

Carmondean Primary School Newsletter 2

October 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back after the October holiday. Please take time to read this newsletter as it contains information which we think is important to share with you, including important information on new Scotland wide National Standardised Assessments.

European Quality Label

Following a very successful eTwinning project For Learners Around the Globe (FLAG) with our European partners we have been awarded a 2017 British Council eTwinning National Quality Label for excellence. This means that the work of the children and of the school has been recognised at the highest European level. As a result of this award we will receive a certificate which we can attach to our BLOG and display in school. Also, our project will be displayed in a special area on the European Portal at www.etwinning.net.

The Scottish National Standardised Assessments

Assessment is a central part of everyday learning and teaching for children and young people. Teachers gather evidence on an ongoing and informal basis through asking questions, observing children working and making comment on their work.

From August 2017, new national standardised assessments have been introduced in all schools in Scotland. These assessments will provide an additional source of nationally consistent evidence for teachers to use when assessing children's progress.

- Every child in P1, P4, P7 and S3 will undertake national standardised assessments covering some aspects of reading, writing and working with numbers.
- Assessments will be completed online and will be automatically marked by the online system giving teachers immediate feedback to help children progress.
- The assessments will be used to help teachers understand how well your child is progressing with his or her learning and to plan next steps. There will be no pass or fail.
- The system will be designed so that if a child is struggling with the questions they will get easier, and if a child is doing well, the questions will become more challenging.
- The standardised assessments will be as short as possible and will be age and stage appropriate. A time limit of 50 minutes for each assessment has been set. This is an absolute maximum to ensure that no child feels an unnecessarily time pressure when undertaking the assessments. We do not expect the majority of children to require the full 50 minutes.
- Your child will not be expected to take assessments covering reading, writing and working with numbers in one sitting.
- The assessments will, as far as possible, accommodate the needs of children who require additional support.

P7 pupils will undertake the assessment during October. P1 and 4 will undertake the assessments in May and June 2018.

There is a parent/carer leaflet available online:

<https://www.education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/parent-leaflet-assessing-progress.pdf>

Bookbug Primary 1 Family Bag Event

The Scottish Book Trust has gifted the school a free bag of books for every Primary 1 child. The Bookbug Primary 1 Family Bag includes lots of fun activities and resources focused specifically on writing and counting. This forms part of the Scottish Government's Read, Write, Count literacy and numeracy campaign which aims to increase the literacy and numeracy skills of children in P1 to P3. To share the campaign with you and to receive your child's free bag of books we are holding a parent/carer workshop on Thursday 23 November from 6.30pm. Please put the date in your diary and more details about the event will follow soon.

Read, Write, Count Primary 2 and Primary 3 Event

The Scottish Book Trust has also gifted the school with Read, Write, Count bags for every Primary 2 and 3 child. This is a Scottish Government backed initiative aimed at making your child's life better in every way. It has lots of suggestions that will help you improve your child's skills and confidence at home and at school. To share the resources and ideas contained within the bags we are holding a parent/carer event on Wednesday 22 November at 6.30pm. Please put the date in your diary and look out for further details about the event soon.

New carpets

Recently the carpets were replaced in Primary 5, 6 and 7 classrooms. To ensure the carpets are kept clean, especially as we approach the Winter months, please check that your child has suitable indoor shoes to change into when they are inside the building. All school staff, and in particular, our janitorial and cleaning staff appreciate the fact that the majority of our children are respectful of their school environment and make the effort to change their shoes into indoor shoes when they enter the building. It would be very much appreciated if you could ensure that your child has a pair of indoor shoes that they can wear and keep within their classroom to ensure the floor coverings are kept clean and mud free.

Christmas Fair

As the festive season fast approaches I would like to remind everyone that our annual Christmas Fair will take place on Friday 1 December from 6.00pm. Preparations are well under way so please put the date in your diary and come along to support the school in our Christmas fundraiser. Donations for the Tombola and raffle are very welcome. Please remember that, with your support, all proceeds from the Fair pay for the children's Christmas parties and pantomime visit.

Christmas Nativity

This year we have made some changes to the way we perform the Christmas Nativity. Children in Primary 1 will work with children from the Nursery and they will perform 'A Wriggly Nativity.' This will take place in the large Hall on Tuesday 19 December, 10.00am and 2.00pm. Children in Primary 2 and 3 will work together to perform Hey Ewe! This will take place on Wednesday 20 December in the large Hall, 9.30am and 1.30pm. Letters for tickets will be sent out nearer the time.

Halloween

Last week we celebrated all things Halloween. The PSA did a great job of organising a fun evening where the children danced, played games and dooked for apples. Lots of sweets and hot dogs were eaten too. Like every other year the children's costumes and turnip lanterns were amazing. However, this year far exceeded expectations. So much time and imagination that went into preparing the children was commented on by all involved in running the event. Thanks to all parents who volunteered their time and talents too. This is very much appreciated by the children and the staff.

