



Co-operation Courage Respect Responsibility Resilience

"Learn and discover, care for each other"

Dear Parents/Carers,

This month I have the following news items to share:

P1 enrolment

Arrangements for enrolling pupils to start P1 in August 2024 are attached to today's newsletter and access to the online enrolment can be made by using the link below

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/enrol-your-child-at-school/>

Pre-Ordered Lunches

If you have pre-ordered a lunch for your child and they are off sick please remember it is parents' responsibility to cancel the lunch before 8:00am so that you are not charged for this. ***Please note that the school office is now unable to issue refunds for pre-ordered lunches when children are absent.***

Christmas School Lunch

Christmas lunch for pupils will be on Wednesday 20th December at Balfron High. Choices for that day can be pre-ordered by parents in the usual way or chosen on the day by pupils in class.

Red – traditional Christmas lunch

Green - vegetarian Christmas lunch

Christmas Dates

The school dates so far for Christmas are included at the end of today's newsletter and includes P1-P3 Twinkly Nativity; class parties and the end of term church service.

This year's service will be led by our P4 pupils on Friday 22nd December at 9:45am in Balfron Church.

Parents are invited to attend and should sit in the balcony.

Our school term ends for all pupils at 12.45pm except for those who go home by bus or taxi. Packed lunches can be brought from home or ordered from Balfron High. As usual, there will be no early home lunches for any pupils.

Parent Council

Parent Council are organising the following two fundraising Christmas events, both of which are being held in The McLintock Hall, Balfron -

Supper with Mrs Claus

Nursery to P3

Wednesday 6th December 2023

6:00pm – 7:30pm

Parent Council also hope to have local children who do not attend Balfron PS come along as well.

Disco Bingo

P4 to P7

Wednesday 20th December 2023

6:30pm – 8:30pm

Further details about each event including tickets are shown on the attached Parent Council posters.

Parent Council will be selling tickets for both events in the playground after school (3pm to 3.30pm) from Wednesday 22 November to Wednesday 29 November and Parent Council encourage people to purchase tickets this way if possible.

For those unable to come to the playground, parents are asked to put money in a sealed envelope with their child's name and class clearly noted on the front before sending into the school office. Tickets organised by the Parent Council will then be sent home by the school office, via pupil school bags.

Any questions about either event or the tickets should be sent directly to the Parent Council using their email balfronpspc@gmail.com or its Facebook page and Instagram.

As a school we are very fortunate to have such a hardworking Parent Council and thank them for organising both events.

"Balfron Cares"

As part of our commitment to a school ethos of kindness, we try to foster opportunities for children and the school community to help others and will continue to do so under a "Balfron Cares" approach. The principles of "Balfron Cares" will be –

- Helping others including charities and other good causes.
- Participation or contribution is always encouraged but optional.
- Low cost expectations for parents or children contributing to any "Balfron Cares" initiative.
- "Balfron Cares" will be led by pupil ideas but will be spaced out throughout the year.
- Prior notice to families.
- Recording and sharing of outcomes.

➤ **"Balfron Cares" - Children in Need**

An annual '**Balfron Cares**' event took place last week, with all of our P7 pupils working together to organise fitness challenges, quizzes, games and a range of other fantastic activities for Children in Need. With some money still coming in through Parent Pay, we were delighted to raise £276.18 for this important cause.

Plans for other ways to show that, "Balfron Cares" include:

➤ **"Balfron Cares" – Glasgow's Spirit of Christmas**

The Christmas season provides a wonderful opportunity to teach our own children about giving to others and getting them involved in an active way in the spirit of giving at a time of year when Christmas can be the hardest and loneliest time for many children and individuals.

The Spirit of Christmas is a charity that collects in gifts for children who live in difficult circumstances.

This year our House Captains would like to lead a whole school initiative where each class make a pledge to donate a gift for both a boy and girl of their age group.

| Class | Age Group Range for Gifts | Boy | Girl |
|------------------|----------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| P1 | Ages 4-5 | ✓ | ✓ |
| P2, P3, P4 | Ages 6-8 | ✓ | ✓ |
| P5, P6, P7-6, P7 | Ages 9-12 | ✓ | ✓ |

House Captains are asking for donations (if you can) from the following list:

- **Xmas festive treat(s)** - selection box, chocolate santa/reindeer, chocolate coins, candy canes, box of chocolates or festive biscuits.
- **Something to love** - teddy bear, soft plush toy etc.
- **Toys to play with** – relevant aged board game, action figure, doll, play set, latest toy, puzzle, rubik cube, football, magic set, trains/cars, activity set.
- **Items for art / creative play** – painting kit, drawing kit and pad, colouring in book and pens, building kits, bracelet /jewellery making kits, sand kit.
- **Something to wear** - Pj's, t-shirt, underwear, warm socks or tights, gloves, scarf, beanie/hat, jumper, trousers, top, dress, slippers, winter jacket.
- **Something to read** - book relevant to age range, Guinness Book of Records, Annual 2023, comic, puzzle book, sports book,
- **Item accessories** - watch, fleece covered hot water bottle, fleecy blanket, headphones, earphones, water bottle, bag pack, wallet, earrings, necklace, bangles, handbag, toiletries bag, hairdryer, straighteners.
- **Personal Care** - deodorant spray or gift set, shower gel, fragrance, hairbrush, scrunches, lip gloss, makeup kit, nail enamel.

