

BELLSQUARRY PRIMARY SCHOOL - DECEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER



“Learn, Believe and you will Succeed”

Article 28: Children have the right to learn and to go to school

Our Vision and Values

At Bellsquarry Primary School we aim to provide a positive, warm ethos to enable the children within our care to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

Dates for your Diary:

- 5-9 After school clubs final week this term (except Art & Craft and Dance classes)
- 4 P7 Ocarina project at Inveralmond CHS
- 6 School choir being recorded for West Lothian Council
- 7 P1c and P1g – Christmas outing to New Lanark
- 8 Primary 4 parent’s Assembly
- 11 Primaries 6 and 7 to the Vue Cinema to see Paddington 2
- 12 Primaries 2, 3, 4 and 5 to Howden Park centre to pantomime
- 13 Primaries 4 and 5 – Christmas Party – p.m.
- 14 Primaries 1 and 7 dental checks in school
- 14 Primaries 6 and 7 – Christmas Party – p.m.
- 15 Primaries 1, 2 and 3 – Christmas Party – a.m.
- 15 Parent Helper Coffee morning - all helpers are welcome: 11.00 – 12.00
- 18 P1, 2 & 3 Nativity rehearsal – presenting to P4-7 pupils and local senior residents: 9.30 a.m.
- 18 Nursery class (a.m. and p.m.) to Purves Puppets – Pips and Panda – a.m.
- 18 P6 and 7 brass pupils to The James Young High School Christmas Concert for 1.30 p.m.
- 19 P1-3 Nativity – 9.30 a.m.
- 19 Whole school Christmas Lunch
- 20 Nursery party (for a.m. and p.m.) – 9.15 a.m. start / Santa at 11.00 a.m.
- 20 P1-3 Nativity – 2.00 p.m.
- 20 Choir sing at Bellsquarry senior resident’s meal – 7.00 p.m.
- 21 Nursery Sing-a-long Nativity – 10.30 a.m. start
- 21 Winning House Team treat – a.m.
- 21 P4-7 service – 2.00 p.m.
- 22 Finish for Christmas holidays – Festive Dress Down day

8 January 2018 - All staff return for in-service day training

9 January 2018 – All pupils return to school for the new term

Staffing

Mrs Cosgrove, our pupil support worker has been absent due to her health. She has decided to take retirement and we would like to say a huge thank you to her for all her hard work and support with the many pupils who have attended Bellsquarry Primary School. Mrs Cosgrove has been a member of staff here for almost 22 years. The children have all been busy making her a card and we will deliver these to Mrs Cosgrove next week.

Eco Group

Our Eco Group, led by Mrs McElhinney are recycling old Christmas cards, from 9th January to 19th January. They will place a box near the entrance to the school.

We would also like to congratulate Ewan P7, Ben, P6 and Noah P6 for presenting to our Parent Council about the role of the Eco group and for sharing their action plan for the year.

Children in Need

Thank you to all parents and pupils who supported Children in Need in school. We raised an amazing £424.79.

Building a Reading Culture in Bellsquarry

Lots of exciting things have been happening this term to encourage our pupils to read more. Last week was Scottish Book Week and pupils made positive comments about the reading challenges they were set for homework. Class libraries have had a revamp and are now more inviting places where pupils can cosy up with a good book. The nursery held their 'Big Bedtime Read' which was a great success. Parents shared stories while pupils listened and enjoyed some cookies. Mr Hunter read a very funny story about a dinosaur that couldn't stop eating and we all know 'what comes in must come out'...!!

In the New Year everyone will have a 'reading buddy'. The idea behind reading buddies is that an older pupil partners up with a younger pupil and they both read aloud to one another, benefiting both pupils' reading and listening skills.

There are many benefits to reading buddies including improving self-esteem and motivating reluctant readers.

Christmas Fayre

Our Christmas Fayre was once again a huge success! Thank you to everyone who came along and a special thanks to Mrs Gough, Mrs Cooper, Mrs Hart and their team of parents for their hard work organising everything. Thank you to all the other parents who came along on the day to assist and a huge THANK YOU to Santa who took time from his busy schedule to visit our school.

