONE WITH DISCRETION AND PRIVACY.

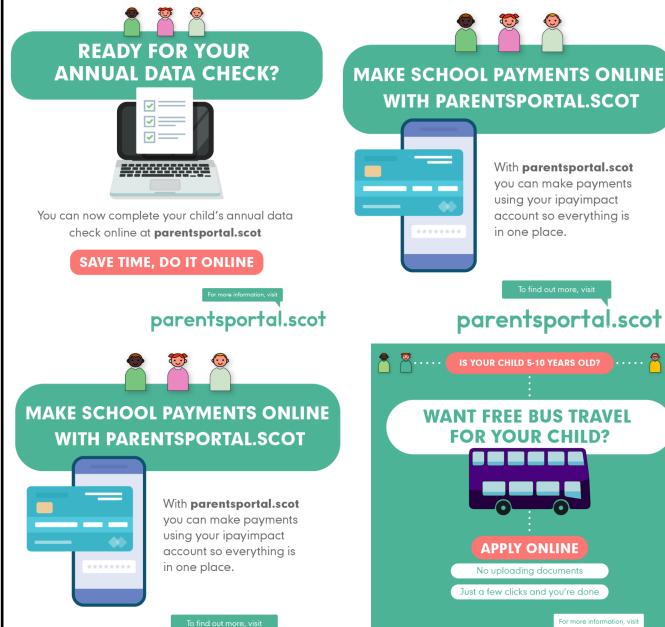
PARENTS PORTAL

We have advertised the use of Parents Portal for some time now. Many thanks to those who have managed to sign up. We know that some of you have had issues signing up and that this can cause frustration and even put you off entirely from using the app. However, we are being encouraged by North Lanarkshire to encourage 100% sign up!

By using Parents Portal you can:

- Update your child's details/contacts/other information at any time
- Report an absence without having to call the school office
- Sign a permission slip for trips and other events
- Access your child's reports. All reports from now on will be sent via Parent Portal.

These are just a few of your options with Parents Portal...



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND A GUIDE ON HOW TO SIGN UP, PLEASE CLICK <u>HERE</u>. Alternatively, please contact the school office. North Lanarkshire Council information for Parents/Carers can be found by clicking <u>HERE</u>.

parentsportal.scot

parentsportal.scot

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

You will no doubt have heard on the news about the issues around attendance in schools across the country. The media focus has been mainly in England, but the issue exists in Scotland and we at St. John Paul II are no different to many of the other schools.



We have been working with colleagues at Cardinal Newman High School to get a true picture of our attendance.

Of course, we know that there are genuine reasons for absences. However, we also know that avoidable absences are on the increase. Birthdays, holidays during term time, haircuts are some of the reasons we have been alerted to. There are some other trends which we notice:

- Absences increase in the run up to a major holiday (Christmas was particularly bad this year).
- Mondays and Fridays can be popular days for absence.

Currently no stages are reaching the North Lanarkshire target of 95% attendance but we have time to improve this!

AVERAGE MONTHLY ATTENDANCE			
MONTH:	PERCENTAGE:		
August 2023	93%		
September 2023	89%		
October 2023	90%		
November 2023	91%		
December 2023	86%		
January 2024	89%		

AVERAGE CLASS ATTENDANCE IN AUGUST & JANUARY				
STAGE:	AUGUST 23:	JANUARY 24:		
Primary 1	96%	90%		
Primary 2	97%	85%		
Primary 3	93%	94%		
Primary 4	92%	87%		
Primary 5	95%	91%		
Primary 6	83%	85%		
Primary 7	94%	89%		

