



**BELLSQUARRY PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER**

**“Learn, Believe and you will Succeed”**



### **News from Ms McMaster and the staff at Bellsquarry Primary School**

We would like to extend a warm welcome back to our new school session 2017-18. We trust you had a great time over the summer holiday with your family and friends. The weather was erratic, but hopefully this didn't stop you from making the most of getting out and about or heading off somewhere nice.

We would like to offer a particularly warm welcome to our new pupils and their families. Our P1s so far are settling in very well, all looking very smart in the Bellsquarry uniform. Their P7 buddies are making sure that it won't be too long before they know the routines. We also have some new families who have joined us at other stages within the school and nursery. We look forward to working in partnership and we are confident that your child will have a happy and successful time at Bellsquarry Primary School.

There have been some recent changes to staffing. As you may be aware, our Principal Teacher Mr Todd left before the summer to take up the post of Depute head at Dedridge Primary. Interviews took place over the summer for his replacement and we would like to extend our congratulations to Mr Colin Hunter who was successful in securing the post. This will mean a slight change in the structure of staffing for the Primary 6 class. Mr Hunter will oversee the learning in P6 and he will teach the class on a Monday and Tuesday. He will support the leadership team on a Wednesday – Friday.

Interviews for a class teacher for Primary 6 (Wednesday to Friday) will take place on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August. There have been a number of excellent applicants. I will inform you of the successful candidate and a start date as soon as possible.

In our nursery we welcome Mrs Vicky Walker as a pupil support worker. Mrs Marion Smith, our learning support teacher who has a background as a nursery teacher, will teach our nursery class on a Monday, supported by our nursery team. Mrs Fiona Anthoney, our Early Year's Officer, will oversee the nursery, supported by our team on a Tuesday to Friday.

Miss Ashley Morrison has taken up a post as a Pupil Support Worker in our Primary 1 classes.

We said goodbye last session to Mrs Neill, our clerical assistant and we have recently advertised for an administrative assistant to support Mrs Marra in the school office. Interviews are taking place this week. I will inform you of the successful applicant as soon as I can.

The staff here at Bellsquarry have had a great summer and are looking forward to meeting you at the up and coming **Meet the Teacher evening on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September**. Please make every effort to attend as information differs from one stage to the next. It is therefore important to find out about the year ahead from the outset.

As usual we are looking forward to the session ahead and the various opportunities and challenges that will shape the childrens' experiences as we move through the school year. As we aim to build on previous success and ensure continuous improvement, we will build on our work from last session. We will continue to develop our curriculum, working closely with our other Cluster schools. Our School Self Evaluation Summary for session 2016-17 will soon be available on our blog, as will our School Improvement Plan for session 2017-18. We are currently working on creating a Parent Calendar for the year, to allow parents as much notice of school events as possible.

With the 600 hour entitlement in the nursery we are still providing a breakfast provision and an afternoon snack which is available to all nursery children, if parents wish to take up this opportunity. Mrs Cosgrove and Mrs Reid will support children attending the breakfast provision and Mrs Walker will carry out this duty in the afternoon. We continue to operate a breakfast club which is free to all pupils in Primaries 1-7 and supervised by Mrs Marr and Mrs Jones.

### **Safe arrival/departure arrangements**

Arrangements will continue as usual, with children dropped off and collected at the school gates, under the supervision of staff. Mrs Reid and Mrs Jones will supervise children in the school playground from 8.30-8.50 a.m. Please do not drop children off before 8.30 a.m. as there will be no supervision then. In the event of bad weather, children will be supervised from 8.30 a.m. in our school hall. At the end of the day, P1-3 staff will escort their classes to the front playground. P4-7 children will be dismissed from class. If any pupils remain, then they will be brought into the main building and asked to wait at the school office until arrangements have been made to pick them up. School finishes at 3.15 Monday – Thursday and 12.25 on a Friday. Please contact the school office if you are unable to pick your child up on time.