Our nursery to P7 enterprise did amazingly well selling goods made by the children. Each class will decide how to use their profits. Well done to all pupils, staff and helpers for making this a great success!

Christmas in West Lothian

Well done to our school choir who won this year's St. Mary's School Choir competition. Our school choir, led by Mrs England, will also be making a recording of Christmas Carols and festive songs which will feature on West Lothian Council's YouTube channel and Community News section of the website. This can be found through the council's Facebook page. See links below:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/westlothianvideos/videos>

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/communitynews>

School Lunches

Christmas lunches are being ordered for Thursday 19th December. As advised, no other lunches will be served on this date therefore ***if you have not placed an order by Friday 8th December you should provide a packed lunch for your child.***

Late Arrival in School

The school day commences at 8.50 a.m. It has come to our attention that several children are regularly arriving in school between 8.50 – 9.05 a.m. This causes disruption to classes as class teachers have already taken registers, ordered lunches and began teaching by the time children enter the class. In accordance with West Lothian Council Attendance Policy we request that children arrive in school on time.

Health & Safety

Security

We have recently made changes to the way children enter and exit the school building to enhance security measures. We feel the changes have been a success and we have had positive feedback from parents.

As part of our security measures, we request that ***all parents and visitors to school should report to the school office in the first instance.*** Parents should not enter classrooms at the beginning or end of the day. Please adhere to these rules to ensure the safety of staff and pupils. If you wish to speak to a member of staff please make an appointment through the school office. Thank you for your co-operation.

Safe Arrival at School Policy

At Bellsquarry we must adhere to West Lothian's Safe Arrival at School policy. This means if your child is absent you must call the school and leave a message on the day of absence and you must call on each day your child is absent.

We are changing our own internal policy in that as from today; we will no longer accept emails as notification of an absence. You must make a phone call to the school office. We are in the process of adding an absence line to our telephone system.

When calling, please call as early as possible, ***before 9.30 a.m.*** If we have had no notification by 9.30 a.m. a group call will be sent to you to respond. If we do not hear from you, then we will follow procedure and contact the Safe Arrival's main telephone number who link with social work, who will then follow up the absence. This is to ensure your child's safety.

When calling us, please state your child's reason for absence. We are required to code the absence on our registers. We also need to be aware of any infectious illnesses which we may need to inform other parents about.

Infectious illnesses

We ask that parents inform us immediately if their child has a confirmed infectious illness such as Noro virus, hand foot and mouth. By informing us, we can then alert other parents. There is information on infectious illnesses displayed in our reception areas and on our school blog. Please also be reminded that if your child is ill with sickness or diarrhoea, we request that you allow 48 hours from their last episode before returning them to school. This helps minimise the spreading of infection. Many thanks.

Communication

Communication with parents was discussed at our recent Parent Council meeting. It was agreed that our channels of communicating with parents are very good - Group Call email/text, newsletters, twitter, school blog and our upcoming school website. A concern was raised that dates can sometimes be wrong or conflicting, causing confusion amongst parents. We apologise regarding this matter and we will continue to ensure we do our best to keep our information current and correct. If you do find yourself unsure of information communicated by school, please do not hesitate to call the school office where we will be only too happy to clarify information with you.

A gentle reminder to parents that date lists, calendars and newsletters are emailed via Group call and also appear on our school blog for reference. Please add dates to your own calendar. There may be occasions out-with our control where we have to change a date and in this case we will inform you as soon as possible.

Staff have indicated an increasing number of emails from parents direct to their inbox. All staff have a working time agreement which extends beyond the school day and we politely request that all parent communication is sent to the school office inbox and admin staff will forward to the appropriate member of staff who will respond as soon as they can. Many thanks for your consideration

After School Clubs

All after school clubs will finish this term week commencing 4th December with the exception of Mrs Clegg's art club and P1-3 and P4-7 Dance classes which finish week commencing 11th December. Information for clubs running next term will be sent out in the New Year.