CARDINAL NEWMAN CLUSTER OF SCHOOLS

Understanding your child's attendance percentage









190 days in school (perfect attendance!)	180 days in school	WARNING This le family 171 days in school		e are 365 days in a year, eaves 175 non-school o y time, visits and other	nal Newman St. John Paul II Holy Family, but only 190 school day days to spend on holiday appointments.
		This is equivalent to 209 days absence over eleven years of schooling: more	161 days in school	152 days In school	142 days
		than ONE YEAR of school missed!			143 days in school
100% No days missed	95% 2 weeks missed	90% 4 weeks missed	85% 6 weeks missed	80% 8 weeks missed This level of attendance	75% 10 weeks missed

possible chance of making good progress and having success in their learning

his level of attendance is **worrying**. It will make it they are less likely to have success in their learning

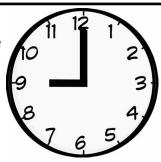
harder for your child to make good progress and It will be very difficult for your child to make good progress in their learning and there is likely to be a serious impact on their success in school



ATTENDANCE MATTERS... every school day counts!

LATE ARRIVAL

Our school day begins at 9am. Every school has children who arrive late for one reason or another! This is just part of life and is to be expected. HOWEVER... We have a number or serial late arrivals at school. This means children who arrive at school late on a regular basis. Even arriving 5 or 10 minute late is disruptive for the child arriving, but it is also disruptive for the children and staff who have already started their day. It puts unnecessary stress upon some children and they can feel embarrassed arriving when everyone has started their day.

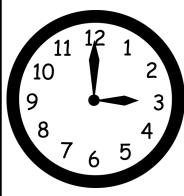


The start of the day is important! It is when we set the tone for the day ahead. We go through expectations and our visual timetables. We settle the children and we let them know if there are any changes to the plan. THIS IS VALUABLE TIME!

Please note...

Our staff never question children if they are late. They will ensure they have a lunch and they will try to settle them into the day as soon as possible. Children cannot be held responsible for their late arrival.

WE HAVE SUPPORTS AND STRATEGIES WE CAN OFFER YOU IF YOU FEEL YOU NEED HELP WITH THIS OR ANY OTHER ASPECT OF YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE.



EARLY COLLECTION

Our school day finishes at 3pm. As with all things, we know that from time to time children will require to be collected early. We do ask that this is kept to a minimum.

Just as with late arrival, we have a number of children who are simply collected early as part of their routine. This can begin from as early as 2:20pm! It happens every day. We have noticed some trends and the weather is a huge factor in this. Winter weather should not be a reason for collecting your child early—nor should avoiding the busy car park!

The disruption at the end of the day can be extremely intrusive. Multiple announcements being made for children to come to the office makes for a very loud and disrupted end to the day. *The end of the day can be just as important as the beginning!* Children review their day, discuss homework, share success and plan ahead.

Of course, we want you all to know that we appreciate that there are genuine reasons for late arrival, early collection and, of course absence. These reminders do not mean that we will not support our families. We know that life can take over! We simply ask you to work with us to keep all of this to a minimum.

IF YOU NEED HELP OR SUPPORT WITH ANY ASPECT OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

- Please get in touch!
- We can work with you and your child.
- We can help you get support from organisations like Sleep Scotland, Community Learning & Development or Homestart amongst others.
- We will be understanding and supportive.
- We will take time to listen.







Let's make a difference to young children's lives

Early Learning and Childcare Support Worker Recruitment 2024

Looking for a new career that fits around your family? Why not come and work in your local nursery (settings include primary school nursery classes and Family Learning Centres).

We have a range of posts in our nursery settings including:

- shorter hours over lunchtimes,
- term time,
- 52 weeks,
- full time and
- part time.

Full training will be provided. Support Worker hourly rate range - £13.05 - £13.73.

Working here at North Lanarkshire Council

great package of benefits available, from health and wellbeing, access to pension scheme to If you're considering a career with us, you'll be keen to know what's in it for you. We have a finances and family. This includes 27 days annual leave and 6 public holidays*, and a wide package of learning and development through our learning academy LearnNL to help you range of benefits available to you, find out more at work well NL. We also have a full reach your full potential and further your career.

Dependent on the working pattern.

Make application via MyJobscotland

DEVELOPING THE YOUNG WORKFORCE WEEK We need your help!

