

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:

#### Parents Evening

Our next Parents' Evenings will be held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 5:00pm – 7:30pm and Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 3:30pm – 6:00pm

Parents who would like to request a specific day for parents evening should use the link below to indicate their preference. The link will close on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February.

<https://forms.gle/khjsT8AiK53rcXSy9>

#### Protocols for Meetings (excluding Parents Evenings)

Sometimes meetings take place in school between teachers and parents/carers which are out with Parents Evening appointments, either at the request of parents/carers or at other times suggested by school. Our school has recently revisited its protocols for these types of meetings. Key elements include –

- Best practice is that all parents/carers meetings with a teacher should be done by a pre-arranged appointment, scheduled at a time suitable for both parent/carer and staff member.
- All visitors must report to the Main Office reception. They must sign-in and be provided a visitor badge.
- Teachers must make either Depute Head or Headteacher aware of any meetings with parents in school. Meetings must not take place without the Headteacher or Depute Headteacher being in the school. Parents/Carers should be asked to sign out on departure from the school/nursery building.
- In the event of a parent/carer acting in a threatening or abusive manner towards a staff member, the staff member immediately explains to the parent/carer that their behaviour is unacceptable, and ends the meeting. The staff member immediately makes the Headteacher or Depute Headteacher aware, who will then accompany the parent/carer out of the school.
- If a staff member has concerns that meeting with a particular parent/carer puts them at risk of suffering from threatening or abusive behaviour, then no meeting should be arranged. Any staff member has the right to request that either the Headteacher or Depute Headteacher is also in attendance a meeting

#### Staffing

At the start of term, we were delighted to welcome three new teachers to our school. Miss Smith and Miss Bruce will be teaching in P2 and P5 respectively for the rest of the school year, while Miss Buchan will be working with the main P4 teachers, supporting a particular initiative on writing, for one morning each week up to the Easter holidays.

Mrs Walker, our school Admin is currently off work and is not expected to be back for the rest of this term. While, Miss Pugh, will be working across both the primary and nursery offices during Mrs Walker's absence, there will be times throughout each day when the office is not staffed. School emails and phone messages, therefore this term, will be responded to a little more slowly than usual.

#### Parent Skills Directory & Other Volunteering

Last term, we were delighted that one of our parents, John Catnach helped P7 pupils develop their coding skills. Mr Catnach's commitment and enthusiasm over a range of weeks was appreciated by both teachers and pupils.

From next week, P7 will also be working with another parent, Rachel Moir, within an enterprising approach in the preparation for the Fun Run and Balfron 10K which this year takes place on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Mrs Hansom, a retired teacher within Stirling Council, has also volunteered to help in our school, each Tuesday morning supporting reading groups etc. PVG checks have been completed and it is planned that Mrs Hansom will begin her regular volunteering role next week.

#### Cross Country

Well done to the following pupils who received podium finishes at the local schools cross-country event last week at Balfron High campus:

P6 girls – Joni Greig (1<sup>st</sup>) and Chloe Guo (3<sup>rd</sup>)

P6 boys – Murray Conway (1<sup>st</sup>) and Finlay Wright (3<sup>rd</sup>)

P7 girls – Rosie Sutton (2<sup>nd</sup>)

P7 boys – Lewis Skinner (2<sup>nd</sup>)

All of the pupils have the opportunity to take part in the wider Stirling Schools competition in Dunblane on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January.

#### Class Trips

It is planned that all classes will have a trip during the summer term:

P1 - P5 will be visiting Briarlands Farm Park on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June

P6 residential trip to Ardroy 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June

P7 – end of year trip arrangements are still to be confirmed

An information evening will be held in the primary school on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 6:00pm – 6:45pm for P6 parents/carers and pupils ahead of the Ardroy residential.

#### Class Newsletters

P1-P7 class newsletters detailing some of the planned learning and activities from January to June will this week be sent out to parents as well as being added to our school website:

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/st/balfronprimary/>.

#### Introducing Parentsportal.scot

A new direct digital communication system is being phased in across Stirling schools. Our school's use of Parent Portal will also be phased and an appendix with further information is attached to today's newsletter.

