

Being the best I can be

**PORTMOAK**

## Headteacher's Newsletter – September 2023

### Strike Update

As you may have heard, Unite and GMB have suspended strike action next week, 26, 27 and 28 September 2023. This means that Tayside Contracts colleagues who were in Unite will no longer be taking strike action. At Portmoak, although we will have some support staff off work those days due to Unison continuing with their industrial action, school meals will now be provided as normal to pupils on those days.

### School Photographer

On the morning of Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> and all-day Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September we have Ian Mitchell in for school photographs. If you have older children you may recall, this was a photographer used during Covid times. Ian will be setting up with his mobile studio in the school playground, Families with younger preschool siblings, who wish to have a family photo taken are invited to come along at 9am on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup>. We will then work through school siblings then individuals those days. Parent helpers will be supporting the children to come along to these sessions.

### Outdoor Learning in our Grounds and Beyond

An important part of learning in school now takes part outside in the school grounds and all classes visit the grounds on a regular basis to enhance their learning, particularly in numeracy and in learning for sustainability. We are grateful to Kinnesswood in Bloom for coming in to work with all of the children in the Portmoak Grows Together project. We are coming to the end of our harvest now, after a bumper crop this year from our polytunnel and raised beds.



All classes have plans to visit our local area this year, either to Kilmagad Wood, Portmoak Moss or Bishop Hill, or several of those in the year. P1/2 and P6/7 had a lovely walk to Kilmagad Wood last week, combining outdoor learning with digital learning as they used the class iPads to make movies on the day.



## Absences and a request for chickenpox and contagious diseases

As you will be aware, you need to let the school know when your child is absent and provide the reason for this absence. Please ensure you email or leave a voicemail on the absentee line before 9am. This information is required daily, unless you have told us at the outset your child is going to be off for a set period of time (e.g., for a holiday or when the 48 hour rule means they won't be able to return from sickness until a given day). We need to chase up all absences where children aren't accounted for in the morning. I am sure you will appreciate this is an important factor in our ability to keep children safe. This requires staff time in making phone calls to your child's contacts, sometimes several of them, and this then delays staff who support in the office from then heading into classes to work with children.

I would also like to remind you that we have a child who is immunocompromised in our school, who would be at risk of becoming very ill if they were to catch chickenpox or any other contagious diseases. Please can you make sure the school is informed if your child catches any contagious childhood diseases, so we are able to let their parents know (We do not need to know about Covid now). I would also like to remind you that children with chickenpox should not attend school for 5 days, and until all their blisters have burst and crusted over, to reduce the risk of infecting others. Your support in this would be appreciated.

## ParentPay permissions

Please do ensure you complete ParentPay when you are asked to give permission. We do send out reminders, but it takes time to keep going back to the list. If you aren't sure if you have given permission when you get the reminder we would be grateful if you could check this so we can complete this.

## School Attendance

Schools across the country are being asked to do what they can to increase children's attendance. This is not something we struggle with at Portmoak for the majority of our children, but there are some cases of individual low attendance and we will have been in touch with you to offer support and guidance if this is the case for your child. For all children, we would expect them to be in school every day unless they are unwell. Remember we need to know every day of an absence where you expect your child to be, please get on touch either by email or by calling the absentee line.

Sometimes there is a rule around whether your child needs to stay off school with a certain illness. This includes:

- Vomiting and diarrhoea - Children with diarrhoea or vomiting should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).
- High temperature - If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.
- Chickenpox - If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.
- Impetigo - If your child has impetigo, they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics. Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment..
- Scarlet Fever - If your child has scarlet fever, they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP. Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks. Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics
- Covid-19 – We are no longer asking children and staff to test for Covid-19, in line with current public health guidance. Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of Covid-19 with either a high temperature or they do not feel well enough to do their normal activities. If children have mild symptoms and they feel well enough, they can still go to school.

## Halloween Discos

A reminder about the Halloween discos – we have two discos, one for the younger children and one for the older ones with a small tuck shop open on the night.

Date: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October

Times: P1-4: 5:30-6:30 and P5-7: 6:45-7:45

Suggested donation for tickets: £2

We know not all children want to dress up, and this is ok, they are welcome to come as they are. Please also be mindful of costumes being suitable for a school disco – we have had some younger ones scared of particularly gory / scary masks in the past.

You are welcome to 'drop and go' at this event. Mrs Cole and I, as well as a number of the teachers will be in attendance, along with quite a few parent helpers. Children will need to be signed in at the desk outside my office and signed out again by an adult, so do bring them into the building on arrival and come inside to collect at the end.

