Being the best I can be

PORTMOAK

Headteacher's Newsletter – September 2025

School Improvement

We have started work on our Quality Improvement Plan for this year, with the following priorities;

- A focus on numeracy- with staff engaging in the PKC Numeracy Schools programme, along with colleagues from some of the cluster schools.
- Engagement in Decider Skills- an approach to supporting children to manage their emotions and behaviours, giving them specific skills to manage different situations. Staff will be undertaking a full day of training in November focusing on this.
- Continued work around reading and writing- moderating and discussing pieces of writing and our approach to teaching this. Check ins with PM readers and a focus on reading for enjoyment, with the goal of achieving Reading Schools recognition by this time next year.

We will feedback to parents on progress within these areas through our newsletters and parent events.

Eco Schools Update

We received the wonderful news this morning that we have once again achieved a Green Flag from Eco Schools. Both of our Eco Committees have worked so hard on this so we are very proud to receive the recognition for their work, as well as all of the Eco development that takes place in the classrooms and through our close connection to Kinnesswood in Bloom. Well done everyone!

Eco - Schools
Green Flag Award

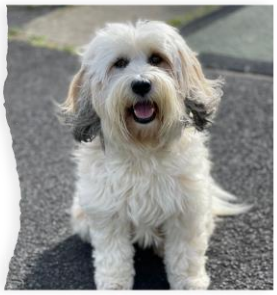
Staffing Update

Mrs Wendy Hunter has now joined the Portmoak team and will be based in the School Office on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Autism Awareness Assembly

Julie Pirie from Perth Autism Support will be coming to speak to the children at assembly on 31st October, to raise awareness of Autism and to support peer understanding. If you would like more information about what will be included, please get in touch.

Our New Furry Friend



We have been delighted to welcome Nellie, the Bark and Read dog into school over the past few weeks. She has now spent time with all of the children and they have been so calm and gentle with her, giving her space and time to become familiar with them and the school. Nellie will be visiting regularly to do story sessions with the children.

MacMillan Coffee and Open Morning

We really enjoyed welcoming you to our MacMillan coffee and open morning last week. There was a lovely atmosphere in the classrooms as the children shared their learning. Thank you to the staff, pupils and parents for all of the delicious baking and generous donations for a worthy cause. A special thank you must go to Miss Kettles and all of our Primary 6 and Primary 7 pupils who have spent weeks planning the event and working really hard to make it a success. What a fabulous way to apply skills in a meaningful way and a fantastic total raised. Well done team Portmoak! Isla C and Saoirse from P6/7 have shared some more about the event below…

On Thursday 25th September Portmoak Primary School held their MacMillan Coffee Morning. The P6s and P7s were responsible for organising the event. The first thing we did to prepare for MacMillan was design posters advertising the MacMillan Coffee Morning. Shortly after, we started working on our donation boxes for people to donate money. They were very colourful because we each got to put our own designs on them. Each class teacher decided what their classes would bake then we had to do a massive shop to get all the necessary ingredients for baking in our classes. Wednesday was the day that we baked everything. All the classes baked different things, and in some classes different groups made different things. With all the home donations we had loads of delicious cakes. Some of us went around different classes a few days before the MacMillan Coffee Morning to see if anyone had brought money in for some of the fundraising games we had to raise extra money. At the very start of the morning, our parents came in to have a look around our classroom. Half an hour was how long they could stay before the MacMillan Coffee Morning started. Many of the parents joined in with some of our fundraising games, and so many cakes were sold. We also had lots of donations, online as well. Lots of us were on our feet, restocking cakes, selling coffee and cleaning spoons. After everyone left to get on with their day, we still had a lot of cleaning to do. We stacked up all the chairs and put away all the tables. We also counted the money from donations. We found out that we had raised £1010 but our teacher still had to take off the money that we spent on the shop. However, Mrs. Davies sent home an online QR code so people who couldn't make the day could still donate. At the end of the day, we sold goodie bags with our left-over cakes for one pound each. Our final total was £1008, and we were all very happy since that is the highest amount that we have ever raised for MacMillan.

Learning Journals

We will continue to use Learning Journals this year to share information and learning directly from classes. If you would like any help or support getting going with Learning Journals, please get in touch and we will do our best to troubleshoot or find any answers for you.

Allergy Aware

Please note that we are an allergy aware school community and would ask that children do not bring any snacks or packed lunch items that contain nuts, including chocolate spreads such as Nutella, into the school building. We have a number of pupils and a member of staff with severe nut allergies.

Absences and a request for chickenpox and infectious conditions

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. I would also like to remind you that children with chickenpox should not attend school for 5 days, and even after that until all their blisters have burst and crusted over, to reduce the risk of infecting others. Your support in this would be appreciated.