#### Free School Meal & Clothing Grant Entitlement

We would like to remind families that applications for Free School Meals and Clothing Grant are available to those who may be entitled.

We understand that circumstances can change, and some families may not realise they qualify. Applying is straightforward, completely confidential and open to all pupils P1-P7. We would encourage any family who thinks they might be entitled to consider applying, even if you are unsure. There is no disadvantage to checking.

Further information and the application form can be found on the Stirling Council website:

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/free-school-meals-and-clothing-grant/>

If you have any questions or would like support with the application process, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

#### Tesco Blue Tokens

Our Parent Council have established links with the Stronger Starts programme run by Tesco, which can be used to raise funds for other general play equipment, now that the playground Trim Trail project has been successfully completed.

Blue tokens are available when shopping in Tesco and can be placed in boxes for Balfron Primary, from now until the end of March, at the following stores:

- Milngavie Superstore
- Helensburgh Express
- East Clyde Helensburgh Express and
- Hardgate, 10 Rockbank Place Express

The more tokens placed in the boxes will result in greater funding received by Parent Council.

#### P1 Height & Weight Checks

On Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February, pupils in P1 will have their height and weights checked. Letters from NHS Forth Valley have been issued.

#### Active Stirling Tasters

This term there will be various blocks of Active Stirling curriculum sports tasters including P1 & P2 football; P6 & P7 rugby; and P4 tennis.

#### Class Assemblies

As shared in the August newsletter, class assembly dates are shown below. Parents/Carers in P2 should note, however, the changed date for their child's assembly as it has been necessary to move it back one week to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May.

1:45pm	Class Assembly to parents/carers
P6	27 <sup>th</sup> February
P5	20 <sup>th</sup> March
P3	8 <sup>th</sup> May
P2	29 <sup>th</sup> May (Revised date)
P1	12 <sup>th</sup> June

#### Digital Festival

P6 and P7 parents and carers from across all of the local primary schools are invited to attend a Digital Safety/Awareness Festival at Balfron High on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 7:00pm – 8:00pm at Balfron High, with S1 and S2 parents/carers also invited to attend. More details of the event will be provided nearer the time.

#### Book Festival

The Balfron Book Festival committee has asked me to share the stories that were written in the village library as part of last year's Book Caterpillar event, where each child could add a line to a story.

#### Smart Watches/Mobile Phones

Mobile phones are not required in school to support learning in class and therefore the expectation is that they are not brought into school by pupils.

In an exceptional case, some parents require their child to have a phone for contact purposes after 3:15pm, for example if attending an after-school club or bus journeys, phones should be kept turned

off and in bags at all times during the school day. Please note that Smart watches with phone access and messaging facilities should also not be brought into school.

#### Organisation of Classes – 2026/2027

The process of organising classes for next session begins this term, based on P1 enrolment figures which remain provisional until placing requests and deferred entries are confirmed.

Composite classes are often required. The decision to create composite classes is taken in the best interest of all children in the school and is also guided by the requirement for our school to make sure that there is capacity to enrol any new pupils who move within the catchment area during the course of next session.

In deciding how to populate composite classes, headteachers will apply the following criteria:

- Each composite class shall have a maximum of 25 pupils as per national requirements.
- The lead factor in determining the population of the class shall be the date of birth of the child i.e. the oldest children from the younger stage join with the youngest children from the older stage. This criterion shall be used because it is unambiguous and transparent: for the purposes of school provision, age is not a ‘protected characteristic’ in the Equality Act 2010. This means that in relation to the provision of education, schools may lawfully use the criteria of age to organise classes.
- A reasonable balance in terms of gender, where possible.
- The range of Additional Support Needs spread reasonably across classes, evidenced through the Staged Intervention process.

Sensitivity should be given to exceptional individual circumstances related to additional support needs, with opportunities for discussion between home and school in relation to Additional Support Needs.

The overall decision should be made in line with policy and criteria, with the final decision resting with the headteacher, who has knowledge of all children and families in the school.

Plans for how our classes will be organised in session 2026/2027 along with teachers will be confirmed to parents and pupils during the summer term. Enrolment figures so far indicate a small group of pupils joining our P1 class in August.