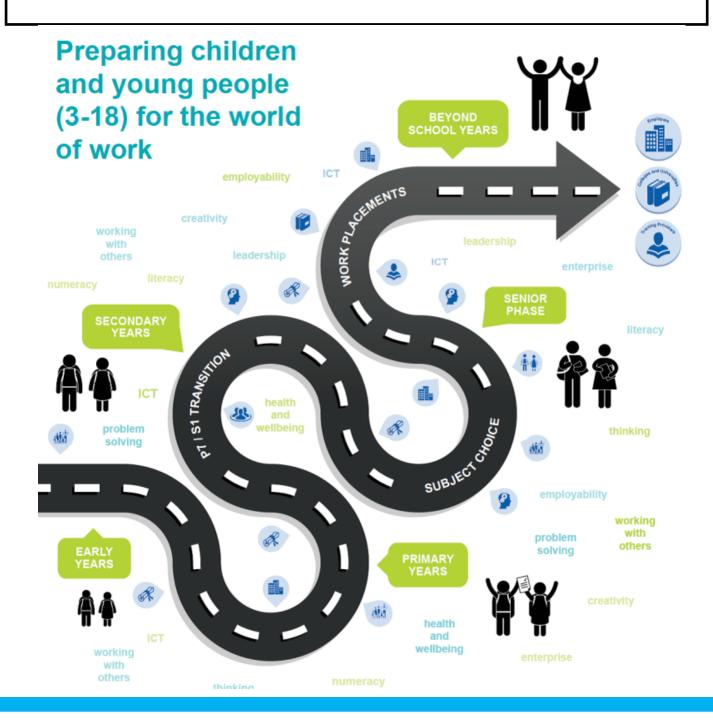
We are having a week in March, WB 11th March, dedicated to Developing the Young Workforce. We've done this once before in 2019 and it was a great success.

We would like to invite any parents/ carers into school to speak to the children about their jobs. We want to show the children a range of jobs that are out there in the workforce.



If you would like to volunteer to do this please contact Mrs Murtagh by email at nlmurtaght@northlan.org.uk for more information or to ask any questions.

We look forward to welcoming you into school. The diagram below gives an idea of what experiences children can expect during their time in Early Years, Primary School, Secondary School, Senior Phase and beyond school.



PARENTS AS PARTNERS

I want to thank everyone who managed along to our Parents as Partners events both before and after Christmas. These events were very well received and the children loved presenting their learning to you all. There was a lovely buzz around the school each day these occurred and it is always great to welcome Parents/Carers and other family members into the school building.

I appreciated the opportunity to fill you in on some of the other work we are doing around school improvement as well as some of the new and exciting initiatives we are involved in. There is never a quiet time in our school - we are always busy, whether it be with our day-to-day learning or with our extra curricular events and clubs!

SLEEP WORKSHOP

North Lanarkshire Council's Educational Psychology Service is offering a free online workshop for Parents on Thursday 15th February 2024 from 2:30pm – 4pm. For more information on this and to find the link to join the meeting, please click the link below. Sleep, as we know, is so important. But sleep is becoming more and more of an issue for many young people. If you would like some help and advice, then this is for you!

February 2024 Parent sleep workshop leaflet

NUERODEVELOPMENTAL SERVICE WORKSHOPS

The above service is offering a variety of workshops to support parents, some of which are in conjunction with Hope for Autism. They range from managing anxiety, to eating issues, visual supports for routines, sleep and sensory difficulties. Click HERE to gain more information and to see the calendar of events. If you would like to discuss this, please do get in touch with us.

ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

We continue to work hard to take forward our Annual Improvement Priorities for 2023-24. They are:

Cluster Priority 1: Improve levels of attendance at school

As you can see from the insert in our Newsletter, this is still a priority for us. We continue to work with families and other agencies to support this priority.

Cluster Priority 2: Embed the principles and practices of 'Keeping the Promise'

Mrs McCluskey is our school representative on a cluster Working Party for this priority. We are continuing to develop our knowledge and inclusive ethos as well as improving the ways we plan for and work with children who are Care Experienced.