Other illnesses when your child needs to stay off school include:

- Vomiting and diarrhoea - Children with diarrhoea or vomiting must stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 full days (48 hours).
- High temperature - If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.
- 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.

Please label all children's belongings

We would like to remind parents to label **ALL** your child's belongings: -clothes, water bottles and especially plastic tubs. We end up with a lot of lost property which we would more than happily return – we can only do this if you label these. We are always surprised at the shoes, jackets and tupperware tubs that end up at lost property that are never claimed.

Assemblies

Class assemblies have been added to the diary dates below. Each assembly, except for the Leavers Assembly, are expected to last approx. 30mins and start at 9.15am. The harvest assembly and Easter assembly are open to all parents to come along to. The harvest assembly on Thursday 9th October will take place in the church, with each class contributing. This will start at a slightly later time of 9.30am to allow us to walk along to the church. Please contact the school office of you are able to accompany the children on the walk along to church. We are also looking for volunteers to support with this the day before at 9.00am as we are attending the church for a rehearsal and will then walk back to school.

Parent Contact Appointments

Parent contact meetings will take place on Monday 10th November 3.30-5.30pm and Wednesday 12th November 5.30-7.30pm. You will be able to make a 10-minute appointment with the class teacher to discuss your child's learning. We will send out an email after the October holidays to give you instructions on how to book these.

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 30th October
Times: P1-4: 5:30-6:30 and P5-7: 6:45-7:45
Suggested donation for tickets: £2 at the door

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. Mr Dowling 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 the day of the disco. A reply by email will be fine. If you have a nervous younger child and want to come into the hall until they settle, or indeed stay for the whole time, this is also fine.

Parking

We have been contacted by the Police regarding parking on Bruce Road at the junction with the main street, this concerns cars parked within 10 metres of the junction. The Police are going to carry out some patrols at drop off and collection times to support safe parking around the school so you may see them over the next few weeks.

Can we please ask anyone dropping off or picking up to be mindful of our neighbours and the traffic regulations when parking. Please do not park in the disabled bays unless you are a blue badge holder and please avoid parking in the bus bays at all times. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Broke Not Broken Update

As we approach the school holidays (again... I hear you say!) Broke Not Broken are extremely busy. We are looking forward to our two Tuesday Trips, heading off to the Scottish Deer Centre and Dalkeith Country Park, which provide an amazing opportunity for fun and friendships.

We will soon be issuing our winter warmer packs which help so many people with the cost of heating in the winter months and then it's time for our big Christmas Hamper Pack on 7th December. We are starting to collect items for this so if you are able, we would really appreciate some donations of sweet treats to our Sainsbury's Box. We will be issuing a sign-up sheet soon as we are looking for people to come and help pack some hampers so watch this space.

But before all these projects we are busy planning our schedules for Challenge Poverty Week which kicks off on Monday 6th October. This national week of campaigning is headed up by The Poverty Alliance and gives organisations and activists an opportunity to fight for change and to raise awareness. As such, we would love it if as many of you as possible could take the time to visit us for a **Community Support Event at Loch Leven Library on Thursday 9th October between 2pm and 4pm.** This drop-in event will allow you to get information about the work we are doing with our partners to put pressure on the government to make changes, we will be having a flag making workshop for the 'Scotland Demands Better' march and there will be support agencies on hand to answer questions and offer support.

Please remember our doors are always open and we are always available for a chat. You can contact us on 07518913107 or drop us an email to admin@brokenotbroken.org We are very lucky that all the local schools are such great supporters of Broke Not Broken and they can be the link between yourself and us if you are more comfortable with that.

From everyone at Broke Not Broken, have a lovely Autumn Break!

Message from Parent Council

A belated welcome to all the new children and families joining Portmoak this year. As your Parent Council we hope you have all settled in well. Our recent AGM reminded us of all the achievements of last year (minutes will be made available soon) and we're motivated for the coming months. Already this term:

- The annual photo shoot is complete, huge thanks to all our volunteers who helped make it run smoothly. We are chasing for an update on when they will become available.
- We've had our first pre-loved uniform sale, which raised an incredible £80 in donations.
- The RagBag bin has been emptied twice this term – please keep recycling!
- Plans are well underway for the Halloween discos, and we're so grateful to everyone who's signed up to help. We'll be in touch very soon with next steps!

We'd like to thank our outgoing Secretary, Nicola Aitken for all her hard work and support over the years. Which means we have a vacant post on our committee…

Be the Glue That Keeps Us Together (No Actual Glue Required)

Do you enjoy keeping things ticking along and making sure people know where to be and when? We're looking for a new Secretary to help the Parent Council stay organised, connected, and meeting regularly.

It's a simple but vital role that helps:

- Schedule meetings and send out reminders
- Jot down key points so we remember what we've agreed
- Help keep the communication flowing

You don't need fancy tech skills or loads of free time, just a willingness to help us stay on track and in touch. We're a friendly bunch, and you'll have plenty of support.