The Charity ensures each child and young person receives a Christmas 'Gift Made with Love' filled with age relevant gifts, toys and treats for a girl or boy of a certain age group. House Captains will collate the donations and place them in gift bags to hopefully provide a loving Christmas Gift for 16 children in Scotland.

Please do not wrap your donated gift, but it must be new and not used. This is completely voluntary and as a school we would like to pledge two donated gift bags containing some items from the above list from each class.

Children can bring in their donations at any point from now until Friday 15th December 2023.

All donations should be placed in the boxes in Mrs Macmillan's Office.

Thank you,
Mrs Macmillan & the House Captains

➤ **“Balfroon Cares” - Reverse Advent**

P4 and P5 will be helping others within our local area this Christmas. Both classes will be working together to organise a **Reverse Advent Calendar** during December, collecting donations which will then be donated to **Start Up Stirling**.

Start Up Stirling focus on relieving poverty, suffering and distress of people in crisis across the Stirling Council area.

All pupils from every class can support the project by bringing into school donations from the following list:

- basic kitchen cupboard items (non-perishable foods) such as coffee, tins of soup, sugar or pasta
- cleaning supplies
- toiletries
- baby food
- nappies.

P4 and P5 will be organising the collection boxes across the school and donations can be made from **Friday 1st December to Wednesday 13th December**.

➤ **“Balfroon Cares” – Stalls From Home Day**

At different times throughout the year, individual pupils or small groups of friends have ideas to raise money for a particular charity or cause that is important to them. In the past school has facilitated playground or after-school stalls with items including loom bands, cards, biscuits etc. all made at home and on sale with money raised going to different causes.

Since August some children have been eager with ideas to make or sell more items and to help foster and encourage this caring from our children, within a manageable framework, a “Balfron Cares” Stalls from Home Day will be held on Friday 2nd February during the school day, at this stage for our pupil community only.

Pupil Council will co-ordinate the “Balfron Cares” Stalls from Home Day and will provide further information and guidance to all classes for any child that would like to organise a stall and details will also be included in next month’s newsletter.

Advent Reflections

Balfron High is once again facilitating a room for its students to take part in some Advent Reflections during the run up to Christmas – please see attached flyer.

As part of the RME Christmas programme, our classes have been invited to visit the Advent Reflections with their teacher.

P5 will be the first class to visit on 30th November.

VSE

During the final week of last term, we were delighted to welcome four colleagues from across Stirling Education to help validate our school’s self-evaluation processes (VSE). The visiting team met with pupils, staff, partner agencies, a group of parents in addition to looking at school documentation and observing classroom learning in all classes P1-P7.

The key features identified from the VSE team were fully aligned with our own school’s self evaluation and listed improvement priorities and are listed below:

Key Strengths

A clear shared vision and inclusive ethos built on strong, nurturing relationships and embraced by the whole school community is having a very positive impact on children’s experiences.

Children, families and wider partners speak highly of how they contribute to the school community and are proud of Balfron Primary School. All feel a sense of belonging and appreciate how visible and approachable staff members are.

The Senior Leadership Team know all children and families very well and have accurately evaluated the school’s next steps.

There are increased opportunities for pupil leadership, particularly in P7. As a result, these children are developing confidence and a range of skills aligned with the school values.

Staff spoke positively about their learning in creative pedagogies and are building their confidence in this approach to support pupil engagement and curiosity. There was some highly effective practice observed in this area.

There is a strong, respectful ethos across the school to minimise the impact of potential barriers to learning.

Next Steps

Continue to develop a shared understanding of effective differentiation, pace and challenge.

Develop consistent approaches to feedback so learners have an accurate understanding of their progress in learning and what they need to do to improve. This will support the school’s current priority to raise attainment in writing.

Build capacity of all staff in their understanding of additional support needs and appropriate adjustments to learning and teaching in classroom practice to meet children’s needs.

Parent Skills Directory

Thank you to everyone who completed a parent skills slip during our recent Parents Evenings, which has allowed us to update our records for those who are willing to be called upon to come into school and share with a class, something of their specific work related skill or knowledge. The directory is already being used with P5 enjoying a visit this week linked to renewable energy.

Anti-Bullying Week

National Anti-Bullying Week took place from 13th – 17th November across Scotland and in all of our classes. At last Friday's assembly, some pupils shared their learning including some classes who had made 'odd socks' as a way of celebrating the individual differences that makes us all unique.

