

# Carmondean Primary School Newsletter 3

January 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

## Welcome back

I hope you all enjoyed the festive season and that you had a great holiday and good start to 2018. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for the many Christmas cards, gifts and good wishes I received just before the holiday. They were all greatly appreciated.

I hope we can now look forward to the new term and that all staff and children remain in good health through the weeks ahead as we have many events and activities to look forward to.

## Norovirus Outbreaks

A number of schools across West Lothian have reported an increase in pupils with vomiting and/or diarrhoea. The symptoms are suggestive of viral gastroenteritis (also known as norovirus, a winter vomiting disease) which is known to be currently circulating in the community. It is usually a short lived self-limiting illness from which children and adults recover quickly.

Further information about norovirus and its prevention can be found at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/norovirus>

To minimise the likelihood of developing norovirus NHS recommend:

- If your child develops vomiting and/or diarrhoea please ensure they remain off school until they have been symptom free for at least 48 hours. This advice applies at all times. So for instance if your child becomes unwell over the weekend they should not attend school on Monday even if by then they feel well.
- Ensure that all members of your family wash their hands frequently using warm water and liquid soap, especially after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food.

## Regional Collaborative - Forth Valley and West Lothian Improvement Collaborative

Schools across Scotland will now have the opportunity to work with other authorities and draw on a range of expertise through six newly established Regional Improvement Collaboratives. West Lothian Council is part of the Forth Valley and West Lothian Collaborative which also includes Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling Councils. Each one will be led by a Regional Improvement Lead and will work with schools to provide advice and support to drive improvement. More details of this new educational initiative will follow when they are made available from Scottish Government.

## Christmas Celebrations

Christmas in school is always a very special time and last year was no exception. Nursery and Primary 1 put on a great performance of the Wiggly Nativity. I am always amazed that children of such a young age can remember so many words, sing songs and perform in front of a packed house. The children in Primaries 2 and 3 also gave a fantastic performance of Hey Ewe alongside the Primary 6 and 7 brass group. Everyone worked very hard demonstrating just how confident, successful and responsible our children are. Well done to all staff who did an amazing job of preparing the children for their performances. This takes time and imagination which, I am sure you will agree, was on display at each performance.

## **Christmas Fair**

The staff would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who came along to the Christmas Fair in December. As usual, the turnout was fantastic and we raised a massive £2848.54 for the school. So far this has enabled us to pay for the pantomimes before Christmas and the cost of the Christmas parties. We have yet to decide what the rest of the money will be spent on.

## **Choir**

Last term the school choir were out and about in the community and already they are beginning to build up a very good reputation. Their first 'gig' was singing at St Mary's Community Centre, Dalmahoy. This is our third year of taking part in this event and the children sang beautifully. The choir then popped up at Edinburgh Airport. This 'gig' was by invitation where the children were asked to sing as the Christmas lights were switched on at the airport's Control Tower - a first for us and certainly a first for Edinburgh Airport. The final performance of the term was at the Christmas Fair which kept everyone entertained on the night.

## **West Lothian Burns Competition 2018**

As a school, we routinely enter the choir and those children who excel at reciting poetry to an audience into the West Lothian Burns Competition. However, this year, we have taken the decision not to enter the choir so we can fully focus our attention on preparing the children for the West Lothian Schools GLEE Challenge 2018. For our poetry recital, we have reviewed the content of the poems we usually prepare the children to recite and have moved away from reciting solely Burns poems to increase the number of Scottish poems that are engaging and fun to work with. Our own poetry reciting competition will go ahead in the usual manner but for this year we are not taking part in West Lothian's Competition, which is based entirely on the poems of Robert Burns.

## **Scottish Concert Band Festival**

On Saturday 2 December, the Deans Cluster Brass Ensemble, which is made up of pupils from Deans Community High School and the feeder Primary Schools, took to the stage and were awarded Silver Plus! A fantastic result and congratulations to Aimee Muree P6, Lucy Scott P6, Karly Cowan P6, Daisy Stewart P7 and Zoe Dudgeon P7. The Band now progresses to The Scottish Concert Band Festival National Final in Perth next March. Fingers crossed for another success.

