



Bulletin 24.9.20

We find ourselves having passed the September weekend; a time of year when many families would normally have taken advantage of the long weekend to get away, as would staff! We did have some hardy campers and some staff headed off to explore some of the wilder parts of Scotland. I hope that whatever you did you took advantage of the sunshine and our pupils enjoyed the lie in on Monday – we've found over the past week that many have complained of feeling tired in the afternoons – think the reality of a full return is beginning to hit home.

Health & Safety Executive Spot Check

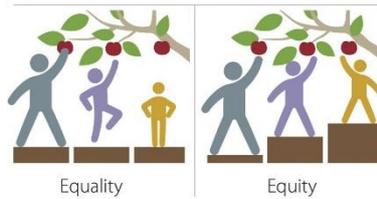
We are continually reviewing and adapting our procedures to ensure we are meeting all Covid-19 guidelines and restrictions. As ever, we rely on the cooperation of all staff, pupils and parents to ensure this is happening, and we are all doing our 'bit' to fight off a second wave of the virus.

On Monday we were informed that an Inspector from HSE would spend the afternoon in our school on Tuesday to check that staff and pupils were safe and that appropriate Risk Assessments and Infection Control Measures were in place. HSE are visiting a variety of schools & workplaces who have re-opened post lockdown to ensure good standards of health & safety are met.

Kerry, the inspector arrived at 11.30am and met with Mrs Hawthorne, Mr Burgess and I to talk through the process we went through from planning to actual re-opening and all the measures we have established. She had a walk around the school, saw pupils at lunch in their classes, visited the playground to check on bubbles and zones and spoke with members of the staff Health and Safety committee and spent time assessing our paperwork; she assessed St John's as Covid compliant and Covid Excellent, with no recommendations.

This was a rigorous process but one which we welcomed and I felt relieved and proud of the staff and pupils for their efforts in maintaining handwashing routines, physical distancing and staying within bubbles. We continue to meet weekly as a staff to discuss health and safety matters and this was recognised as a sign of good practice.

Equity for All



As we look ahead to a school, I wanted to once important issue, both for Government. *Equity in* is a national priority. In 2018, the Scottish Government produced their report on “How to deliver excellence and equity in Scottish Education.” As a school, we use ideas from this so we are ensuring equity for all our pupils.

positive year for our again highlight a very St John's and the Scottish education for all our pupils

However, equity does not mean the same for all! Equity is often a phrase confused with 'equal' or 'equality'.

Equity has a strong focus on fairness and giving each individual child an equal opportunity to do well. This often means making adaptations or giving a helping hand. At some point, nearly all of our children will need a stepping stool, a second chance, a guiding hand, an ear to listen or just a quiet space. We will never refuse this based on the idea that others' may think this unfair. As a school, we understand the 'bigger picture' for each of our pupils. For many, the reasons they need extra support are hidden or misunderstood. We ask all our parents to trust the staff within the school and appreciate that we are doing our very best for all of our pupils, so that they can all access the education they are entitled to.

We are all part of this learning community, and proud to be so. I look forward to continuing our journey towards inclusion and equality for all with you this session.

Playground DROP and GO Update!



At the parent council meeting we discussed ways in which to improve the **collection process** at the end of the school day. The nursery entrance was highlighted as a point of most congestion. One suggestion was for parents collecting pupils to be provided with more space to safely distance.

We would like to try this... **from Monday** if you are collecting **P2, P4 or P5** pupils use the space from the gate at the top (Duddingston Road) all the way down to the bike shed in the playground. Please do not go beyond this point. Some sensible P4's have made a great pictorial representation of the areas we are referring to below:

2 metre distancing lines



Nursery Entrance



Into the Playground



For this to work effectively we ask parents to remain 2m apart and not crowd around – teachers require space to safely hand children over. I would also request that parents/carers arrive as close to collection point as possible, thus reducing the wait time.

No further than the bike shed.

Outdoor Learning

Mrs Gries, who has been delivering outdoor learning sessions and previously worked alongside Mrs Mitchell in Support for Learning has accepted a new post as Outdoor Learning Coordinator in East Lothian – she leaves with our thanks and very best wishes for her new job – she is a passionate supporter of outdoor learning and will be a real asset in her new role. Mr Jake Taylor will join us for 2 days per week to cover Mrs Gries classes until the October break. On return we welcome Ms Jenny Kinnear to St John's who will take over the outdoor learning remit alongside teaching at her other school, Craiglockhart Primary for part of the week. We are glad to be able to continue to offer these sessions outdoors.

Meet the Teacher

Thanks for feedback received from Meet the Teacher presentations, we know it doesn't match the experience of coming into school and viewing the classroom and resources, meeting other families and being able to have meaningful discussions but I'm glad to receive feedback and to know that it was helpful.

Diary Dates

Week beginning 28th September

We are supporting Sustrans Bike to School Week – info for families can be found by accessing this link: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/sign-up-to-receive-your-free-family-guide/>

Thurs 8th October: Parent Council AGM – joining instructions will be emailed ahead of the meeting.

Please join the Parent Council and school for the annual general meeting. This is a valuable opportunity to hear about the great ways the PC support the school and ways you can become involved too. We have a creative, active and supportive parent council who always welcome new members.