Brass Concert at James Young High School

Primary 6 and 7 brass pupils will have received a separate letter from Mrs Poynter detailing the brass event at James Young on the 18th December. Parents are asked to pick up their child at Bellsquarry and take them to The James Young to arrive for 1.30 pm. The concert will begin at 2.00 pm.

Christmas Post Box

Our Christmas Post Box has been set up in the school reception area for pupils to post Christmas cards to their friends if they wish. The box will be available for Christmas post until Wednesday 20th December. P6 pupils will distribute the post daily to all classes therefore please ensure child's name and class is written on the envelope.

Christmas Outings

Information regarding the following outings will be sent to you separately via letter:

- Nursery – Pipis and Panda at Purves Puppets
- P1 – 'Tinsel Time' at New Lanark
- P2 , 3, 4 and 5 – pantomime at Howden Park Centre
- P6 and 7 – Paddington 2 at Livingston's Vue cinema

Infant Nativity – 9.30 a.m. Monday 19th December and 2.00 p.m. Tuesday 20th December

There will be two performances of our infant nativity on the above dates. **Places are limited to 2 per family** to ensure numbers are within health and safety limits. We ask that families do not send two persons to each of the nativity plays. This is to ensure fairness to all. Thank you.

P1-3 Christmas Party – Friday 15th December 9.15 a.m./Santa 10.00 a.m.

Our P1-3 Party will be on the above date. Children should wear their party clothes to school. As it is a Friday, there will be no need for the children to bring school uniform that day. Children should be collected at normal time.

P4-5 Christmas Party – Wednesday 13th December 2.00 p.m.

Our P4-5 Party will be on the above date. Children should wear school uniform to school and bring party clothes in a bag with their name clearly marked on it. If you wish to take your child home to get changed please send a note to your child's class teacher. Children should be collected at 12.30 p.m. and return to school at 1.20 p.m.

P6-7 Christmas Party – Thursday 14th December 2.00 p.m.

Our P6-7 Party will be on the above date. Children should wear school uniform to school and bring party clothes in a bag with their name clearly marked on it. If you wish to take your child home to get changed please send a note to your child's class teacher. Children should be collected at 12.30 p.m. and return to school at 1.20 p.m.

Parent Helpers Christmas Coffee Morning – 11.00 a.m. Friday 15th December

We rely heavily on parent helpers in school for trips, class admin tasks etc. and appreciate our parents who regularly give up their valuable time to assist. We would like to say 'Thank You' by inviting them to our Christmas Coffee Morning on Friday 15th December at 11.00 a.m. Please come along and join staff and pupils for some coffee and cake!

Nursery News

Welcome to our new children and families who joined us in November. This is a busy time for everyone in the nursery preparing for Christmas events.

Christmas Sing-a-long Nativity

We would like to invite all a.m. and p.m. nursery parents and family to come to our Christmas Sing-a-long Nativity at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 21st December. We ask that afternoon children are dropped off at 10.15 a.m. Parents are welcome to wait in the reception area until the event starts at 10.30 a.m. We aim to finish at 11.15 a.m. We ask that afternoon children go home for lunch and return for their regular session at 12.14 p.m.

Christmas Party

We invite both morning and afternoon children to a joint Christmas party on 20th December. The party will begin at 9.00 a.m. Morning children will still be entitled to extended hours for their breakfast club. Parents are welcome to come along to see our 'special visitor' and should arrive at 10.45 a.m. There will be an option for afternoon children to bring a packed lunch and stay with their parents. An area will be provided in the nursery reception area and your child will have access to the nursery toilets. There is also the option of afternoon children going home over lunch and returning to nursery at 12.14 p.m.

Severe Weather Procedures

In the event of severe weather West Lothian Council will provide information to Radio Forth and Real Radio regarding emergency school closures and re-opening information. Information will also be communicated via the internet on West Lothian On-line, Twitter and Facebook.

