



*Welcome Back Newsletter - August 2016*



Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to Williamsburgh for Session 2016-2017. We are thrilled to have you with us and hope that you had a great summer, even although nobody seemed to tell the sun it was expected to make an appearance.

This is a welcome back newsletter which gives some important information to our new families and some reminders for those who are returning to us. For those people who have been with us for a while, please bear with me as much of this information will be known to you. Reminders are always helpful - particularly after a long break!

I would like to wish an especially warm welcome to the families who join us for the first time, both in P1 and across the school. We look forward to getting to know you in the year ahead.



**School & Nursery Uniform**

Thank you for the very high standard of school uniform that the children are currently wearing. The staff and I will be encouraging the children to wear uniform and praising those who wear it with pride. I would ask that hoodies are not worn. Children wearing these will be asked to remove them in class. P7 children are allowed to wear their "leavers hoodie" in Term 4! Thank you for your support in this matter. For nursery children we also have a lovely polo shirt and sweatshirt available and I would encourage you to make use of these. Please ask nursery staff for more information. Could I also make a plea that you **name everything** that can be taken off? We have a **huge** amount of lost property every year and naming items would make life so much easier - and less costly for parents!

**Primary 1**

Well done to all of our new P1 children on starting school. They have all been absolute superstars already confident and looking like they have been in school for years!

Some parents like to take P1 children home for lunch once they start full days. Any P1 pupils going home for lunch should be collected from the school office at 12.15pm. On a particularly wet morning (of which we have lots) P1 pupils should enter through the junior door which is the door at the bottom of the front playground nearest to the nursery.

Could I ask parents to please assist us by standing back from the P1 & P2 lines in the morning? This enables staff to make sure that all children are safely in their line. It also helps the children to confidently line up independently. After all, they are big boys and girls at school now! Thank you.

### Nursery Class Weekly Donation

Although there is no charge for nursery education, your weekly donation of £3.00 is very much appreciated. This money is used to benefit all the children during their time at nursery. Maria Chittick from the school office will come over to the nursery in the mornings to collect this. ***Please be assured that this is a voluntary donation and you are not obliged to contribute this should you feel you are unable to.***

### Nut allergy

You may be aware of the possibility of children being allergic to nuts and nut products, which in severe cases can be fatal. In light of this, please could I ask that children do not bring nuts and nut products for either their lunch or snack. I realise this may cause some inconvenience but as children can be tempted to share food I am sure you will agree that this is a prudent precaution.



### Health Promoting School

As drinking plenty of water is important to good health, we like to allow the children the opportunity to drink throughout the day. Please feel free to provide you child with their own small bottle of water for use in the school.



### **Healthy Schools**

Please could we ask that children do not bring fizzy or sugary drinks to school and that sweets and chocolates are limited. Please also avoid bottles or cans of juice. Children are not permitted these in the playground and we would prefer they are not sent in at all. We are very keen to look after our children's health and we hope to see our children's gleaming smiles for a long time to come!

### Parent Council

We have a small but very active Parent Council. The meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7pm in the staffroom. New members are always welcome. It is a very informal and friendly group who do super work for the school and nursery. We would love to have some nursery parents represented on the group too so please do consider coming along.



### Shop Lunches

Please note that children are not allowed to leave the school to buy their lunch at the shops.



### Head Lice

Please remember to check your child's head regularly for little visitors! A once a week look is probably a very good idea. If your child is unfortunate enough to get recurring head lice, the local chemists, your GP or Health Visitor will be able to offer you advice. I hope this paragraph hasn't made you all scratch your heads!

### Data Check Forms

These will soon be sent out by the school. Could you please return these forms to the school office as soon as possible? Could I also ask that you let the school office know immediately if there are changes to contact details, particularly mobile phone numbers? Many thanks for this.

### Attendance



Thank you for your support in encouraging high attendance at school. As you will be aware, good attendance and time keeping can contribute significantly to a child's progress at school. It would be wonderful if we could keep improving in this area. The Senior Management Team will be monitoring attendance and time keeping closely this session and we ask parents for their support in instilling good habits into our children.

Renfrewshire Council does require parents to notify the school when their child is absent. We feel this is best done with a phone call on the first day of absence and a short written note on the child's return, for the benefit of our records. We operate a text messaging system if your child is absent with no explanation. Please note that it is our duty to follow up on unexplained absence or when the level or pattern of absence is causing concern. Should you be experiencing difficulties with your child's attendance at school please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Senior Management Team.