## **West Lothian Gymnastics Competition**

At the end of November last year we entered 4 teams into the West Lothian Gymnastics Competition at Craigswood Sports Centre. We were delighted with the achievement of each team. Level 1 Team (Liam Jansen, Rosie White and Anya Turner) were awarded Bronze medals for their team. Dorka Toth was awarded an individual Gold medal for her performance within the Level 1 Team (Lexi MacLeod, Sophie Vance and Naia MacFarlane). Level 2 Team (Cara Flood, Anna Glasgow, Louisa Barrie and Zak Swift) won a Gold medal for their team and the other Level 2 Team (Melody McCulloch, Carla Jansen, Karly Cowan and Amber Lawson) were awarded silver medals for their efforts as a team. The good news is that the two Level 2 Teams progress to the next level of the competition, which takes place in Perth in March.

## **Gymnastics Showcase**

Many of our children have an interest and talent in gymnastics and did not take part in the West Lothian Gymnastics Competition last November. Instead, we are holding a Showcase for parents/carers of all of the children on Thursday 01 February 2018. Details of this event will be sent out to the families of the children involved separately.

## **Staff News**

At the end of last term Miss Smith left Carmondean for pastures new. She took up the position of Acting Principal Teacher at Seafield Primary School. Primary 3 will now be taught by Mr Gordon who is new to Carmondean Primary School. Also new to Carmondean is Mrs King. She joins the staff team as a Pupil Support Worker.

## **Children in Need**

As usual, we took part in fundraising for Children in Need. Primary 5 took overall responsibility for running the event, which was extremely successful. The grand total raised was £725.94. A huge thank you for supporting this fundraising event.

## **Polar Explorer**

Now that our Erasmus+ project with our European partners has come to an end we have taken an amazing opportunity and signed up for something a little different. We have joined the Polar Explorer Programme which is aimed at encouraging and supporting us when we teach the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). We have been assigned a Polar Ambassador, who just happens to be a real explorer, and he will provide us with support to increase the children's enjoyment and engagement in STEM subject lessons and extra-curricular activities. Watch out for updates on the BLOG.

## **Parent Council**

As you may be aware we have a new Chairperson for the Parent Council, one existing member and two new recruits. Our next meeting will be towards the end of this month and if you are interested in becoming a Parent Council rep please get in touch.

## **School Show**

A provisional date of Wednesday 21 March 2017 has been set for the Primary 6-7 school show. This year the show will be called The Dracula Rock Show. More details to follow nearer the time. Primaries 4 and 5 will also perform a show and this will be held in the final term.

## **Blog**

As part of our many methods of communicating with you I would like to continue to draw your attention to the class Blogs. Each week the staff update their Blog and give you the latest news from their class. The staff and children would appreciate it if you could spend a little time each week reading your child's/children's class Blog. In addition to the class teachers, the Senior Management Team has a Tag called Management News and Views and the Office has a Tag called School Office. Please take a look and keep up to date with all things Carmondean. If you are a 'Twitter' user, our posts are 'tweeted at' "@carmondean\_ps". Why not follow us and keep up to date?

## **Carmondean Primary School Website**

West Lothian Council has decided to take a corporate approach to all of its school websites and, so, Carmondean Primary School website has been completely re-designed. After much work, the new site is now ready and can be accessed at:

<http://www.carmondeanprimary.westlothian.org.uk/>

The new website has lots of easily accessible information on the school and its business as well as direct feeds from our school Blog and our school Twitter account.

Why not have a look and bookmark our new website on all of your devices? It's the first port of call for information about Carmondean Primary School.

## **Winter Ready**

In the event of severe weather and the school has to close for whatever reason, the best place for your children to continue with their learning is through GLOW. All pupils have their Winter Ready Instruction Sheet which has their GLOW Username and Password on it. The sheet gives instructions about how to access GLOW to continue learning and teaching over the Internet. Our older children are able to do this independently, but our younger pupils will need some adult help.

Closing a school or cancelling after school clubs or events is something we do not do lightly and we do everything possible to avoid such an event. However, if a closure is deemed necessary we will ensure that you are fully informed of the procedures that are put in place to allow you to organise child care.

