

People Directorate
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MARCH UPDATE

Dear Parent/Carer

We welcomed our nursery and infant pupils back to school on the 22nd February and they transitioned back to school tremendously well. It has been lovely to see all their familiar smiling faces along with some new starts too. Please remember to contact the school office in the first instance to inform us of any absences etc.

I am delighted to announce that in Parliament on Tuesday afternoon the First Minister firmed up her statement from last week – she stated a clear expectation that **15 March will be the return to school date for all P4-7 pupils.**

This was stated in much more concrete terms than it had been before now as there had been concern that suppression had stalled. However, the latest statistics show a return to more quickly reducing infection levels, such that it would take a significant change in the data between now and 15 March to derail plans for the return of pupils to schools.

I would like to emphasise the need for parents to avoid congregating at school gates which was reiterated by the First Minister and that only one parent should be present at drop off and pick up times. Can I please ask that pupils who do not travel to school by taxi/minibus **do not** arrive at school before 9am. This will avoid the need for parents to congregate at the school gates and avoid pupils from mixing outwith their bubbles. All pupils will be expected to wear school uniform from 15 March as they are returning to school in the normal manner to be taught by their teacher. Pupils should line up where they were previously designated to line up for their class.

Staffing

Due to the nature of this pandemic we have had some staff absences and we have struggled to get cover for these due to the fact that many other schools are in the same position. From Next week- week beginning the 8th March for three weeks, Mrs McPhee will work alongside Miss McVie in our early years Centre. Mrs McPhee is a very experienced early years practitioner who currently works at Maidens Primary. This will be a good opportunity for sharing and collaborating across both establishments and will support staff development.

I am unable to advise who will cover Miss Gemmell's maternity leave following the Easter break at present due to the staff shortages, however I hope to be able to advise of this before we break for Easter. We hope that Miss Gemmell continues to remain healthy in her pregnancy and look forward to meeting her bundle of joy when he arrives.

Transition

Nursery-P1: Mrs Martin will be carrying out some pre-school transition sessions during April and May following the Easter break. This will allow the pupils an opportunity to get to know her and for her to get to know them. The Nursery pupils and the infant class pupils currently participate in Daily Mile walks together as this provides further opportunities to become familiar with their peers and supports transition. There are also plans underway to begin some joint outdoor learning sessions that will take place on Fridays. More information will follow from the Early Years staff once plans are finalised.

Early Years Registration

Early Years Registration will take place during the week **8th - 12th March 2021**. This year, parents/carers are required to complete an online registration form similar to primary one registration. South Ayrshire have tried to make this process as easy as possible. The link to the application will go live on **Monday morning**. <https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/26976>

There has been no change to the priorities or options, they remain the same as last year. You will require your child's details, parents' details, birth certificate and proof of residence. Please contact the school next week if you have any problems with this.

School developments

Our building works are almost all finally complete and we have a lovely new floor in our school corridor now too which was installed during the February break. This means that we will be able to progress with our outdoor area plans following the Easter break and make use of some of the new outdoor materials. We have purchased a variety of new resources for the school, including new playground equipment and we look forward to putting everything to good use.

Parent Council

Our Parent Council have continued to amaze us during this Pandemic and we would like to say a huge thank you to them for all their support and dedication. The pupils have benefited from a variety of activity packs and goody bags etc. and we are also very grateful for the generosity of our local businesses who support them. Our most recent contribution has been a donation of books for our school library and Pizza making kits from Morrisons. Our nursery and Wee class pupils received a book to take home today for World Book Day. The P4-7 Pupils will receive theirs when they return to school.

I look forward to welcoming all our pupils back to school on **Monday 15th March**. I am aware that some of our pupils may have been struggling with their mental Health during this period and would like to direct parents to <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/> as a method of accessing advice and tips to support your child.

I am very mindful that the opportunities for children to play socially have been limited this year due to the pandemic. Play is vital to children's physical, social and emotional wellbeing.

Why Playing is important

Children need play to survive and thrive. Play is a life-enhancing experience which fosters resilience, the ability to handle stress, challenges and setbacks. "Just playing" can help build children's capacity to cope with highly stressful situations.

Play builds health and wellbeing – being active through play helps physically and emotionally, contributing to their health and happiness

Play builds resilience – playing boosts children's confidence, creativity, problem-solving skills and perseverance, enabling them to cope with stress and challenges through life

Play builds friendships – playing allows children to interact with others, develop relationships, deal with conflict, and learn respect and tolerance

Play builds communities – playing allows children to learn about the world around them, make connections, and develop a sense of identity and belonging as they grow and develop, play offers children the opportunity to develop a range of physical, emotional and social skills, helping to make sense of the world they find themselves in.

Please go to <https://www.playscotland.org/> for more information and practical ideas to support playful families.

My best wishes to you all and once again our thanks to you for your continued support. We know that the pupils will continue to flourish on their return to school and I have been very impressed by the resilience that they have shown.

Yours Sincerely

Leeanne Campbell

Head Teacher