



JANUARY 2026

From Mr Thomas...

A very Happy New Year to everyone in our school community! (I know, it seems a bit late for that!) It was lovely to welcome the children back after the holidays and to hear all about their holidays and how they spent Christmas. I'm sure that all of our Parents and Carers are glad to see the new school term starting again!

We have welcomed three new families into our school community since the end of term. It is always great to welcome new children into our school. We hope that they feel the warmth of our welcome and that they settle into life at St. John Paul II very quickly. We also welcomed five new children into our Nursery Class along with their families. A new year and lots of new beginnings!

As always, our Newsletter has lots of information which will help keep you up to date and planned in advance. Every term is busy, and this term will be no different!

Of particular note are the details of our forthcoming Enrolment of Infant Beginners - or next year's Primary 1s. Please share this information with anyone you think it is relevant to.

Our Mission, Vision & Values



MISSION

Inspired by the person of Jesus Christ and our Patron, St. John Paul II, our vision is to be a school community where everyone is included, listened to and valued. Our children will be at the heart of everything we do, as we support them to be the best version of themselves as Successful Learners, Confident Individuals, Responsible Citizens and Effective Contributors.



VISION

To nurture the faith, strengths, and talents of every child through high quality learning experiences in an inclusive environment, which prepares and equips them for learning, life and work. Through excellence and equity, we strive to meet the needs of everyone in our school community. Our Catholic faith will be nurtured, lived and celebrated.



VALUES

Faith | Respect | Inclusion | Achievement | Trust | Friendship

Right of the Month

JANUARY

29

The right to be the best you can be

These are our Rights for the months of January and February. The children will be discussing these and learning more about them in class. They will learn what impact they have on their lives and the lives of children around the world.

FEBRUARY

15

The right to meet with your friends and join groups & clubs

Primary 7 Residential Trip to Dalguise Outdoor Centre

I am sure that Primary 7 are looking forward to their trip to Dalguise in a few weeks time. Please refer to the recent letter which had some reminders about the trip itself, the kit required and also the payment information.

If you need any help financially, please get in touch with Mr Thomas.

Primary 6 Outdoor Education Week at Palacerigg

A letter will be sent out to all Primary 6 children this week, with information about the forthcoming Outdoor Education Week. We are sending this information to you nice and early, so that you have time to spread the cost of the trip. As with any trip, please do not let cost be a reason for your child not attending.

Class Trips for Nursery and P1 - P5

Mrs Cummings has been working with Nursery staff and Class Teachers to plan excursions for all other classes. This is a huge undertaking and we thank Mrs Cummings in particular for her hard work to arrange these trips. As always, we will use our school fund to keep the costs of these trips to a minimum and we will also support families who will maybe find the expense too much of a burden. Letters will be sent to you regarding each class trip and there will be, as always, the option to pay online. Here is an outline of the trips that are planned:

Class:	Where:	When:
Nursery	Almond Valley Heritage Centre	21 st May 2026
P1A	Cloybank Farm, Falkirk	TBC
P1B & 1C	Almon Valley Heritage Centre	24 th April 2026
P2	Five Sisters Zoo	25 th March 2026
P3	Glasgow Science Centre	1 st April 2026
P4	Forth Bridges Experience	9 th June 2026
P5	Sky Up Academy, Livingston	5 th February 2026

PRIMARY 3 FIRST RECONCILIATION



Our Primary 3 children are working towards making their First Reconciliation (or Confession) and you should begin to see the workbook coming home as part of this. Please ensure that the tasks are completed and that the books are returned to school so that the next phase of learning can take place. First Confession takes place on **Tuesday 10th March 2026**, with children from St. Gabriel's making theirs during the school day. Children from St. Columba's will receive a letter with a time slot for them to attend the church in the evening.

PRIMARY 7 CONFIRMATION

Primary 7 are beginning their preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, which will be administered by Bishop Toal on **Thursday 5th February 2026 at 7pm in St. Gabriel's Church**.

CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION NAME

As part of their preparation, the children will need to choose a Confirmation Name. Class Teachers will support this, but Parents/Carers can also support with this too. Normally, boys will choose a male saint and girls will choose a female saint. Their chosen saint should be one who inspires them in their own faith journey.

CHOOSING A CONFIRMATION SPONSOR

All of our Confirmandi are required to have a Sponsor, who stands by their side at the point of Confirmation.

The Church stipulates that a Sponsor should:

- *Be 16 years or older*
- *Be a baptised Catholic*
- *Be a practicing Catholic (i.e. someone who attends Sunday Mass regularly).*



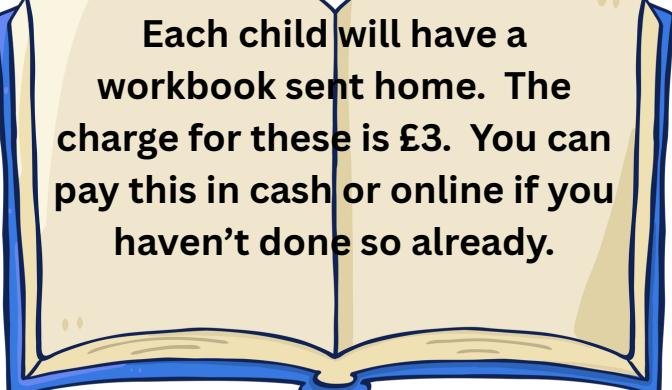
PRIMARY 4 FIRST HOLY COMMUNION



Children in Primary 4 will be presented for their First Holy Communion on Saturday 16th May. For those in St. Columba's, this will take place at 11am. For those in St. Gabriel's, this will take place at 1pm.

We will send out more information nearer the time so that you know exactly what to expect on the day.

If you need any help with the preparation or if you need any support in accessing the things your child might need on the day, please let us know. Very often, we can access beautiful pre-loved Communion Dresses and other items which may be of help! Please do ask!



Each child will have a workbook sent home. The charge for these is £3. You can pay this in cash or online if you haven't done so already.

Planning for our 20th Anniversary Celebrations

On **Wednesday 6th May 2026**, Bishop Toal will join us to celebrate a special 20th Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving. Mass will take place at 1:45pm in the Assembly Hall. We are looking forward welcoming former Head Teachers, Teachers, Support Staff, former pupils and other guests. However, it would not be the same without a great turn out from our Parents/Carers and other members of our school community! Please save the date!



*Save
The
Date*

We are also working with our Smart School Council, Captains and Vice Captains and our Parent Council when considering what else we can do to mark this special occasion. Our friends in Laburnum Family Learning Centre will also be 20 years old and so we are hoping to have a celebration with them too! Lots to look forward to.

FEBRUARY HOLIDAY WEEKEND & INSET DAY

Our February Holiday weekend will take place on Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th February. Wednesday 18th February is an INSET Day and children should not attend school on these three days. School will reopen for children with Breakfast Club at 8:15am on Thursday 19th February 2026.

Nursery to P1 and P7 to High School Transition Arrangements



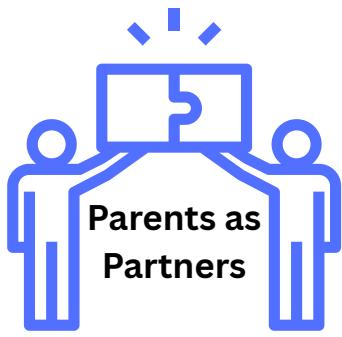
Parents/carers with children in their pre-school year, and those with children in Primary 7 have all been involved in either enrolment or completing forms to transfer to secondary. This time of year can create a sense of worry for children and parents/carers alike. However, as a school team, we will do everything to ensure that every child's transition is as smooth as possible.

NURSERY TO PRIMARY 1

The transition process started as soon as you enrolled your child. We will be sending out dates and times of events at St. John Paul II, where children will meet their teachers and their classmates. P6 children are being trained to become our new P1 Buddies for the start of the new school year, however, their visits to nurseries will start as soon as possible.

