

Newtonhill Newsletter April 2023



Dear Parents and Carers

I hope everyone had a lovely holiday. We have a busy term ahead and we would like to share a few updates, requests and general information.

Pupil Concerns

As you already know we have had a situation with a vape being found and pupils trying this in the playground. We will highlight again the dangers of vaping to all pupils at assembly and emphasise the importance of not picking up discarded items such as vapes in playgrounds and parks. We have seen an increase in inappropriate behaviour and language, and this too will be addressed at assembly. Swearing and sexual language is not acceptable in school, and I hope parents and carers will support us with this message. We have also had an increase in the reports of inappropriate use of social media where pupils have sent messages that are threatening, using bad language and generally unkind. We have also had reports of pupils filming inappropriate behaviour in the parks after school and being rude to other parents. We will be addressing this in classes and assemblies. Most of the apps being used have a recommended age of 13 years old. When these messages and behaviours occur outwith school, we are unable to address the incident but there are often repercussions which do impact on behaviours and friendships in school. Your support to address these issues is always greatly appreciated.

Classes - Session 2023/2024

I have now been provisionally allocated our staffing entitlement for next session and for 2023/2024 we will hopefully have 12 classes. Not all classes can move on as they are, and in fact this rarely happens due to the number of classes and staff we are allocated by the local authority. I trust the following information will support you in having a greater understanding of factors affecting the configuration of classes in schools:

- **Primary 1 - 25 pupils**
- **Primary 2 & Primary 3 - 30 pupils**
- **Primary 4 to Primary 7 - 33 pupils**
- **Any composite class at any stage e.g. Primary 3/4, Primary 6/7 – 25 pupils**

Teachers, Nursery staff and the leadership team always give careful consideration to the placing of pupils in classes, with learning and teaching being the main focus. All the teachers currently teaching our classes, and nursery staff, will be involved in this decision-making process and will spend time in discussion to reach the best possible decision within the constraints of class sizes.

We make well-considered, informed decisions regarding classes and we need parents and carers to support us with this by reassuring your child that we have made the best decision we can and that they will have a good year with their new class and teacher. We appreciate that parents and pupils may be anxious about change and possibly have their own opinion on what they think will be the best class for their child. Ultimately, we have to make the decisions that will give us the most positive solution for learning and teaching and that fit into the constraints of the class sizes.

With all this in mind, we cannot accept any individual requests for pupil/class placements and changes cannot be made at parental request. We really do appreciate your support and understanding with this.

Composite Classes

Our school roll and the class size policy means that we will always have some composite classes. Some years we may need to create additional composite classes to ensure that there are reasonable groupings within the class.

There is no set policy on the split that a composite class can have. As a school, and where possible, we do not like to have a very small grouping from one year group. For example, in a composite class with the maximum 25 pupils, we would try to avoid a split of where there might be 3 pupils from one year group and 22 pupils from the other.

Every year we are asked if composites are decided on age or ability. Pupils are not allocated to composite classes by age, nor do we choose the least able or most able etc. Being in a composite does not mean that your child is repeating a year, nor does it mean they are being put up a year. As in every class the children are taught at the level that meets their need. We may, however, look at the number of groups of similar stage readers, or similar ability in maths, spelling etc. An example of this would be if we had a composite class with a split of 8 and 17 where teachers would then look at curricular groups that might fit this configuration.

We will have several composite classes next year and I hope this explanation helps to alleviate any misconceptions or concerns parents have about these classes.

Unveiling and Raising of the Aberdeenshire County Flag

This weekend four of our Primary 7 girls along with their families have been invited to the 'Unveiling and Raising of the Aberdeenshire County Flag' at Castle Fraser. They were finalists in the competition to design the flag for Aberdeenshire. The winner will not be known until the unveiling, so keep your fingers crossed for our girls, but even to get to this stage is cause for celebration!

Running Club – Balmoral Event

Ms Hinds and several members of her running club will be attending the Run Balmoral event this weekend. Good luck to them all and we hope they have a fabulous day.

Coronation Coin Trail

In the past we have had two very successful coin trail fundraising events. We would like to ask families to donate small coins on the 5th of May as we create a coin trail to celebrate the coronation of King Charles. We would appreciate if all families could send in loose change - bags of 1p, 2p and 5p are all welcome. Our aim is to have all the children participate in creating a massive coin trail around the playground and create a piece of coin art to celebrate our new King. Funds raised will be used by our Eco and Playground groups as we know that King Charles is passionate about all things 'eco' and the environment.

Transitions

Transition events for Primary 7 pupils are underway and the pupils are excited about their visits.

There is a meeting for the parents of the new P1 pupils (starting in August) on Thursday 18th May in the school hall at 7pm.

Car Park

All of our pupil support assistants start work at 9am. There have been several occasions recently that they have been unable to use the **staff car park** as parents have parked in the space to drop off pupils. At lunchtime we have a similar problem with visiting staff that cannot park for the afternoon session due to nursery parents dropping off or collecting children at nursery. Please do **not** park in the staff car park. We need all spaces for those who work in the school. We would also remind you not to ask your child to cross the car park to meet you. All children should use the paths at either side of the car park. Thank you.

Dogs

Please remember there should be **no** dogs in the school grounds at any time, whether this is at drop off, pick up or during the school day.

Weather/Clothing

As the weather has been a little better recently several pupils are coming to school without coats. Can you please ensure they still have some sort of waterproof jacket packed in their bag as all classes participate in outdoor learning and the weather can be very unpredictable. Please also make sure all clothing has the pupil name clearly marked on it.

Sports Day and Family Picnic

This year, weather permitting, we plan to have Sports Day on the morning of 9th of June. We will have P1-3 seated at one side and P4-7 at the other. We have asked for two running tracks to be marked out. Parents will be invited to watch, and we request that you are seated in the middle between the two tracks. This allows parents with pupils in different years groups to watch both tracks.

More information will be issued nearer the time. After the event we would like to invite all parents back to the school playground to have a family picnic with their child, family and friends. Lunch will last about an hour.

Friends of Newtonhill

F.O.N have sent information this week about the family picnic and sponsored walk on May 13th. We hope the sun shines and that all families are able to participate.

Dates and Events

- April 28th – Primary 1(Mrs McKenna) and Primary 2/3 (Mrs Shiach) assembly
- May 1st – May Day Holiday
- May 5th – Coin Trail
- May 8th – Coronation Holiday
- May 12th – Primary 1/2B (Mrs Burr) assembly
- May 13th – F.O.N. Family Picnic and Sponsored Walk
- May 18th – New Primary 1 (August 23 intake) meeting 7pm
- May 19th – Primary 5 (Mrs Braidwood) assembly
- May 25th – Open Evening
- June 2nd – Primary 3 (Miss Clark) assembly
- June 2nd – Pupil Progress Reports issued
- June 8th – School Disco (F.O.N.)
- June 9th – Sports Day and Family Picnic (weather permitting)
- June 13th – Playground Day (information and details to follow)
- June 14th – 16th P7 transition days to Portlethen Academy
- June 16th – Primary 1/2M (Miss Meehan) assembly
- June 20th and 21st – P7 Show
- June 26th - 30th – P7 at Lagganlia
- July 7th – Last Day of Term, leavers assembly

Kind Regards



Head Teacher

- [Article 3 - All adults should do what is best for you.](#)
- [Article 16 - You have the right to privacy.](#)
- [Article 31- You have the right to play and rest.](#)
- [Article 33 - You have the right to protection from harmful drugs and from the drug trade.](#)