

PORTMOAK PRIMARY NEWS

AUGUST 2015



Welcome Back

A warm welcome to our new P1 pupils and their families and welcome back to our pupils and families from P2-7. Feedback from teachers so far has been very positive about their new classes – long may this continue into the new session!

Staffing Update



Miss Seaton left Portmoak at the summer at the end of her probation year and I am sure you will join the staff and pupils in wishing her well as she leaves us to take up a permanent teaching post in Kirkcaldy. We are delighted to welcome Miss Lesley Rennie as our new probationer teacher at Portmoak Primary School. Miss Rennie is teaching P5/6 this year.

Mrs Fraser will be continuing to deliver the Friday in Miss Rennie's class and also teaching Religious and Moral Education once a week to each class. Mrs Clemie has had her contract extended to provide Mrs Kellie's management day out of class, so will teach P4/5 on a Wednesday.

Mr Young has agreed to stay on for another year and will be teaching music every Tuesday. Mr Ainsworth will still be teaching PE to all pupils every Friday. All of our musical instructors are staying on for the new session, but not all have space for new pupils. Classes being offered a chance to be tested for learning a new instrument will be contacted directly. Pupils entitled to free school meals (P4-7) can also apply to be exempt from musical charges.

Mrs Davies has returned to her classroom assistant post for a reduced three days this year and we are pleased that Mrs Welsh has agreed to cover the other two days for us during this time. Our other classroom support staff, Mrs Williams and Ms Gibbon, will both be covering the same hours as last year.

Our further staffing news is that Mrs Robertson's secondment at All Stars has been extended for a year and we are delighted that Mrs Dunnett has agreed to stay on next year for one day a week as our pupil support teacher.



I would also like to share some personal news with those of you who weren't there to hear in person at the end of term assembly, in that I am expecting my second child and am due to be going off on maternity leave shortly before the Christmas break. Arrangements for the post of Acting Headteacher will be made by the Council and it is my intention to be off for two terms again and to be back for August 2016.

Coffee and a Catch Up

At the events and fundraising meeting last week, we discussed trialling a 'Coffee and a Catch Up' session for parents to come and meet each other and myself in an informal way. The first session is **Thursday 10th September – just after 9am drop off** in the school library. Hope to see you there!

Summary of Improvement Priorities 2015-16

- To further develop consistent approaches in **learning and teaching**, including in the use of **digital technologies**.
- To work with cluster colleagues to moderate expectations and achieve **consistent assessment** approaches.
- To develop more **progressive planning pathways** including planning for **French** from the early years.

We have three main priorities this year again. You will notice that we will be introducing an additional language, French, over the course of the session. This is in line with the Governments 1+2 Languages initiative. In Perth and Kinross, where we consider language 1 is English, all schools have been asked to make French the second language. A decision will be made at cluster level as to whether we stick with German in P5-7 as language 3, or whether a consistent alternative will be offered.

Parking

A reminder at this time about safety for our pupils and consideration for our neighbours: I appreciate our car park can be a busy place at pick up and drop off times but please make sure you park thoughtfully around the school and do not use the disabled bays or bus stops. Parents should never park on the pavement. Remember too that our buses need enough room to get around the corner, so parking right at corners can make this difficult for the bus drivers and makes the walk to school less safe for our children. Please be aware that the red painted lines represent walk ways that must be left clear.



George Thompson



I have already spoken to the children at assembly about this, but I thought that I would share with you the details of a lovely letter I received in the summer holidays. It was from a Mr Taylor of Dundee, an old school friend of George Thompson's, who had read about our new library and dedication to our former pupil and VC awardee. He sent us an original Courier article from 1945 detailing George's heroics and it has some insights into his daily life before he joined the RAF working at Sand's in Kinross. Next time you are in the library, take a moment to have a read of the article on the wall. Get in touch with us if you would like a copy sent home.

Macmillan Coffee

This will be held in the school hall on the afternoon of Thursday 24th September. You are invited to come along to the school for 1.30pm, visit your child in class and see their work / wall displays, then come along for coffee and cake in the hall. Donations of cakes by the morning of the 24th would be very welcome. All proceeds from this event will go to Macmillan Cancer Support.

Uniform Sale

We will be having a sale of second hand uniform items again at the Macmillan coffee afternoon. If you have any uniform items that are good quality, please consider donating them for this sale.

PE Kit

Our uniform policy states that our preferred items (to be available daily) in gym bags are:

- Black shorts
- White T-shirt
- Black "light" gym shoes with non-marking soles– not heavy "trainer" type
- Optional - trainers and tracksuits may be worn for outside gym if desired
- For Health and Safety, no jewellery is allowed to be worn during P.E. sessions. Pupils who wear earrings will need to remove them or tape them up before taking part.
- Spare socks and a hair bobble for those with long hair should also be included.