PRIMARY 7 TO HIGH SCHOOL

Our P7s have already been engaging with their various secondary schools. The majority will attend Cardinal Newman. Again, dates will be issued, but staff and senior pupils have already been visiting us and the P7 children have been enjoying this.



We **loved** welcoming so many of you to our recent Parents as Partners Events for the P4-7 dates. Thank you so much to those who manged along on the day and for the wonderful feedback you gave.

If you did not manage to leave feedback, please click [HERE](#) so that you can give use some. We really appreciate it!

Tuesday 27th January

Primary 3A (Miss Williamson)
Primary 3B (Miss Byrne)

Wednesday 28th January

Primary 2A (Mrs McDade)
Primary 2B (Mrs Mulgrew)

Thursday 29th January

Primary 1B (Miss Millar)
Primary 1C (Miss Savage)

We are now looking forward to welcoming all of our P1-3 parents and carers in the New Year! If this is your first time attending an event like this, you will NOT be disappointed.

The programme is the same each day:

9am Tea/Coffee/Biscuits served in the hall

9:10am Introduction from Mr Thomas

9:30am Children arrive to showcase their work

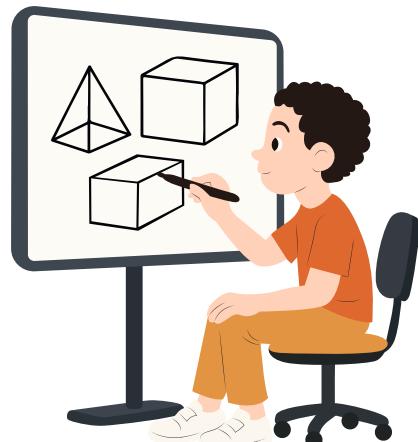
Visit from the Nicola Benedetti Foundation

Nicola Benedetti is a world famous violinist from Scotland. Her foundation offers sessions to children in primary schools across the country. On Monday 19th January, we welcomed Callum and Judith from the foundation. They provided a workshop for P4-7, engaging them in music activities and demonstrating some instruments to them. The children had a wonderful time learning to make music using their hands, feet and fingers!

Purchase of SMART Panels

We have recently ordered some more Interactive SMART Panels. We have taken advantage of a 'Buy One, Get One Free' offer from North Lanarkshire. This is an excellent way for us to update our existing panels and we are grateful to North Lanarkshire for making this funding available to use through the BOGOF offer!

Interactive SMART Panels are used every day in class. They are not only a good way for Class Teachers to display things, but they act as a Learning and Teaching tool in the classroom. With this purchase, we will be able to upgrade four of the original panels and repurpose them to other areas of the school. This will mean that every available teaching space will have an Interactive SMART Panel available for use. We are taking this opportunity to install a larger 85" Panel in the Dining Hall, meaning that this space can be better utilised for smaller assemblies and other lessons. It will also come in handy for our much loved Cinema Afternoons!





Opportunities
Teamwork
Life-skills
Achievements

**EVERY
MOMENT
MATTERS**

It all starts with
showing up at school

LEARN HERE



Car Park Safety REMINDER



We continue to be concerned about the parking issues in school grounds. We need your help and support with this. Please do consider your own parking behaviours and make sure that you are playing your own part in our Car Park Safety. If everyone co-operates... nobody gets hurt!

Please do not park in Heather Gardens!

I have been contacted by residents of Heather Gardens, rightfully complaining about people parking across driveways, parking in allocated spaces, blocking people into their driveways and mounting pavements, which obstruct for pedestrians.

I know that the parking situation is difficult, but please try to park elsewhere. I have suggested the Church Car Park (a minute's walk from the school) or over at The Laughing Buddha, which is about the same.

Please respect our neighbours. Heather Garden's is Private Property!