### **Absence**

Please contact our school office by 9.30 a.m. at the latest, should your child be absent from school. This needs to be repeated **each day that your child is absent**. Please leave a message on our school answer machine if no one is available to take your call. Our answer machine is checked on a regular basis throughout the day. Any unreported absence will be followed by a group call text message requesting parents to contact school. Should we receive no response and are unable to contact parents/carers, information will be passed to appropriate authorities who will then pursue the reason for absence. Continued absences are monitored in school on a regular basis.

## **Annual Data Checks**

Your child will be issued with an Annual Date Check form which will be sent out within the next few days. Please check the information and return the form to school with any amendments. The information on the second page is required for statistics by the Scottish Office. ***Please provide your current home email address to allow information and newsletters to be sent by email.*** We cannot accept business email addresses. If you do not use email, please notify the school office and paper copies will be issued via pupil post.

There have been changes to West Lothian's excursion policy. An EE2 Parental Agreement form for local visits is now no longer valid. EE2 permission forms will be sent out when children are leaving school grounds for an outing.

P1 and new pupils will receive a Photography Consent Form which allows photography in school. Please complete and return to the school office.

***We ask that you please return all of the above by Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September at the latest.***

## **School Lunches and Milk**

School lunches are free for pupils in P1-3 and cost £1.97 for P4-7 pupils. We wish to encourage all parents to order/pay through West Lothian's online I-Pay impact system. Please contact the school office if you have any questions or difficulties accessing this system.

We now have a halal option for lunches. Orders have to be placed one week in advance to allow the kitchen to order the food. Please select 'special diet' on i-pay impact if you wish to order the halal option.

Our lunch times are currently 12.15 – 1.00 p.m. for P1-3 and 12.35 – 1.20 for P4-7 and they are supervised by 2 staff members. However, after the September break we plan to pilot a change in lunch times to allow for a shorter afternoon for our younger pupils. From 19<sup>th</sup> September, P4-7 pupils will have their lunch from 12.15 – 1.00 pm and P1 – 3 will have their lunch from 12.35 – 1.20 pm.

Can we please ask parents of P1-3 pupils to discuss the menu with your child to ensure that they are aware of the choices ordered. Packed lunches are available to order on a Friday, free for P1-3 and children with free meal entitlement.

Milk payments should be made through i-pay impact. If you have not yet ordered, please do so by Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August.

## **Snack**

As a health promoting school we encourage children to bring a healthy snack for morning break. Our tuck shop is situated in the reception area from 8.45 – 9.00 a.m. each morning selling healthy snacks from 10p – 50p. We have Fruity Friday each week where children are asked to bring a piece of fruit for snack on a Friday to encourage healthy eating.

## **Book Bags**

We would like to give parents the opportunity to purchase a school book bag. These are used by the majority of children for carrying homework, letters etc. to and from school. The book bags cost £5 and are available from the school office.

## **Nursery Class**

Welcome to our new children who joined us this week. They have all settled in well.

The children will have the opportunity to play outdoors most days in nursery therefore please provide a pair of wellies for your child. Wellies should be labelled with your child's name and will be kept in the nursery class.

Nursery snack is available daily and parents will have the opportunity to make payments on I-Pay impact. New pupils will receive their unique number and instructions over the next few days. If you have any problems please contact the school office.

## **Dates for your diary (further information to follow)**

Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	- Parent Council AGM
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	- Meet the Teacher curricular evening in school (6.15-7.15)
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	- P5 pupils leave for Low Port residential camp
Friday 1 <sup>st</sup> September	- P5 pupils return from Low Port
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	- Community Coffee Morning - All break for September holiday
Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> September	- All staff resume for In-service day
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> September	-All pupils resume after September holiday
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> October	- MacMillan Coffee Morning – in school hall (11.30-12.25) – all welcome

Our monthly school newsletter will provide parents/carers with further dates and information. We are also in the process of creating a year calendar for parents to give parents as much notice of events as possible.

This session, newsletters will continue to be sent via parent mail. All newsletters will also be uploaded to our school blog.

Yours sincerely

Ruth McMaster

Head Teacher