

Mary Russell School
Hawkhead Road, Paisley PA2 7BE
Tel: 0300 300 0171

Head Teacher: Mrs Julie McCallum



7 September 2020

Dear Parents & Carers

As many of you may know I have just returned to school last week after a family bereavement. It was fantastic to return to see all the staff and pupils after such a long time. I know our staff were delighted to welcome our pupils back to school earlier in the month after working hard to ensure that all our systems were in place to allow a safe return to school for everyone. I am sure many of you were a little anxious sending your child back to school but please be reassured our pupils have been a credit to you all. They have coped very well with all the changes and routines. I am very proud of how settled they are.

I would like to extend a special welcome to all our new parents/carers whose children have joined our school community for the first time. Mary Russell is a very special place and I am sure your child will flourish and develop in our nurturing and caring environment. We look forward to getting to know you over the next few months. Information on how you can get involved with our Parent Council or PTA will be issued shortly.

Communicating with Us

We would encourage you to contact us by phone or email at any time if you would like to discuss something or share a concern relating to your child. Please see below the staff with specific pastoral responsibility for each department/year group.

Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions we are not able to offer an open door policy at this time to meet with you face to face. We are hoping that over the next few months this may change.

Mrs Julie McCallum	Head Teacher	Whole School
Miss Lorna Barr	Depute Head Teacher	Primary Department
Mr Ian Macfarlane	Depute Head Teacher	Secondary Department & S2
Mr Liam Coyle	Depute Head Teacher	Post 16 Unit S6
Mrs Lynsey Coffiled	Principal Teacher	Primary
Mrs Louise Madigan	Principal Teacher	S1
Mr James Smyth	Principal Teacher	S3
Ms Susan Hamill	Acting Principal Teacher	S4
Mr Mike Smith	Principal Teacher	Behaviour Support Secondary
Mrs Lynne Methven	Principal Teacher	DSYW & S5

If you need to come to school to pick up your child we would request that you do not enter the school premises. Please press the call button at the door entrance and speak with one of our office staff. You will then be asked to wait outside the front entrance until your son/daughter has been collected from class. Entrance into the school building is not permitted unless arranged in advance with senior managers.

Should your child be required to borrow clothing in school please do not return this to us during the current restrictions.

School Catering Service

Our school meals provision in Mary Russell School is of high quality with menus changing on a weekly basis. At present we are offering a limited service due to COVID. Primary 1-3 children are all provided with a free school meal so there is no need to apply. If you think your child may be entitled to a free school meal you will need to apply online on the Renfrewshire Council website.

<http://renfrewshire.gov.uk/Freeschoolmealsandclothinggrants> The daily cost of a school meal is £2.25. You can if you wish pay on a weekly basis. Monies can be handed in to catering staff on Monday mornings.

Parent Portal/Annual Data Check/Parent Pay

Recently you received a text message from Renfrewshire Council to inform you that this session Annual data checks would be carried out electronically. You would have been directed to accessing the Parent Portal and requested that you created an account. <https://myaccount.renfrewshire.gov.uk/>
If you require support with doing this please get in touch with the school. Later this term we will be going live on Parent Pay, which will reduce cash handling in schools. I anticipate that this will be some time in November. Further details to follow.

Pupils over 16 - Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment of £30, paid directly to young people who continue in full-time education after they reach 16 years of age. Information about EMA can be found by following this link <http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/3366/Education-Maintenance-Allowance>
Applications this session must be made on line.

Social Media

During lockdown we increasingly relied on using social media more and more to communicate with you to share some of the great things that our pupils are involved in at school. I would encourage you to be checking our Facebook and Twitter pages as well as using the school app to keep up to date. Information about our social media can be found on our website <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/maryrussell/>

This session, to remove the need for paper being sent home, all letters will be electronically posted on our school website/school app. Prior to posting you will receive a text message from the school alerting you to new correspondence. (As you would have for this letter)

Mobile Phones

Renfrewshire Council's policy on mobile phones states that during class time mobile phones should be out of sight and switched off. It is strictly forbidden to take photographs or videos on mobile phones while on school premises. Please encourage your son/daughter to adhere to this policy.

Welcome to New Staff

A number of new staff have joined to our school team. Mrs Methven has joined the Step Unit department as Principal teacher with responsibility for S5 pupils. In Secondary we welcomed Mrs McMillan to her new role as key worker and in our primary department we welcomed Ms Bruce & Mrs Merrick to our teaching staff and Mrs Bett, Ms MacFarlane & Ms Kelly to our support team staff. They are looking forward to getting to know our pupils over the coming months.

School in 2020 is a very different place from a year ago. The current pandemic means we need to find new ways of doing things without compromising on quality. Looking back, this time last year we were in the midst of preparing for an HMIE Inspection and not knowing what was ahead of us. This year we again find ourselves in uncertain territory. What we do know however is that our school vision and values are very important to us, they remain constant and will be the vehicle by which we navigate through these difficult times.

School Vision and Values

OUR VISION

An inspirational place with happy, confident learners who thrive in our school to achieve their full potential

OUR VALUES

RESPECT ACHIEVEMENT CARE TRUST RESPONSIBILITY CO-OPERATION

Be all We can be! Be proud of who We are!

As we continue to put into practice our School Vision and Values we would ask that you reinforce these very important messages at home with your child. Together we can be stronger.

Below I have attached some dates for your diary which you may find useful. Apologies but due to COVID this is not as extensive as normal. Further updates will be issued when guidelines in relation to large gatherings are reviewed and amended.

Should you require any additional information or would like to give feedback on this newsletter please do not hesitate to get in touch by phone or use the contact us page on our school website by clicking the link <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/maryrussell/contact-2/>

Take Care & Keep Safe

Kind regards

Julie

Julie McCallum
Head Teacher



Director of Children's Services – Steven Quinn

Mary Russell School

Diary Dates 2020



Term 1

<u>September Weekend</u> School closed	Friday 25 th and Monday 28 th September
Virtual Parent Council Meetings	First Tuesday of each month (time to be confirmed)
<u>October Holiday</u> School closed	Monday 12 th – Friday 16 th October (inclusive)
In Service Day	Monday 19 th October (school closed for pupils)
School Re-opens	Tuesday 20 th October 9 am
St Andrew's Holiday	Monday 30 th November (school closed)
School closes	Friday 18 ^h December 2.30pm
<u>Christmas Holiday</u> School Closed	Monday 20 th December – Tuesday 5 th January 2021
Pupils Return	Wednesday 6 ^h January 2021 9am