Please note that it will be dark when the discos finish, and we recommend that children are collected by an adult. If you want your older child to walk home alone, please let us know in writing before that Thursday. A reply by email will be fine. If you have a nervous younger one and want to come into the hall until they settle, or indeed stay for the whole time, this is also ok.



## Payment for Primary 6 and 7 school lunches

Please ensure that if your Primary 6 or 7 child has school lunch and is required to pay for their meal, that there is credit in their ParentPay account before 9am each day they are choose their school lunch. You are able to go into your ParentPay account and deposit a lump sum or arrange a recurring monthly payment which can pay for your child's meals for as long as you like.

As I am sure you will be aware the budgets across all schools are being pressed and it does cost our school money to send parents messages to remind them to top up for school lunches so we would be most grateful if you could use the free low balance email reminders available on ParentPay to set up free email alerts when your balance falls below a set threshold to remind you that you need to top up.

All children in Primaries 1 to 5 are entitled to Universal Free School Meals so this will not affect them.

## MacMillan Coffee Afternoon

We are delighted to invite you to our MacMillan Coffee Afternoon on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September.

The plan for the afternoon is as follows:

- 1.30pm classrooms open for visitors
- 2.00pm classrooms closed for visitors. School hall opens for tea and coffee with cake (free, but cash donations for MacMillan welcome). The children will stay in their classrooms, but younger siblings are welcome to join adults in the hall. Please pop along to the hall for a coffee and chat.
- 2.45pm hall closes
- 3.00pm sale of any leftover goodies just outside the front door (in £1 lucky bags)

We will be accepting cash donations for this event on the day, which will go to MacMillan Cancer Care. This year we are also able to offer QR codes to make a donation to MacMillan at the coffee table and at the stall at 3pm with leftover lucky bags, which should help those people who have a smartphone with them but no cash on the day.

Donations of home baking would be most welcome, preferably at 9am drop off on Thursday or at 3pm on the Wednesday if easier. Please remember that all donations must be nut free as we are a nut free school. We will also have a sale of second hand uniform in the school library, organised by the parent council.

Extra fundraisers will also be happening for the children in school next week, from Monday onwards, and will be available for parents during the afternoon too.

- Guess Colin the Caterpillar's birthday – 50p
- Guess the number of sweets in the jar – 50p
- Guess the number of cupcakes on the poster – 50p

The children in P6/7 would also like to run a book sale on the day. If you have any books at home that your children no longer read and you would like to donate them, we would love to add them to our book sale! These can be brought into school at your earliest convenience. All classes will have the opportunity to visit the book sale with their classes throughout the morning then it will be available for you to browse in the afternoon.

There will be a minimum donation of 20p per book, with all proceeds going to MacMillan Cancer Care

## Rag Bag Collection

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the Rag Bag collection. Our donations weighed in at 320kg and we have raised an amazing £128. Extra special thanks to the Friends of Portmoak Fundraising Team for organising this for us.

## Assemblies

We are delighted to be able to welcome you back into school to see your child in their class assemblies - each class will have the opportunity to present a Sharing our Learning Assembly to their parents and invite their parents to attend one of the Special Assemblies hosted by their class throughout the year.

Each assembly, except for the Leavers Assembly, are expected to last approx 30mins and start at 9.15am.

All parents of the school are invited to attend the Harvest and Easter Assemblies in Portmoak Church and start at 9.30, or just after. We would greatly appreciate parent helpers to walk with us to/from the church. We do not yet have enough helpers to assist with our walking to the church on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October so if you can help please let us know by calling the school office or by email.