The Office Staff

In my last newsletter I mentioned that banking is done on a daily basis and there is no availability for change to be given at any time. This is still an issue for the office and support staff who collect the money. Please, where possible, sign up to iPayimpact, West Lothian Council's electronic system for making payments. Currently, 47% of our families are using the system and very successfully. For more information please contact the staff in the School Office. The Office is also extremely busy at the beginning and end of the day and children should bring in any monies themselves to the Pupil Support Workers.

Old Pound Coins

Old round one pound coins went out of legal tender on Sunday 15 October. With this in mind, we are unable to accept payments that includes these coins.

Main Entrance

The opening and closing mechanism at the main school entrance continues to be a problem. Your patience and understanding has been most appreciated by the Office staff as they attempt to fix the problem or operate the front entrance through a fire door. Please take note that when you ring the bell for the attention of the Office staff press the number 1 on the panel and then the bell symbol. This will alert the staff that there is someone at the door. Also, the doors operate outwards. Please stand back from the doors to allow them to open fully, otherwise they fail to open.

Attendance

West Lothian Council recognises the need for all children and young people to engage fully in the education process and has developed a strategy for promoting attendance through a positive and supportive approach. This strategy provides a framework that allows early intervention, comprehensive information sharing and a positive partnership with parents/carers through a staged intervention. The West Lothian Council strategy provides a system that intervenes at an early stage. Stage 1 is where a child's absence has fallen below 90% in the previous month and no good reason for such absence is supplied by the parent/carer. A letter will be sent to inform the parent/carer that this absence is unacceptable and needs to improve. If there is no improvement, Stage 2 involves a meeting in school with parents/carers. If there is a continued drop in the absence rate Stage 3 is implemented and the school will make a referral to the Children and Young People's Team who provide programmes to address school attendance directly. If there is no improvement a Child's Planning Meeting will take place. If there is no further improvement the pupil will be referred to the area attendance group with the option of referring on to The Children's Reporter.

Lateness

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child/children may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher. Please try to ensure your child/children arrive on time for the start of the school day. A reminder that the first bell rings at 8.50am and the final bell at 8.55am by which time all children should be settled to start lessons promptly at 9.00am.

West Lothian Cross Country Championships

Children from Primaries 6 and 7 took part in West Lothian's Schools Cross Country Championships on Dechmont Law on 4 October. Every year we have some winners and this year was beyond exception. At Cluster level our Primary 6 girls came overall first with the first four places being Carmondean girls. Very well done to Alicia Chaziwa who took gold, Chloe Merson who received silver and Carla Jansen won bronze. Dorka Toth came fourth. The girls will now proceed to the West Lothian Championships in

October 2018. Primary 6 boys' team also did very well, with Jamie Scott taking first place and Eddie Smith just behind in second place.

Primary 7 pupils take a step up as they compete against all schools within West Lothian and therefore a larger field. Well done to Rhianna Wilkins and Daisy Stewart for a well-run race despite not being in a medal position. Well done to all winners and everyone who took part in the event.

Breakfast Club

Ms Mercado, Mrs Steel and Mrs Shepherd continue to work hard to make the Breakfast Club an enjoyable experience for the children who attend. This is open to all children and is free of charge. Doors open at 8.15am and entry to the Breakfast Club is via the Primary 6-7 entrance.

Winter Weather

West Lothian Council will operate normal winter arrangements again this year regarding gritting and clearing paths. In the event of heavy snow the school Janitor who normally opens up the school will clear/salt one initial footpath to allow staff to access the school safely. For pupils, he will make every attempt to clear/salt all other pathways leading from the gates at the back of the school to the entrances at P6/7, P4/5, P2/3 and P1. Please note that the Janitor has no responsibility for clearing access roads and pavements, car parks or playgrounds.

Childhood flu immunisation

A reminder to all parents/carers who have given their permission for their child/children to have this year's flu vaccination. This will go ahead on Wednesday 08 November.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Millar
Head Teacher

Dates for your Diary

November

- 8 P7 Transition morning
Flu Immunisation Day
- 9 Open Evening for P7 parents at Deans Community High School 6.30pm
- 13 PSA meeting 3.30pm
- 22 Read, Write, Count Primary 2 and Primary 3 Event
- 23 Bookbug Primary 1 Family Bag Event
- 24 St Mary's Church, Dalmahoy, Choir Festival
- 30 After School Clubs end

December

- 1 Christmas Fair 6.00pm
- 4 P6 Christmas Party 1.30pm
- 5 Christmas Lunch for pupils
- 6 Christmas Pantomime in school
P3 multisports festival
- 8 P5 Christmas Party 10.00am
- 11 P4 Christmas Party 1.30pm
- 12 P3 Christmas Party 1.30pm
- 15 P2 Christmas Party 10.00am
- 18 P1 Christmas Party 1.30pm
- 19 Nursery and P1 Nativity 10.00am and 2.00pm
- 20 P2-3 Christmas Nativity 9.30am and 1.30pm
- 21 Nursery Christmas Parties
P7 Christmas Disco 6.00pm
- 22 Last day of term
End of term Church Service (collection appreciated)

January 2018

- 8 Staff In-Service day
- 9 Pupils resume
- 15 After School Clubs resume