



Halfmerke Primary School Newsletter



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August /September 2014

Welcome Back

Didn't the summer holidays seem to fly in this year? It was a pleasure to welcome everyone back to school and to welcome new pupils into their first term in Halfmerke Primary School. Last Wednesday we welcomed 14 new Primary 1 children into the school. They are already settling into learning and from next Monday (25th August) they will be in full time. The infant playground is staffed from 8:50 a.m. While parents are welcome to drop off their children either at the bottom of the steps (to encourage independence) or at the top of the steps, staff would be grateful if you did not stand in the area between the playground and the door. This can become congested very quickly which can be daunting for our younger children.

Extra In-service Day

I wish to let you know the Scottish Government has recently indicated that primary schools can have an additional in-service day this year to support reflection on learning and teaching practice, and to further embed Curriculum for Excellence approaches.

Following discussions, South Lanarkshire Education Resources has looked at ways to limit the impact for parents/carers and has agreed the date for all schools will be **Friday 19 September 2014**. This day has been added onto the existing in-service day on **Thursday 18 September 2014**.

You may also wish to know that secondary schools will also be closed to pupils on these two dates.

Learning - We want everyone talking about reading!

Thanks to the work of our Parent Council we have taken delivery of class sets of Roald Dahl novels. As part of our drive to improve attainment in literacy across the school each class is starting the year with a different Roald Dahl novel. You can join in with this project by asking the children about the novel they are reading.

Learning out of school

When children are learning outwith the school site, they will bring home a consent form with the information letter. This **must** be returned before the child can be taken off the premises. If we do not have the consent form we **cannot** take your child out of school.

Home Time

Bus Children

Unless we are informed differently we assume that bus children are travelling on the bus every day. If your child deviates from their normal pattern of bus travel please inform the school office. This year we have one school bus and the Hunter After School Care bus. There are more taxis needed in the car park this year so can I ask you not to add to the congestion by bringing your car into this area.

P1 - 3 children should be collected from the infant area. If you have other arrangements for your child please let the teacher know and ensure that your child knows what they have to do.

Contact Numbers

Please ensure that the school office has an up to date telephone contact number in case you need to be contacted in an emergency.

Staff News

I have spoken with **Mrs Aird** and am happy to report that although her treatment can leave her a bit tired, she is doing well and she wishes everyone an enjoyable term. I am sure you will join with me in wishing her a speedy recovery.

During her absence we are delighted to welcome **Miss Inglis** back on to our team.

Sadly, we have had to lose a member of our support staff this year. **Mrs Aitken** who has been an enthusiastic member of our team has had to leave us. Fortunately she is not going far and is taking up a full time post in West Mains School so she will still be seen around the school.

School Captains and House Leaders

Our school captains this year are **Emma Scott** and **Andrew Shuff**. I am looking forward to working with them over the year to continue to improve our school.

House leaders from Primary 7 will be elected by the children in each House.

The children earn points throughout the year and the House with the most points at the end of the session win the House Shield. Last session the House Shield was won by Kelso House. Will this year be Elgin's year?

Reporting to Parents

Our staff report progress in a number of ways throughout the session:

Monthly Reports

Monthly reports will start in September. These will keep you up to date with your child's progress and general behaviour. Our teachers are very clever with where they place the ticks in the boxes and tend to show small improvements (or otherwise) by where the tick is placed! The children will complete the front of the reports to let you know what they have been learning about over the month. Working with the teacher, the children also set themselves individual targets. P3 - 7 children have these in their homework diaries. Please discuss these with your child(ren).

Class Assemblies

These are an active way in which our pupils report on their learning.

Open Evening

Our pupils take responsibility for showing off the great learning they are doing in class. There is always time to chat to the teacher.

Curricular Evening

Find out how an area of the curriculum is taught.

Annual Reports

A summary of the learning your child has been involved in and their progress.

Formal Parent Teacher Interviews

Find out how your child has progressed over the year.

School Uniform

It is great to see the majority of the pupils wearing their school uniform. Whether they are in the formal uniform of white shirt and tie or the red polo shirt and sweatshirt, they look very smart.

