



Friday 10 January 2020

Dear Parents/Carers & Friends

Key Dates:

Week Beginning: **Monday 13 January**

Monday 13 January	Swimming begins for P4, Group 1
Tuesday 14 January	Mrs Kelly attending Edinburgh Primary Headteacher Conference (am) Mr Burgess attending Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood training for Catholic schools 3-4pm Active Schools Sign Up Session, pop into reception to meet with Lauren Miller to sign up for term 2 classes
Thursday 16 January	Parent Council Meeting, 6.455pm – all welcome
Friday 17 January	Rights Respecting Schools & Martin Luther King Assembly

Upcoming date for P7 Parents: P7 Assembly, Friday 7th February

Happy New Year to all our families, particularly as we embark upon a new decade!



Thanks to you all on behalf of the staff and I for good wishes donations to e foodbank and gifts received over the festive season.

Beginning a new term, on a Thursday, after nearly three weeks off is quite a challenge so we eased back gently yesterday with a focus on our patron saint, St John the Evangelist whose feast day always falls when we are on holiday, 27th December. Our kitchen staff kindly baked some biscuits for each class to decorate and enjoy while learning new facts and the history of John the Apostle to share with Fr Jock at Friday's special feast day mass. Fr Jock said questions answered on St John were the very best he has heard since he arrived!

Vision, Values and Aims & Positive Relationship Policy

We have been working on these together with staff and pupils and will share draft aims at our parent council meeting on Thursday. We would welcome your comments especially if you think we have missed anything important. Mr Burgess has been using assemblies to revisit the four key components of the school vision: *nurture, inspire, flourish and pray* with the children and Miss Miller and the newly renamed Learning Council (previously known as Pupil Councillors) have set themselves four goals they would like us all to focus on and contribute to. They are:

Sort out playground relationships

Treat all staff with respect

Accept people for who they are and

To be happy for others and celebrate success in and out of school

We have also looked at our Positive Behaviour Policy to incorporate a lot of work we've been doing around resilience and restorative practices. Some families will have received 'Above and Beyond' postcards – these along with Tea with SLT on a Thursday afternoon are to reward those pupils who have excelled in achieving a class or school target or who have been praised for excellent work ethic. A next step for us is to invite parents into school to share what we have been doing – look out for information before the February half term.

Thank You, Thank You

To House & Vice Captains who led the Carol Service on the last day of term, a technical hitch did not put them off their re-telling of the Nativity story. Thanks to all the staff & classes who sang so well and for the wonderful rendition of Last Christmas...next year we must remember to invite parents for a festive sing-a-long!

Staffing Update

We shared an emotional farewell with Mrs Lyn Williamson and Mrs Jan McIntyre on the last day of term, along with a cheerio to Mrs Newman, who has decided to remain in Dundee for the foreseeable future. Thanks again to all of them for their professionalism and dedication.

We say hello again to Mrs Angela Mackay, who returns to P1 and to Mrs Rebecca Williamson who will teach P7B on a Monday and P3B every Thursday and Friday. We welcome Ms Portia Horak to P3 Mon-Wed and we also welcome and say hello to Mr Stephen Devine who will replace Mrs McIntyre as PE Specialist. Mr Devine will work with us Mon & Tues so some slight tweaks to the PE timetable, he will begin with us on Monday, 27th January.

Let's Get Dramatic

A further thank you to the Parent Council who were successful in their application for a grant from the local neighbourhood partnership.

This £1,800 or so worth of funding is for:

- (1) a Polytunnel for the gardening club
- (2) More drama lunchtime club sessions
- (3) Lego Therapy training

We are delighted that Edinburgh Youth Theatre have confirmed they can deliver a lunchtime drama club for the next 10 weeks. This will be offered to pupils in P4/5 and will take place on Thursday lunchtimes. This along with Lego club, Gardening Club, P3 Book Club and all the lunchtime Active Schools Provision means that there is a great deal on offer across lunchtimes for anyone who wants to try something different/take a break from the playground.

Lateness/Absence

We are continuing to monitor both lateness and absence and we are still above the local average for attendance. Just to be clear, there are very FEW instances where I can authorise pupil absence for a holiday outwith term time. To do so I need proof from an employer that school holiday dates have not been granted. Also, if your child is sick please do explain this on return – explained absences such as appointments and illness are recorded separately. Thanks for your support with this.

Achievements

It was the dance show for our Active Schools Dance group on 10th December, this was held up at Holy Rood High and the performers not only had a great time but received praise for all their enthusiasm and efforts. Aine from P3's dad shared a lovely review with us:

I just wanted to share a note that Aine and other St John's children (unsure of names) performed at Holyrood HS last night as part of the Edinburgh NE cluster and Active Schools Dance Show.

They danced brilliantly in front of a large audience to Dolly Parton track 9 to 5 and received a warm ovation at the end.

Aine encouraged and supported the younger children of the group who had never performed before in front of an audience by helping them with their dance routine.

They demonstrated all what is positive for the school, community and wider cluster. We were very proud parents.

Our congratulations to Jaxson in P7 who has been invited to train with the P7 Edinburgh Select Team. Jaxson had his first session with the squad on Friday and we look forward to hearing how he got on. Well done!!

...And Finally

A reminder of the date for the Lion King – we are going on Wed, 11th March to the matinee performance which begins at 2.30pm. Our friends from St Mary's Leith were there last week and Miss McDonnell their Principal Teacher is coming to St John's to share logistics with us and all the activities they did to prepare for what sounds like a wonderful experience.