#### Crossing Patrol

In light of the imminent ending of crossing patrol, it is even more important now that walking or park and stride approaches are used by our parent/carer community.

#### Parking

- To help avert an accident from happening, entering the school grounds by car during busy periods including 8:45am - 8:55am and 3:15pm - 3:25pm, unless absolutely essential, is not permitted.
- Moor Road parking – the turning point or on the kerb at the playground double gates is not for parking. This creates additional congestion around the school which can be dangerous.
- Moor Road parking - some residents have contacted the school, requesting that cars are not parked across driveways, or on the white lines, even for a short period of time, as this is blocking access.

*A recommended alternative, used successfully by many parents, is parking at Donaldson Park and walking the short distance to school via the path.*

#### Dogs in the playground

Parents are reminded that dogs, even on leads, are not permitted in any part of the school playground either at the beginning or end of the school day.

## Allergy Aware Schools

Our school is moving from a 'nut free' school to an 'allergy aware' position. The reason for the change is:

- It is not possible to guarantee and enforce a nut free zone - staff cannot monitor all lunches and snacks brought from home.
- A 'free from' environment creates a false sense of security and does not safely prepare children for environments where nuts may be present.
- We need to consider other children with different food allergies and it is not practical to restrict them all.

All situations where children have allergies should be reported to the school office so that we can support them with a care plan where required. Meetings can also be arranged with the Council's catering team.

Parents, when preparing packed lunches, are asked to continue being allergy aware for other pupils by not including nut based products.

## Sickness Reminders

At the start of the year it is important to remind parents that in order to reduce opportunities for spread of infections, when children suffer from a sickness or diarrhoea bug they should not return to school until 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

Yours sincerely



Angus Black  
Headteacher

## Dates for the Diary

February		
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Parents Evening Google Requests to be returned	
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Staff Development Days	School Closed to pupils
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> – Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Local Holiday	School closed to P1-P7 pupils and staff
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	P1 Height & Weight Checks by NHS Team	
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Parents Evening appointment slips issued to parents	
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	P1 & P7 Dental Checks by NHS Team	
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	P6 Class Assembly	1:45pm
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Killearn Garage Cup matches to begin	P6 & P7 football team

March		
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Parents Evening	5:00pm – 7:30pm
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Parents Evening	3:30pm – 6:00pm
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	2026/2027 P1 Transition information session for parents	3:30pm – 4:00pm
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup>	P5 Class Assembly	1:45pm
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Digital Learning Festival for Parents/Carers Balfron LC P6-S2	Balfron High 7:00pm – 8:00pm
Tuesday 31st	P7 Transition Balfron High online meeting for parents/carers	5:00pm - 7:00pm
April		
Thursday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	End of Term	3:15pm
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> – Friday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Easter/Spring Holidays	School closed to P1-P7 pupils and staff
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup>	Summer Term	8:55am
Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> – Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup>	P6 Bikeability	
Tuesday 28th	Parent Council meeting	7:00pm
May		
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup>	Staff Development Day	School Closed to pupils
Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Balfron Fun Run and 10k	Morning
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Local Holiday	School closed to P1-P7 pupils and staff
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Ardoy information evening – P6 parents and pupils	6:00pm – 6:45pm
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup>	P3 Class Assembly	1:45pm
Tuesday 19th	P7 Transition Balfron High in-person meeting for parents & pupils	5:45pm - 7:00pm
Wednesday 20th	P7 Transition - Blazer fitting at Balfron High	5:30pm - 7:30pm
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup>	P7 Play	7:00pm
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup>	School Sports Day	9:00am - 11:30am
Tuesday 26th - Thursday 28th	P7 Transition Days at Balfron High	
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup>	P1 Induction Morning	9:30am – 11:45am

Friday 29 <sup>th</sup>	P2 Class Assembly	1:45pm
<b>June</b>		
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> – Friday 5 <sup>th</sup>	P6 Residential Trip to Ardroy	
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup>	P1 Class Assembly	1:45pm
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup>	P1-P5 Trip to Briarlands Farm Park - Blair Drummond	Full Day
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	P7 Leavers' Assembly	1:45pm
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	P7 Leavers' Party	7:00pm
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup>	End of Term	12:45pm