In the event of school closures parents will be contacted via Group-call. ***It is essential that the school office is informed of any changes to mobile telephone numbers.***

For information on West Lothian Winter Ready Campaign visit www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter

In line with West Lothian Council Guidelines all pupils will be issued with work which should be done at home during school closures. Copies of these will be available on our school blog.

Bellsquarry Primary School and Nursery on Social Media

Our **school blog** is updated regularly and we like to encourage parents to check it out to find out what is going on in school. The children love sharing their learning via the blog. The blog is regularly updated by staff and the parent council.

The blog can be accessed at the following web address – <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/wl/bellsquarrypsblog/>



Or using your smart phone to scan the QR code:

Our **school Twitter** page is also regularly updated and staff and pupils like to microblog their learning. Please view our twitter page by clicking on the link below:

<http://bit.ly/2Agrb4z>

Espresso

Espresso digital learning service providing visual media and interactive resources is being used in school. The benefit of the licence is that parents can access espresso from home to enable them to be involved in their child's learning.

To access the website visit www.espresso.co.uk

Click 'log in' at top right hand side of page.
Click 'Espresso Online Service' (child on cloud icon)

Username: Student21968
Password: BQPS123

ETHOS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND AMBITION

Article 29: Children have the right to become the best that they can be

We celebrate children's achievements in and out of school therefore please send photographs and information for us to include these in our monthly newsletter.

Several children from P5-7 participated in the West Lothian Gymnastics Competition recently. Well done to everyone who took part! Sophie P6 won a gold medal for her category. Well done Sophie!

Conor P7 has passed his final (Level 7) Skiing lessons at Midlothian Snowsports Centre, Hillend.

Lucinda P3 won 2 silver medals and 1 bronze medal representing West Lothian Artistic Gymnastics Club at Fife Gymnastics Floor and Vault Competition on 5th November.

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Article 15: Your right to meet with friends and join groups and clubs

Bellsquarry Community Information

Our school choir will sing at the Bellsquarry Residents meal in the village hall on Tuesday 20th December at 7.00 p.m. Further information to follow.

NHS Health Scotland – Norovirus (Winter Vomiting Bug) Campaign 2017-18

NHS have issued a message to schools and nurseries advising to 'stay at home' for 48 hours after symptoms have stopped to avoid spreading it further.
More information can be found by following the link below:

<http://www.healthscotland.com/resources/campaigns/norovirus.aspx>

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

Article 42: The government must let children and families know about children's rights

PPAG – Positive Parking Action Group

A group of interested parents have been meeting regularly to discuss road safety issues at Bellsquarry Primary School and Nursery Class. They are working closely with our pupil leadership group, the Junior Road Safety Officers.

You may have seen the PPAG at our Christmas Fayre. The group are currently encouraging parents to take part in their survey (see link below).

<http://bit.ly/2ny2j2h>

The PPAG are also encouraging parents to sign our 'Parking Pledge' which will be sent out to all parents over the next couple of weeks.



Response to our Parent’s Evening Exit Survey (102 responses)

1. 92% found the online system easy to use
4% had some difficulty but called the school office for support
4% found it difficult to use
2. 86% found the interim report a useful tool for discussion at parent’s evening
14% did not find the interim report a useful tool for discussion
3. 97% of parents feel more informed about their children’s progress
3% do not feel more informed about their children’s progress

Examples of comments:

Happy with the process - Thank you

Thank you for all your hard work

Good process

Refreshments and cakes

A wee bit more time to discuss the interim report

It was an easy process, no changes required

A little more time with the teacher if possible

Keep appointments as much on time as possible

All information provided was valuable and very helpful so we can help our child with points covered, thank you

Provide some information about how the child is managing with respect to the levels

Have more regular parent teacher meetings

Very impressed with the format

Bellsquarry staff and pupils would like to wish all our friends and families

a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year



CHRISTMAS 2017

COMMENTS

We are very keen to hear about

- What we do well
- How we can improve

If you wish to comment on any items in the newsletter or any other matter, please complete the comments slip below and return it to the school office. Thank you.