School Priority: Review of the school Curriculum Rationale to ensure quality learning experiences for all children.

This work is well underway and we are currently seeking your views on our Vision, Mission and Values.

The children participated in a live Teams meet and used Mentimeter to share their views with Mr Thomas.

Staff will continue this work during the February INSET Day.

Nursery and School Priority: Raise attainment in Writing through a review of learning and teaching strategies (Talk for Writing)

This is our second year and we are already seeing a wonderful increase in enthusiasm for writing across the school. Our Nursery Class has really taken to this approach with children demonstrating fantastic knowledge. Classes are working well and new resources to support Learning and Teaching have been implemented this year.



P7 TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

P7 are already preparing for their transition to high school. By now, all parents/carers should have returned the form which indicates which high school their child will be moving to. If your child is not moving to Cardinal Newman, and they are going to another school, you may need to submit a **placing request** to the relevant authority.

We are already working with the staff of Cardinal Newman where the majority of our children are going. We will also establish contact with any other high schools. If families have already done this, please let us know any relevant information regarding your child's transition.

PARENT COUNCIL

We offer a huge thank you to all of those Parents/ Carers who gave up their time and energy to host the recent Movie Nights. These were a huge success and the children thoroughly enjoyed them. Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets and to the children whose behaviour was excellent!

PARENT COUNCIL FUNDS TO SUPPORT OUR SCHOOL

As you know, the school benefits greatly from the generosity of our parents and carers. The money raised by the Parent Council always comes to us in one way or another. Recently, the Parent Council match funded a SMART Interactive Panel at a cost of £1400. the school also bought one from our own funds. The PC have also funded £20 per child for the P7 trip to Strathclyde Park in April and the school is subsidising £10. Thank you to everyone involved!

Reconciliation

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION—2023/2024



Our Sacramental Preparation Programme is well underway for P3 (Confession), P4 (Communion) and P7 (Confirmation). Please note: If you have not sent us the return slip for either of the Sacraments, please do so as soon as possible. Otherwise, we will presume your child is not making this Sacrament.

CONFIRMATIONS (P7) take place this month on Thursday 22nd February at 7pm in St. Gabriel's. This is for ALL P7 children enrolled for Confirmation. There are no Confirmations in St. Columba's this year. Bishop Toal will come to meet the children at school on Thursday 15th February. Please ensure that you have returned the from with all of the details, including the name of the child's Sponsor. Please ensure that you stick to the guidelines from the Diocese regarding Sponsors.

Confirmation

FIRST CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION (P3) will take place on Monday 4th March 2024. St. Gabriel's will take place in the school during the day. Those from St. Columba's will go along to the church on the same evening at an allocated time.



FIRST COMMUNIONS (P4) will take place on Saturday 27th April at 11am in St. Columba's and 1pm in St. Gabriel's on the same day. Further information will be distributed in due course.

PAYMENT FOR WORKBOOKS: If you have not already done so, could you please pay the £3 for your child's preparation workbook? You can do this online or send in the £3 to school.





Please make every effort to complete the home learning tasks when they are sent home. There will be some prayers to learn for all of the above Sacraments, so please support with this too.

Any practicalities will be sent out separately for each Sacrament. Thank you for your ongoing support!

THE COST OF COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/CARERS

We try our best to communicate with you all in the best way possible. Sometimes I think we offer information in too many forms! Facebook is popular, but this is maybe putting a barrier up for some Parents/Carers who then choose not to link up to *Parents Portal* or who do not provide us with an email address.



I recently found out that, so far this year, we have sent out an overall total of 44,000 texts! This is an astounding amount and each text costs us about 3p. If we keep going in this way, we will have sent a total of 58,000 as a projection. This would be at an estimated cost of £1900! I know that texts are probably the most effective way for us to contact you, as you may not check your email inbox regularly, however... **EMAIL IS FREE!** I am looking into paying a flat fee for a set amount of texts which could halve the cost. It would still be a sizeable amount though!