## Portmoak Primary Dates for the Diary

September 2023		
5 <sup>th</sup>	Block 1 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 1
12 <sup>th</sup>	Block 1 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 1
19 <sup>th</sup>	Block 1 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 1
20 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Rugby 3-4pm
22 <sup>nd</sup>	P4-7	After School Netball 3-4pm
25 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Cricket 3-4pm
26 <sup>th</sup>	Block 1 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 1
27 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Rugby 3-4pm
28 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	MacMillan Coffee Afternoon 1.30-2.15 in class 2.15-2.45 in hall
28 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Ardroy – instalment due
28 <sup>th</sup>	Whole school	School photographer in am (younger siblings first thing)
29 <sup>th</sup>	Whole school	School photographer in all day
29 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Netball 3-4pm
October 2023		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	P4-7	After School Cricket 3-4pm
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Whole school	Flu vaccinations
4 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Rugby 3-4pm
5 <sup>th</sup>	Team still TBC	Cluster Football Festival 4-5pm at LLCC
5 <sup>th</sup>	P5/6 and P6/7	Trip to Dundee Science Centre & V&A Museum
6 <sup>th</sup>	P3/4 & Whole School	Harvest Assembly – presented by P3/4 at Portmoak Parish Church – 9.30am
6 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Netball 3-4pm
6 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	End of term (3pm finish)
9 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	October holidays until 23 <sup>rd</sup> October
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Whole School	Term 2 begins
23 <sup>rd</sup>	P4-7	After School Cricket 3-4pm
24 <sup>th</sup>	Block 2 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 2
25 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Safer Schools - Online Safety Evening for Kinross Cluster Parents/Carers - 6.30pm - 7.30pm in Kinross High School
26 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Halloween Discos
27 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Netball 3-4pm
28 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Ardroy – instalment due
30 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Cricket 3-4pm
31 <sup>st</sup>	Block 2 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 2
November 2023		
1 <sup>st</sup>	Whole School	Coffee & Catch Up 9.15-9.45am
3 <sup>rd</sup>	P5/6	P5/6 Assembly – Remembrance 9.15am
6 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Parent Contact meetings 5.30-7.30 pm
6 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	After School Cricket 3-4pm
7 <sup>th</sup>	Block 2 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 2
8 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Parent Contact meetings 3.30-5.30 pm

10 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	In-Service Day
10 <sup>th</sup>	P4-7	After School Netball 3-4pm
14 <sup>th</sup>	Block 2 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 2
21 <sup>st</sup>	Block 2 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 2
24 <sup>th</sup>	P1/2	P1/2 Assembly – Book Week 9.15am
28 <sup>th</sup>	Block 2 Skiers	Ski-ing Block 2
28 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Ardroy – instalment due
<b>December 2023</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup>	P2/3	P2/3 - Sharing their learning Assembly – 9.15am
15 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Christmas Dinner
18 <sup>th</sup>	P1 and P2	P1 and P2 Christmas Party
19 <sup>th</sup>	Whole school	Nativity – evening performance
20 <sup>th</sup>	Whole school	Nativity – morning performance
20 <sup>th</sup>	P3 and P4	P3 and P4 Christmas Party
21 <sup>st</sup>	P5-7	P5, P6 and P7 Christmas Party
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Whole School	Christmas holidays – 12pm until 8 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>January 2024</b>		
8 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Term 3 begins
9 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Swimming – bring £1
15 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Swimming
23 <sup>rd</sup>	P6	Swimming
30 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Swimming
31 <sup>st</sup>	Whole School	Coffee and Catch Up 9.15-9.45am
<b>February 2024</b>		
2 <sup>nd</sup>	P3/4	P3/4 Assembly – Digital – 9.15am
13 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Swimming
14 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	In-Service Day
15 <sup>th</sup> & 16 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	School Holidays
20 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Swimming
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Whole School	Lord Badel Powell's Birthday – Scouting and Guiding uniforms ok to be worn to school.
28 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Ardroy – instalment due
<b>March 2024</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup>	P2/3	P2/3 Assembly – World Wildlife Day – 9.15am
4 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Parent Contact meetings 3.30-5.30 pm
6 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Parent Contact meetings 5.30-7.30 pm
15 <sup>th</sup>	P6/7	P6/7 -Sharing their learning Assembly - 9.15am
28 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Ardroy – instalment due
28 <sup>th</sup>	P5/6 & Whole School	Easter Service – presented by P5/6 at Portmoak Parish Church – 9.30am
29 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	End of term (3pm finish)
<b>April 2024</b>		
15 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	In-Service Day
16 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Term 4 begins
28 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Ardroy – instalment due (final)
<b>May 2024</b>		
3 <sup>rd</sup>	P3/4	P3/4 - Sharing their learning Assembly – 9.15am
6 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	May day holiday
17 <sup>th</sup>	P5/6	P5/6 - Sharing their learning Assembly – 9.15am
24 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup>	P6	Residential weekend
31 <sup>st</sup>	P1/2	P1/2 - Sharing their learning Assembly – 9.15am
<b>June 2024</b>		
6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> June	P7	P7 induction days
14 <sup>th</sup>	P6	P6 John Muir Award Assembly – 9.15am
26 <sup>th</sup>	P7	Leavers' Assembly – 9.30am
27 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	End of term (12 noon finish)
28 <sup>th</sup>	Whole School	Summer holidays until 14 <sup>th</sup> August

Don't forget to save both school numbers 01577 867290 (school office)

and the absentee line & answer phone on 01577 867196.