Hallowe'en – some of the children asked me in the playground if Hallowe'en would be cancelled? I explained that while I was unsure about Scottish Government rules re: 'guising' – we would not be able to host one of the most fun events of the year – the PC Hallowe'en disco – you can imagine the disappointment. I did concede to fancy dress so am providing advance notice of the date **Friday, 30th October** – with more info to follow.

!!Parental Consultations Update!!

We hope to be able to offer meetings as scheduled, week beginning 5th October, however, these won't now be on MS Teams. The council have purchased a secure add-on to Group Call, our messaging service, which will book the appointments and host the meetings. As soon as we go 'live' we will send you a secure link to book your appointments.

In advance – **if you require an interpreter** please can you let the school office know by calling 0131 669 1363 or emailing admin@st-johns.edin.sch.uk

Parking

I take no pleasure in reporting ongoing concerns with parking in and around the school. Most recently a neighbour on Duddingston Road's driveway was blocked by an adult at drop off and she reported being verbally abused when she requested the car be moved; another adult removed the cones blocking entry to the staff car

park so that a child could be dropped off. This is unacceptable. You will see from the end of the newsletter – we are asking pupils to be encouragers – please can I encourage you to consider others – we are a school family, a community and as such we have a collective responsibility to ensuring the safety of our children. Please do contact me directly if you are unable to park away from the school and walk – we will work with you to find a solution.

Communications from the School

In the last bulletin I shared ways in which parents and carers can get in touch with the school and teachers.

Communications *from* school was an item discussed at the recent parent council meeting. Clarification below of the main ways we aim to communicate with the school community, each with a different purpose:

Group Call Messenger – this is the main tool the school uses to provide updates and information, usually by email. This is also used to communicate daily absence checks. Letters, newsletters, school/class outings and important updates are all issued by the school via Group Call. Teachers may also ask the office to communicate class information to parents via this medium.

School Website – The school Wordpress site has had close to 120,000 views since 2015 and offers an insight into the life of the school for anyone with internet access. It is used by classes to share blogs about pupil learning; share key annual information such as staff lists, term dates and contact information; store documents including newsletters and improvement plans; highlight extra-curricular activities in the school; promote pupil achievements and share information from the wider community including our own St John's Parish church.

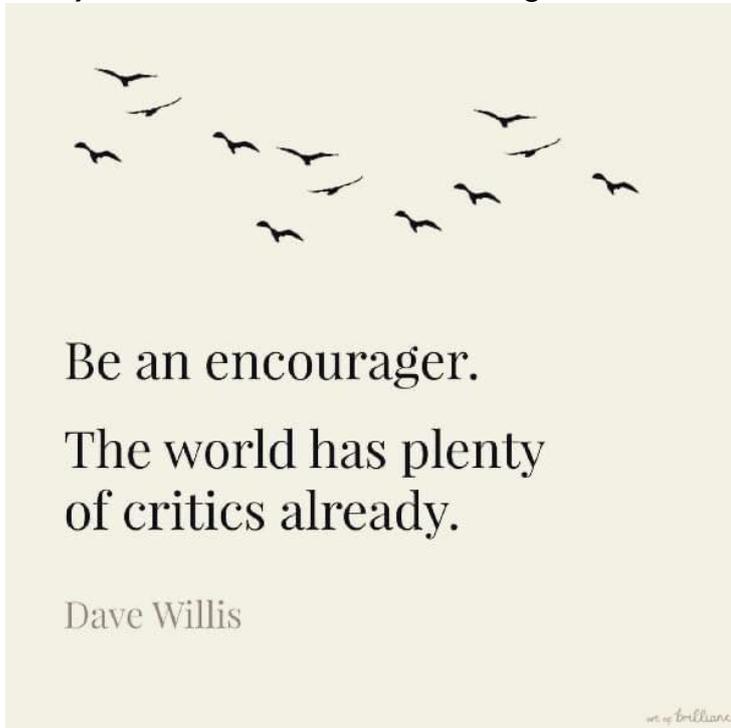
Twitter – small snapshots of school life are added to Twitter – we have a strong following on twitter – 844 followers and it is a good platform to share achievements. Critical information may be added to Twitter as an addition to Group Call but it would not be used to disseminate urgent school information as it is not a platform all families use.

Learning Journals – we purchased a subscription to Learning Journals during lockdown – although nursery families will be more than familiar with this app, it has been long established across nursery settings. We renewed the subscription as it was well received and utilised as an easy way to aid communications between teacher and parents/carers. We would only use it to communicate key whole school info to supplement messages on Group Call. Class teachers may also communicate directly with you by telephone or email if the matter is urgent or confidential.

School Newsletter – this is produced at least once per month and details what has been happening in school, procedures, updates from parent council meetings, assembly and date info. It is shared via Group Call and the school website.

In the case of an emergency – such as immediate school closure – we would use all communication methods to ensure families had as many opportunities as possible to access key emergency information.

And Finally...we continue to share messages of kindness, hope, resilience and affirmation with our pupils through our Building Resilience work. This is a message we want to share with all as it encompasses our values of Nurture – Inspire – Flourish and Pray.



Phone: 0131 669 1363

Email: admin@st-johns.edin.sch.uk