### PE Kit

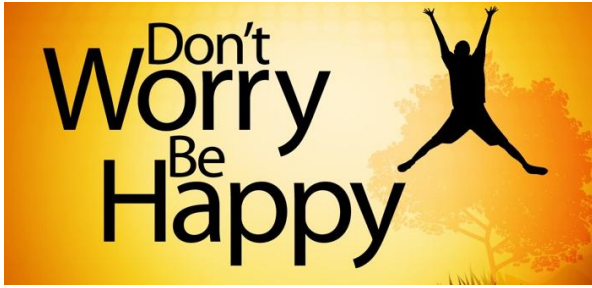
All our children have 2 hours of quality PE each week. Please help them to get the most out of this by ensuring they have proper PE kit on their allocated days. Children need shorts, a polo or t shirt and indoor sandshoes or trainers. These can all be kept in a bag on their peg or brought in on each gym day. **May I remind you that in the interests of health and safety, children will not be allowed to take part in PE wearing body piercing or jewellery? This is Renfrewshire Council Policy.**

### Mobile Phones and Valuable Items



I would prefer that children did not bring mobile phones to school at all, however I realise that sometimes they are needed to contact parents at the end of a day for arrangements. Please ensure that your child brings their phone **only** if it is absolutely necessary. Any mobiles in school must be kept in school bags and switched off throughout the day.

We have sometimes had issues with children bringing other expensive equipment into school such as I-pods and games consoles. **Please ensure that these valuable items stay at home. Children will not be permitted to play with them in school.** We want our children to be active in the playground at break times and not looking at screens or "plugged in" to music. **Please note that the school does not carry insurance cover for loss or damage to personal items .** Thank you for your support in this matter.



### Problems and Concerns

In our experience most "problems" are best solved early before they grow arms and legs. If you or your child has a problem, a concern or a worry then we do want to hear about it. We are a very large nursery and school and therefore it is important that you know who to contact and how so that

issues can be easily and quickly solved. We hope that the following will be helpful to you:

- In the first instance, please speak to your child's class teacher or nursery officer. This can be done by telephoning or emailing the school and asking for an appointment or for the teacher to call you back. You could also pop a note in to your child's bag. **Please do not approach class teachers in the playground or at the lines if there is something you are concerned, worried or angry about. It is not appropriate to discuss these matters in the school playground in front of an audience of other parents and children.** Teachers have a responsibility for the whole class and beginning and end points of the day are busy times.
- If you still have concerns or feel there is something you wish to speak to a senior manager about then please contact the Depute Head Teacher for your child's stage. Parents of Nursery children and P1-P3 should contact Mrs Alison Vandal and parents of children in P4-P7 should contact Mrs Gillian Thomson.
- Please be assured that staff will keep me informed and I will get a record of all parental contact. However, as Head Teacher, I am in and out of school a lot and have overall responsibility for all nursery and school children and staff. I am confident that my teaching staff and senior staff will be able to resolve and issues quickly and efficiently but if you feel this is not the case then you can, of course, contact me.

### Car Park

Can I please remind you *once again* that the car park is for staff only? **Parents are respectfully asked not to use the car park to park or drop off. Please also do not use the car park to walk through.** Please help us to keep our children safe.



Regrettably, last session some staff were subjected to verbal abuse from parents when asked to move from the car park. I would like to remind you that Renfrewshire Council operates a zero tolerance approach to aggression towards staff. Verbal or physical abuse of staff will not be tolerated.





### School Office

As many of you know, our school office is a very busy place! With efficiency savings continuing, we are working with a minimal level of staffing. Could I please ask you to make every effort to ensure your child comes to school with their snack, packed lunch, PE kit etc and knows their arrangements for the end of the day? It takes a huge amount of staff time to run around the school delivering forgotten snacks and messages.

Mrs Elliot remains off sick and we welcome Mrs Brady; Mrs Kinney and Mrs Barker who are currently helping us out. Please bear with us as this does mean that only Mrs Chittick in the office knows the school, the systems and the children at the moment.

### Communication

Making sure that everyone has the correct information at the correct time is challenging in a large school and nursery like ours. This session we are making some changes that we hope will result in improved communication.

**Monthly Newsletters** - our audit last year was returned by only 6 parents and there were various views. The monthly newsletter is very costly to produce so taking this into account along with the views of the parents who did respond, we are making changes here. I will still produce a monthly newsletter in glorious technicolour but this will go onto our school website and other platforms (see below for information on our exciting new platforms!). A colour copy will be on display in the foyer of the school and nursery. I appreciate that there will be times when you would like a paper copy; perhaps your child's photograph is featured so I will also produce a limited number of paper copies for anyone who would like one and these can be collected from the foyer (or your child can collect one for you.) I will monitor how many people like these each month and adjust the amounts accordingly. If there are none left please do ask the school office or drop me an email and I will ensure one is printed for you.