Red polo shirts should be worn for PE

As usual I am very appreciative of the work our Parent Council has done to ensure that the uniforms were delivered. A huge thank you to Mrs McHugh for her hard work in this area.

Attendance

In accordance with South Lanarkshire Council's guidelines, if your child is ill and off school we ask that you telephone the school between 8:30a.m and 9:30a.m to let us know. If the school has not heard from you a member of the office staff will contact you. On their return to school, pupils should also bring an absence note.

Please note that I am unable to authorise absences for holidays.

Parent Helpers

We are often looking for parents to help and support activities where we take pupils out of school. Parents need to hold a PVG certificate to be able to help. If you would like to be a parent helper please and are not on our list please contact the school for an application form for a PVG certificate.

JRSO (Junior Road Safety Officers)

I am looking for a parent who is willing to work with our two P6 JRSO's. This would involve meeting with the children during a Friday afternoon on a monthly basis. If you are able to give a considerable commitment to this please let me know of your interest.

Reminders

Dogs

Please do not bring dogs into the school grounds. Some of our children are frightened of dogs (even small ones). Our children use the grassy area around the school for play and for learning. This area should not be used to exercise dogs.

Nuts

Please do not send your child with nuts for a snack or as part of their lunch. We have some children who are allergic to nuts.

Water

Research has shown that children learn better if they are properly hydrated. They should bring a bottle of water with them to school to drink during the day. Sports caps are best as they are less likely to spill.

After School Clubs

After School activities will start next Monday the 1st September.

Monday - Athletics - Mrs Munro

Wednesday - Football - Miss Inglis

Children should bring £1 each week to help cover the costs of the tournaments.

Owing to other commitments Miss Burke is unable to offer netball at this time in the session.

Dress Down Days

Thursday 25th September - Roald Dahl theme

Friday 31st October , Friday 28th November, Friday 19th December, Friday 30th January

Friday 27th February , Friday 27th March Friday 29th May, June date to be decided.

Themes will be on our web site and in our news letters.

Credit Union

Our credit union is run by our P7 children and overseen by Blantyre Credit Union. We hope to restart this on Wednesday 27th August.

Outdoor Play and Learning

Children learn in a variety of ways both in and out of the classroom. At Halfmerke we believe that children also learn through outdoor play. A little rain will not stop us from going outside so please ensure that your child has appropriate outdoor clothes.

We will however operate an indoor interval when the weather is extreme.

A few dates for your diary

Wednesday 20 th August	P7 Crucial Crew
Thursday August 21st	P6 start swimming block
Monday 25 th August	Primary 1 start full time
Wednesday 27 th August	Halfmerke Credit Union Starts
Thursday 18 th September	School closed to pupils for voting. Staff INSET
Friday 19 th September	School closed to pupils . Staff INSET (see beginning of newsletter)
Wednesday 24 th September	Hopscotch Theatre visit to school. Whole School P1 settling in reviews Parent Council AGM
Tuesday 16 th September	School Photographer Individuals / Families P1 and P7 groups
Friday 26 th and Monday 29 th September	Holiday
Friday 10 th October	Harvest
October 13 th - 17 th	Holiday
Friday 19 th December	School Closes 2:30
Monday 5 th January	School Re-opens 9:00
Monday 9 th ,Tuesday 10 th , Wednesday 11 th February	School closed. 11 th February is an INSET day for staff
Thursday 2 nd April	School Closes 2:30pm
Monday 20 th April	School reopens 9:00
Monday 4 th May	Holiday
Thursday 7 th May	INSET day - school closed to pupils
Friday 22 nd and Monday 25 th May	Holidays
Wednesday 24 th June	School closes 1pm

Please remember to check updates on our website www.halfmerke-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk.

I am looking forward to working with your children over what promises to be another very busy year.

As always, if you have concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school. DO NOT WAIT FOR ONE OF OUR FORMAL EVENTS TO SPEAK TO A MEMBER OF STAFF

Yours sincerely,
K Douglas (Mrs)
Head Teacher