I would appreciate you letting us have your email address but more importantly, I would appreciate you setting up Parents Portal. Please see the other item in the newsletter.

VISION, MISSION & VALUES

In 2018, we established our current Values which are displayed around our school and have become very much part of our school ethos.







As part of this year's Annual Improvement Plan we are looking at

our Curriculum Rationale (the what, the when and the how things are taught!) We are reviewing our Values as well as our Mission and Vision. The kind of school we aspire to be, has a huge impact upon our Curriculum Rationale. We want as many people who are involved in our school community as possible to have their say! We would value your contribution.

We have put together a very short survey and would ask that you complete as soon as possible. It won't take you long... we promise! Simply click **HERE** to take part.

Thank you!

SCHOOL CAR PARK

We all know what a problem we have with parking and the dangers around the school, especially at 3pm. I continue to ask that you find an allocated space to park. If you cannot, then you should not leave your car. Please do not block the zebra crossings and empty parking spaces! Be calm and courteous and if someone asks you to move, do the decent thing and move!

SMOKING AT THE SCHOOL GATES

Whilst we cannot stop people from smoking, we are respectfully asking Parents/Carers not to smoke at the school gates or on the premises. We have been approached by a number of Parents/Parers who say it is something which is on the increase. Not so long ago, our children did a power of work with NHS Lanarkshire on a campaign to keep smoking away from the School Gate. As with lots of things, people forget and as time passes, it becomes a thing again! This is a polite request to ask all smokers to wait until they are away from the school before smoking. Thank you for your assistance!

routestowork





Calling residents living in Bellshill, Mossend, Holytown, Newarthill and New Stevenston!

Mid Term Break







A REGISTERED SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SCO33698

Are you a looking to either upskill, find employment, gain new qualifications or get support in self-confidence, life skills and much more?

Come and join us for a chat, whilst your children play in the gaming van and visit the petting zoo for FREE.

Parent or guardian, should be available to sign child into the van.

- Tuesday 13th February
- 11.00am-3.00pm
- Bellshill Cultural Centre, John St, Bellshill ML4 1RJ











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:			
Monday 12th February	HOLIDAY				
Tuesday 13th February	HOLIDAY				
Wednesday 14th February	INSET DAY (Ash Wednesday)	Pupils should not attend.			
Thursday 15th February	Bishop Toal for Pre-Confirmation Visit	11am in school			
Thursday 15th February	P6 Buddy Conference	AM event in school			
Friday 16th February	Whole School Mass for Lent	10am in St. Columba's All welcome to attend			
Mass for Lent each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday at 8:20am in the Music Room. All Welcome! From Monday 19th February.					
Thursday 22nd February	P7 Confirmation	7pm in St. Gabriel's Church			
Monday 4th March	P3 First Confession	St. Gabriel's: During school day—no parents/carers to attend			
		St. Columba's: At church in the evening with parents/carers.			
Thursday 7th March	World Book Day				
11th March—15th March	Developing the Young Workforce Week	More details to follow. See Newsletter!			
Monday 18th March	Cardinal Newman High School Meeting	In Cardinal Newman. Save the date!			
Tuesday 19th March	P1 at Mass for Feast of St. Joseph	10am in St. Columba's. All Welcome!			
Thursday 21st March	Parents' Night	Details to follow			
Thursday 28th March	Holy Thursday Mass	9:30am in school hall. All Welcome.			
	Last day of term	School closes at 2:30pm			
Monday 15th April	School Reopens	Breakfast Club from 8:15am			
		School Day start at 9am sharp!			
Monday 22nd—Friday 26th April	P7 Strathclyde Park Outdoor Experience	Bush leaves at 9am each day and returns at 2:30pm.			
Tuesday 23rd April	Parent Council AGM	6pm in Dining Hall. All Welcome.			

Faith Respect Friendship Trust Kindness Equality