Flu Vaccination Catch Up

We previously had the NHS Flu Vaccination administered to our children, but on that day, there were a number of absences. The team will be in school on **Monday 26th January 2026** to catch up on those they missed the last time. If your child missed the last session, please ensure that they are in school on 26th (unless they are unwell!)

It is not possible to add children to the list, so if you did not return the permission slip, you will need to make your own arrangements with your Health Centre and/or GP.

OUR PARENT COUNCIL NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!



St. John Paul II

Parent Council

The Parent Council met on Monday 13th January. They are currently a **very** small group and they are appealing for more members! People may think that there is a huge commitment involved, but there is not!

The more people we have working together, the lighter the load. The next meeting is not until Tuesday 28th April. Please save this date. Meetings start at 6pm and they are generally an hour long. The next event is Thursday 19th February, which is our Mid-Term Disco.

Could you consider giving some of your time to assist the Parent Council?



stjohnpauliipc@gmail.com

Please email the Parent Council if you would like to get in touch to offer your help in any way. If you have ideas of what we could be doing together with the Parent Council, let us know!

Lost Property Appeal

You are perhaps tired of hearing us say, **“Please label all of your child’s clothing and belongings!”** More often than not, the lost property in school has no name attached to it. We are offering a bit of advice going forward...

- Label everything that your child wears and brings to school
- Check regularly that the name hasn't faded or fallen off
- When new items are bought, please label them
- **TRAIN YOUR CHILD** to look after their belongings. Children should hang their jackets up if they are not wearing them! (We will do this too.)

Periodically, we gather all of the lost property and try to sift through it all....

- We return anything with a name on it
- We make all other items available to parents/carers so that they can claim items back
- We send reminders out on a regular basis to appeal for your help!

Early Pick Up from School is on the rise again!

As you know, we have been trying to reduce the number of children who are regularly picked up from school on a regular basis for some time now.

I want to thank those who have responded favourably to this! It is very much appreciated.

We are noticing a rise again, however, and there are more and more children being collected from about 2:15pm onwards.

Can I ask you to consider the following...?

- Only collect early in the case of an emergency.
- Only collect early if an appointment cannot be made outwith school hours.
- Try to keep all appointments (if at all possible) outwith school hours.
- Don't let the busy car park be a reason to collect early.
- Don't let the weather be a reason to collect early.
- Don't collect your child early just because you see others doing it!

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR HANDBALL TEAM!

A team of P6/7 children attended the NLC Handball Tournament on 20th January 2026. Some of these children had been part of an after school club last year. For others, it was their first time. They returned to school victorious, having secured their place in the Scottish finals in the coming weeks. Not only were they fantastic ambassadors for our school, but they were also great sports-people!

Well done to them all and many thanks to Mr Cooney for entering us and coaching the team. Here they are showing off their lovely medals!



Breakfast Club Changes

We were recently granted some government funding in order to promote our breakfast club and encourage more footfall. This has come to us in two forms:

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

Our school was one of 9 schools selected in North Lanarkshire to receive around £6300 in order to promote the Breakfast Club and encourage children to attend. The money can be used for resources and activities as well as additional adult support.

We have partnered with the local VIP organisation who are coming into school on a Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday to do various activities with the children. They are loving this! We are also purchasing and updating our resources and games, etc., following feedback from the children.

The Scottish Government also announced in the recent Budget that every school should have a Breakfast Club. We await more information on this and whether it will impact on P6/7 being free or not.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

NLC were already reviewing their current Breakfast Club arrangements, especially for the busier clubs. Any club who has an average of 50 or more children a day will now have another member of staff to assist with the running of the club. This is a fantastic addition to our provision and we look forward to appointing someone in the near future. This is only funded until June 2026, by which time, we should know what the Government plan to do in response to their budget announcement.

- The opening times are from 8.15am until 8.50am each school day.
- The breakfast consists of cereal, milk and toast.
- This is free to pupils who are in Primary 1 to 5 and for pupils in Primary 6 to 7 who receive free school meals.
- For all other pupils the cost is £1.05 per day with a sliding scale for families of two at £1.55 per day and families of three at £1.90 per day.