Interested or curious? Please get in touch by emailing: friendsofportmoakschool@gmail.com

Coming Soon: Our Festive Fundraising Shop!

Portmoak's little elves are busy creating Christmas artwork for our annual fundraising shop which we will open in early November! There's no obligation to buy, but with so many lovely options, including Christmas cards, a personalised Festive storybook, and (we hear) some new soft toys, we're sure every family will find something on their list.

When it opens, you'll need to be quick – it will be live for just one week! Don't worry we will keep you informed of dates and deadlines. Any questions – please email: friendsofportmoakschool@gmail.com

Shop Online & Support Portmoak — It's Easy!

Did you know you can raise funds for Portmoak Primary just by doing your usual online shopping? With **easyfundraising**, over 7,000 retailers (including M&S, Argos, John Lewis, and Tesco) will donate to our school at no extra cost to you. It's quick to set up, and friends and family can join in too!

Just visit easyfundraising.org.uk and search for *Portmoak Primary School* to get started. Thank you!

Portmoak Primary Dates for the Diary

		October 2025
8th	Whole School	Assembly run through- Portmoak Church
9th	Whole School	Harvest Assembly- Whole School – 9.30am – Portmoak Church – all parents welcome
10th	Whole School	Last day of term – 3pm finish
27th	Whole School	Term 2 starts 9am
		November 2025
4th	Whole School	Coffee & Catch Up 9.00 – 9.30am
4th	Selected P5-7	Firpark ski-ing with Mr Ainsworth (those who have signed up)
7th	P1/2	Bonfire Night Assembly- 9.15am- P1/2 parents welcome
10th	Whole School	Parent Contact 3.30-5.30pm – info to book appts to follow
11th	Selected P5-7	Firpark ski-ing with Mr Ainsworth (those who have signed up)
12th	Whole School	Parent Contact 5.30-7.30pm – info to book appts to follow
13th & 14th	Whole school	In-Service days
28th	P5/6	Advent Assembly – 9.15am- P5/6 parents welcome
		December 2025
5th	P4/5	Sharing Learning Assembly- 9.15am – P4/5 parents welcome
10th	Whole School	Panto- evening performance
11th	Whole School	Panto- evening performance
16th	Whole School	Nativity- evening performance
17th	Whole School	Nativity- morning performance
18th	Whole School	Christmas Dinner
23rd	Whole School	Term 2 ends – 12 noon
		January 2026
7th	Whole School	Term 3 starts – 9am
12th	New P1s	P1 enrolment week for August 2026
16th	Selected P5-7	Glenshee Ski Trip (those who have signed up)
27th	Whole School	Coffee & Catch Up – 9.00 – 9.30am
		February 2026
2nd	Whole School	Open afternoon – all parents welcome 2.15-2.45pm
10th	Selected P5-7	Glenshee Ski Trip – backup date (those who have signed up)
11th	Whole School	In-Service Day
12th & 13th	Whole School	Holiday
		March 2026
6th	P4/5	World Book Day Assembly – 9.15am P4/5 parents welcome
16th – 20th	Whole School	Book Fair
20th	P6/7	Sharing Learning Assembly – 9.15am P6/7 parents welcome
		April 2026

1st	Whole School	Spring Assembly by P2/3 – 9.30am- all parents welcome – Portmoak Church
1st	Whole School	Reports issued
2nd	Whole School	Term 3 ends – 3pm
20th	Whole School	Term 4 starts – 9am
22nd	P6	Swimming - 9.30am
29th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
		May 2026
1st	P1/2	Sharing Learning Assembly- P1/2 parents welcome
4th	Whole School	May Day holiday
5th	Whole School	Coffee & Catch Up – 9-9.30am
6th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
13th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
15th	P2/3	Sharing Learning Assembly- P2/3 parents welcome
15th – 19th	P6	Ardroy
20th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
25th	Whole School	Parent Contact - 3.30-5.30pm – info to book appts to follow
27th	Whole School	Parent Contact – 5.30-7.30pm – info to book appts to follow
27th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
29th	Whole School	In-Service Day
		June 2026
1st-5th	Whole School	Celebration of Wellbeing Week
1st	Whole School	Sports Day - PM
3rd	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
5th	P5/6	Sharing Learning Assembly – 9.15am – P5/6 parents welcome
10th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
11th & 12th	P7	Induction days at KHS
17th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
19th	P6	John Muir Assembly – 9.15am- P6 parents welcome
24th	P6	Swimming – 9.30am
		July 2026
1st	P7	Leavers' Assembly – 9.30am- P7 and performers' parents welcome
2nd	Whole School	Term 4 ends – 12 noon

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

and the absentee line & answer phone on 01577 867196.