Several people have said that they like the "diary dates" section and I believe this is featured on many fridges! Each month I will send out a separate Diary Dates sheet in black and white as this is relatively inexpensive. This will also be posted on the notice boards and website.

In addition to this I have produced a "What's On at Williamsburgh" booklet which gives dates for the coming session. Of course these may be unavoidably subject to change but I hope this will be helpful information for parents to have at this stage of the year. This booklet is enclosed with this letter.

**Website** - our new website is up and running and Miss Rai is working hard to keep this up to date. It was accessed via <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/williamsburgh/> which was a bit of an unwieldy address so to make life easier we have bought a new domain name and you can now access the website at [www.williamsburghprimaryschool.co.uk](http://www.williamsburghprimaryschool.co.uk) Hopefully this is easier to remember!

**Social Media Platforms** - We are moving into the digital age! Renfrewshire Council has completed a pilot and has agreed to allow schools to use Facebook and Twitter as a communication tool. We hope that these will be very useful in giving up to date information and celebrating achievements. Please note these are not monitored constantly so do continue to use the school office to direct any enquiries, concerns or complaints.

The details of our Facebook page and Twitter feed will be available soon. Please do like and follow us!

**Phone and Email** - If you have a quick question or would like an appointment to speak to a teacher or senior manager, the easiest way to do that is to phone the school office on 0141 889 2585 or email us on [williamsburghenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:williamsburghenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk) .

**Text Messaging** - this service will still be used. Please ensure that the school office has your most up to date mobile telephone number.

Hopefully all of these will result in excellent communication between home and school. If you have any suggestions for further improvements, please do let us know.

### **Staffing Update**

I am delighted to welcome back all our staff and bid a special welcome to our new staff. It is lovely to have them and I hope they will soon feel part of the Williamsburgh family. For your information, classes and teacher info is given below and on the next page. There were some very last minute changes on the final day of term and this necessitated some alteration.

Mr Miller will have responsibility for non class contact time across the upper school with a focus on ICT, mapping skills and the introduction of Spanish as our second modern language.

Mr White will continue to cover non class contact time in the infant stages and Mrs Gray will support the Newly Qualified Teachers.

Mrs Kirk is undertaking a new role this session and will provide much of the support for children who have English as an Additional Language.

Mrs Peden was successful in obtaining a temporary promoted role as Acting Depute Head Teacher in Rashielea Primary in Erskine. This happened very close to the end of term which meant a bit of necessary "re-jigging". This post is temporary at the moment. We have no idea how long it will be for but are not expecting Mrs Peden back with us this session. We are delighted to be able to welcome Miss Russell back with us to cover Mrs Peden's vacancy. Mrs Wishart will take on much of Mrs Peden's Principal Teacher responsibilities in the short term and Mr McMaster will cover P2a for 2 days a week to allow Mrs Wishart to have adequate management time.

We also welcome Anna Odolczyk as our new nursery officer as well as Judith Brown and Michele McLuckie as our new Additional Support Needs Assistants. Ann Kinney, Vicky Brady and Frances Barker are also welcome, temporary additions to our school office.

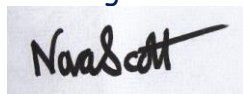
Classes, teachers and rooms are given below.

Class	Teacher	Location
P1a	Mrs Wendy McDonald	Room 1
P1b	Miss Kam Rai	Room 2
P2/1	Miss Sarah McNeil	Room 3
P2a	Mrs Simona Wishart (PT) Mr John McMaster (Wednesday, Thursday)	Room 5
P2b	Mrs Diane Soutar	Room 6
P3/2	Miss Nicola McMillan	Room 9
P3a	Mrs Lauren McConnell (congratulations to Miss Bremner on her marriage in the summer!). Mrs McConnell is covering Mrs Harvey's maternity leave until Mrs Harvey returns around Christmas time.	Room 7
P3b	Mrs Anna Rossi	Room 8
P4a	Miss Catherine Stevenson Mrs Elaine Gray	Room 11
P4b	Mrs Helen Smith	Room 12
P5/4	Mrs Louise Meyers	Room 13
P5	Mrs Evelyn Dunn	Room 14
P6/5	Mrs Joanna Balmer	Room 15
P6a	Mrs Cristina Mehmood	Room 16
P6b	Miss Michaela Lennon Mrs Elaine Gray	Room 17
P7a	Miss Rachael Lees Mrs Elaine Gray	Room 18
P7b	Miss Leigh Russell	Room 20

I think that is all the important beginning of term information for now.

Thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards



Nova Scott  
Head Teacher