Breakfast



After School Clubs

Our After School Clubs are getting up and running again, with the continuation of some from last term and a few new opportunities this term too. Please note that registration for new clubs was sent out to those involved. I have outlined the clubs below...

What?	When?	With who?	Please Note:
P6/7 Netball	Mondays	Miss Agnew	Pupils from Term 1 only
P6/7 Arts & Crafts	Tuesdays	Miss Gavin	
P3 Basketball	Tuesdays	Miss Savage	
P4/5 Athletics	Wednesdays	Mr Cooney	
P2 Lego	Wednesdays	Mrs Mulgrew	
P5 Mini Vinnies	Wednesdays	Miss Millar/Miss Williamson	
P4-7 Drama	Thursdays	The Drama Dream Team!	
P6/7	Football	Mr McLaughlin	Pupils from Term 1 only

Registration forms have been sent to the relevant groups by text message. Please note that, with the exception of P5 Mini Vinnies, the other new clubs registration will close on Friday. Mini Vinnies will close on Monday.

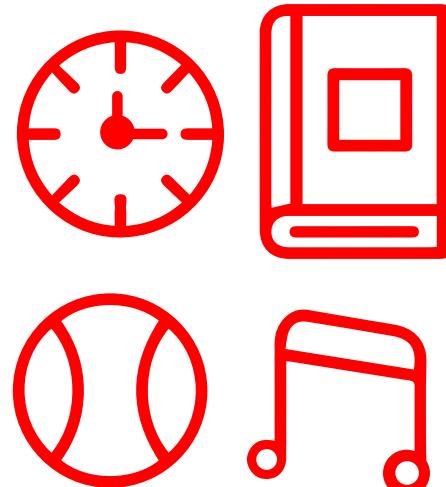
IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE TEXT MESSAGE:

This may be because we do not have an up to date mobile number for you or your phone is not set to receive messages from our school number.

Please save the following number on your phone as JPII Texts or something you'll recognise: +44 7860 030805

A huge thank you to all of the staff who are giving up their free time to offer these experiences to our children. It is very much appreciated. Thanks to Mrs MacFadyen for all of her organisation too!

Look out for some after school experiences for Primary 1 in the Summer Term.





NEURODEVELOPMENTAL

family support



North Lanarkshire Council: Education & Families have commissioned North Lanarkshire Carers Together to deliver a Family Support Service to support parent carers and their child or young person living at home who has a need for additional support.

Following on from the NHSL Neurodevelopmental Teams Whole School Approach, some of our team will be based in St. John Paul II Primary School on the date below.

Please feel free to drop in, get to know other parents in a safe and welcoming environment, and seek any support you require.



30th January 2026, 9am-12noon



NORTH LANARKSHIRE
carers together



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date:	Event:	Details:
Wednesday 21 st January	Parent Consultation Meeting with NLC	6pm in the hall
Monday 26 th January	Visit from Bishop Toal	Whole School Assembly and time with P7 Confirmandi
Tuesday 27 th January	P3A and P3B Parents as Partners	From 9am in the Assembly Hall
Wednesday 28 th January	P2A and P2B Parents as Partners	From 9am in the Assembly Hall
Thursday 29 th January	P1B and P1C Parents as Partners	From 9am in the Assembly Hall
Thursday 5 th February	P7 Confirmation Mass	7pm in St. Gabriel's Church
Tuesday 10 th February	Safer Internet Day	
11 th -13 th February	P7 Residential	
Monday 16 th & Tuesday 17 th February	HOLIDAY	
Wednesday 18 th February	INSET DAY	Pupils don't attend
Thursday 19 th February	Lent Service	11:15am in the Hall. All Welcome.
Thursday 5 th March	World Book Day	
Tuesday 10 th March	P3 First Reconciliation	See Newsletter
Tuesday 17 th March	P2 to Mass for St. Patrick's Day	10am in St. Columba's
16 th - 20 th March	Neurodiversity Celebration Week	