**Please ensure that all contact details are up to date especially if you got a new phone over the Christmas period as we use Group Call to notify parents of closures etc. Please note we can only Group Call or email the main contact of each family.**

## **Attendance**

Attendance at school by children and young people is essential so that they receive the education to which they are entitled. Absence from school, whatever the cause, disrupts learning and will impact negatively on the life chances of our children and young people, and therefore, our community.

West Lothian Council recognises the need for all children 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 and a positive partnership with parents through a staged intervention approach.

The first stage of a three stage process is where a child's attendance has fallen below 90% in the previous month and no good reason for such an 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. These letters are generic in nature and are written by officers of West Lothian Council.

As an employee of West Lothian Council my job requires me to regularly monitor attendance. I would appreciate your support in ensuring your child attends school unless there is illness or some other excuse that can be explained. Unfortunately, taking your child out of school during term time for a holiday will be marked as unauthorised. If you decide to go on holiday, the absence will trigger the 90% target fairly quickly and you will likely receive a first stage letter.

**Please remember to contact the School Office if your child is off unwell or is going to be late into school due to an appointment. You can phone 01506 432492 to either speak to the Office Staff or leave a message on the answering machine. Alternatively, you can text us on 07860 049699.**

## **School Uniform**

Thank you to all parents and carers for ensuring your children arrive at school in school uniform. We are all very proud of our school and we are keen to continue to display this by encouraging the children to wear school uniform in line with West Lothian Council's guidelines. A reminder that the school uniform consists of grey, black or navy trousers/skirt, white polo shirt and navy sweater.

## **Footwear**

To ensure the floors are kept clean and well maintained it is important that the children change their outdoor shoes to soft indoor shoes. This is even more important now that we have new corridors, changing facilities and a Gym Hall. Please ensure that your child has appropriate indoor footwear to change into.

### **Clothing**

We keep a supply of spare items of clothing in school in case any child needs to be changed for whatever reason. Before Christmas a number of the children needed spare clothing because they fell over in the playground. If your child came home with a change of clothing please ensure it is sent back to school to maintain the stock.

### **Drinking Water**

Last term there was a slight increase in the number of children bringing diluted juice and flavoured water to school to drink through the course of the day. We are a health promoting school and encourage the children to bring plain water only to drink. Your support with this would be appreciated by all staff.

### **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.

### **Healthy Tuck Shop**

Our Healthy Fruit Tuck Shop is doing really well with a good number of children buying fruit regularly. Most pupils are also bringing water to school, which is worthwhile too.

### **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 a free provision and runs from 8.15am where entrance to the building is guaranteed. However, some children start arriving much earlier than 8.15am when entry to the building is not guaranteed and there is no supervision. Please ensure that if your child is attending the Breakfast Club that they arrive as near to 8.15am as possible. Entry to Breakfast Club is through the P6/7 entrance. On mornings when the weather is inclement the children will remain in the Hall where they will be supervised before they are directed to their classrooms.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Millar  
Head Teacher

## Dates for your Diary

### January

- 15 After School Clubs resume
- 23 P7 Risk Factory
- 29 Scots Afternoon

### February

- 1 Gymnastics Showcase
- 2 P7 Sports Hall Athletics, Craigswood Sports Centre (for selected pupils)
- 7 Parent Consultations for school and nursery 5.00pm-7.30pm
- 8 Parent Consultations for school and nursery 4.00pm-6.30pm
- 9 PSA Valentine dress down morning
- 12-13 February holiday
- 14 All resume school
- 21 Dalguise/Lendrick Muir Residential meeting for parents 6.00pm

### March

- 2 P5 parent assembly, 9.15  
After School Clubs end
- 5-9 P6 residential to Dalguise
- 12-14 P5 residential to Lendrick Muir
- 13 P3 parent assembly, 9.15
- 16 P4 parent assembly, 9.15
- 20 P5 outing to Bannockburn
- 21 P6/7 School Show 1.30 and 6.30
- 23 Last day of term

### April

- 9 All resume school