Maths Week Scotland

Last Thursday P5 joined with other schools within a data skills live online challenge organised as part of Maths Week Scotland. **Pupils joined the 'Numbers in the Fast Lane' live lesson which was an interactive hands-on lesson where pupils discover the mathematics behind winning a Formula 1 Championship.**

Primary 2 took part in the Stirling and Clackmannanshire Sumdog maths competition last week. Primary 2 were 14th overall and Conrad M was 22nd overall out of 1456 pupils who took part. Congratulations to Conrad and Primary 2! Excellent effort.

Thursday Sports Leaders

This term S6 Sports Leaders have been providing lunch sports clubs for P1-P7 each Thursday at the astroturf. The sessions have been very well attended with our youngest children especially excited by the range of fun activities available. Following the conclusion of the P1-P7 sessions, the Sports Leaders then move down to the nursery to provide an adapted session in our playground.

Reducing Waste

Last week, pupils in P6 and P7 got an opportunity to deepen their understanding of how recycling works in Stirling Council with an arranged educational visit of a recycling lorry.

Set up within Balfour High campus, pupils were provided with a demonstration, talk, quiz and challenge all linked to reducing waste and recycling more effectively.

Club Programme

This term P3 pupils have an opportunity to take part in a Monday lunchtime chess club with Miss McLernon and some of our senior pupils.

Mrs Carey and girls across P6 and P7 have been investigating the inner workings of a variety of items including old computers during the weekly STEM club which has been taking place each Thursday after school.

Over 30 boys and girls from across P6 and P7 have been playing for our school football teams both this and last term. The final festival before a break for winter will take place on Friday 1st December.

Participation in the various Active Stirling festivals which we promote to families is encouraged and this term includes P4/P5 rugby and P5/P6/P7 netball.

Scots Song

This term we have been delighted to welcome Scots Song music tutor, Amy Lord into our school each Wednesday morning to work with P2, P3 and P4. Organised through the government's Youth Music Initiative, the pupils have been learning a variety of Scots Songs and will be performing them at the Tolbooth Theatre in Stirling on the morning of Wednesday 6th December.

Permission slips for P2-P4 pupils have been sent home and should be returned by Friday 24th November.

Budget

Everyone is encouraged to contribute towards the current Stirling Council Budget consultation, where an estimated £13million of savings is estimated to be required in the next financial year.

Please follow the link below

<https://engage.stirling.gov.uk/en-GB/projects/stirling-council-budget>

Yours sincerely



Angus Black
Headteacher

Dates for the Diary

| November | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Friday 24 th | P5 Class Assembly – Parents/Carers welcome | 1:45pm – 2:15pm |
| Friday 24 th | Active Stirling Festival – P4 & P5 Rugby | 4:00pm |
| Tuesday 28 th | Active Stirling taster P7 cross-country | 9:15am |
| December | | |
| Friday 1 st | “ Balfron Cares ” P4 & P5 Reverse Advent box donations begin | |
| Friday 1 st | Active Stirling Festival – P6 & P7 Football | 4:00pm |
| Wednesday 6 th | P2, P3, P4 Scots Song Concert – Tolbooth Stirling | 10:30am – 11:30am |
| Wednesday 6 th | Parent Council Fundraiser – Supper with Mrs Caus (Nursery to P3) | 6:00pm – 7:30pm in McLintock Hall |
| Thursday 7 th | Nursery Christmas Fair | 3:30pm – 4:45pm |
| Saturday 9 th | Christmas light switch on in village | 4:00pm – 5:00pm |
| Wednesday 13 th | “ Balfron Cares ” P4 & P5 Reverse Advent box- last day for donations | |
| Thursday 14 th | P1-P3 Twinkly Nativity | 1:45pm and 6:00pm |
| Friday 15 th | P3 & P4 Christmas Party | 1:30pm |
| Monday 18 th | P5 & P6 Christmas Party | 1:30pm |
| Tuesday 19 th | P7 Christmas Party | 1:30pm |
| Wednesday 20 th | Christmas lunch P1-P7 | |
| Wednesday 20 th | Nursery Christmas Party | 1:00pm |
| Wednesday 20 th | Parent Council Fundraiser – Disco Bingo (P4-P7) | 6:30pm – 8:30pm in McLintock Hall |
| Thursday 21 st | P1 & P2 Christmas Party | 1:30pm |

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|---|---|--|
| Friday 22 nd | Christmas Church Service - P4 leading | Whole school and families 9:45am in Balfroon Church |
| Friday 22 nd | End of Term | 12:45pm |
| Monday 25 th – Friday 5 th January | Holiday | School closed to pupils and staff |
| January | | |
| Monday 8 th | New Term | 8:55am |
| Tuesday 9 th | Active Stirling Taster – P2 football | 9:15am |
| February | | |
| Friday 2 nd | “ Balfroon Cares ” Stalls From Home Day | |