Due to the need for clean shoes for indoors gym (when rolling on gym mats etc. it is not suitable to be dropping mud and grass onto the equipment that others are then using) and the frequency that the children are going outdoors for gym, we would ask that all children do now bring old trainers to change into for outside gym please. Our preference for indoor gym is gym shoes, but we do understand that children's feet can sometimes outgrow the sizes available and clean trainers are also perfectly acceptable.

As it gets colder, some children may prefer to wear a tracksuit rather than just their shorts and t-shirt to go outside for gym. Tracksuits for outside gym do not have to follow the black and white colour code for indoor gym uniform. We would still ask, however, that children attending sporting events (orienteeing, cross country etc.) all wear a Portmoak sweatshirt and appropriate bottoms.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent from school you must call and let us know. We operate an absentee line on 01577 867196. Unless you need to speak to someone about your child, this is our preferred method for contacting the school about absence. This is a voicemail only line, so is available 24 hours a day, with parents being asked to leave a message for their child's name, class and reason for absence. If you do not advise us of why your child is absent we will contact you as it is important we know where everyone is at all times.

Sickness bug – 48 hours

The medical advice is that children who have a sickness or sickness and diarrhoea bug should be kept off school for 48 hours after the last episode. Please help us to limit the spread of winter bugs by following this rule.



Ladies Shopping and Pamper Night

Please "save the date" for this year's Shopping and Pamper night which will be held in Portmoak Hall on Friday the 6th November. This is a really super evening which raises a substantial amount of money for the benefit of our school. The race night being planned for September has been postponed.

Harvest Time at Portmoak

The school grounds committee have been reaping the rewards of all of their planting and growing over last session, with a medley of vegetables having been ready for harvesting after the summer break. The school would like to thank Kinnesswood in Bloom for their tireless work with this committee, but also for the efforts that have gone into the school grounds both before and during the summer. What a lovely welcome back to our staff and our pupils to see the pots and wellies all in full bloom and the school looking fabulous for the new term – thanks to all involved!



Office Procedures

Please note that the office operates a 'no answer' policy between 11-12 to allow for some of the more time consuming tasks to be completed without interruption. It would be appreciated if, wherever possible, you could avoid popping in during those times.

All visitors should report to the office on arrival. Parents are not expected to take children up to class, this will be done by staff members. If you would like to speak to your child's teacher, please contact the school office to make an appointment. I am happy to see parents at or before 9am, so feel free to catch me at the morning lines, but teachers are not free at this time as they are busy preparing for the day's learning.

School Dinners

School dinners for P1-3 are still free of charge. P4-7 pupils are £2 per day. It would be helpful if parents would arrange to pay this in advance on a Monday for the following week where possible. You can also pay for longer periods of time in advance and ask to be notified when a cash top up is required.

We have had to change our bank account in line with Council policy changes, so our banking will also be changing. Parents should be aware that we will only be cashing cheques fortnightly, so you may notice dinner cheques taking longer to clear this year.

Parents can see menu choices online here:

<http://www.pkc.gov.uk/schoolmeals>

The daily sandwich option is also available to download from this site. Please note that the sandwich option also includes pudding, salad and a drink.



Dates for Your Diary:

- Monday 31st August – Primary 1 first full day at school
- Tuesday 1st September – P4/5 Author talk at LLCC
- Tuesday 1st September – P5-7 After School Football restarts
- Wednesday 2nd September – P1 Photos for Perthshire Advertiser
- Thursday 3rd September – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Wednesday 9th September – P6-P7 Cluster Football trial at LLCC 4-6pm Thursday
- Thursday 10th September – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Thursday 10th September – Parents Coffee and Catch up - in library 9am
- Thursday 17th September - P6 Curling's Cool – Kinross Curling Rink
- Thursday 17th September – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Thursday 24th September – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Thursday 24th September – McMillan Coffee Afternoon 1.30 – 3.00pm
- Tuesday 29th September – Tempest Photographer in school
- Thursday 1st October – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Thursday 8th October - P6 Curling's Cool – Kinross Curling Rink
- Thursday 8th October – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Friday 9th October – Last day of Term 1 (3pm finish time)
- Monday 26th October – First day of Term 2
- Tuesday 27th October - Flu Vaccines P1-7
- Thursday 29th October – Halloween Discos
- Thursday 29th October – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Friday 30th October – Bags to school before 9am.
- Tuesday 3rd November – M & M Panto – Peter Pan - afternoon
- Thursday 5th November – Primary 4/5 swimming
- Friday 6th November – Christmas Shopping Night
- Thursday 12th November – Primary 4/5 swimming last day
- Thursday 19th November – In-service Day
- Friday 20th November – In-service Day
- Tuesday 15th December – Nativity am & pm
- Friday 18th December – End of term 2 (12 noon finish time)
- Tuesday 5th January 2016 – First day of Term 3

Don't forget to save both school numbers
01577 867290 (school office)
and the absentee line on
01577 867196



School Terms and Holidays 2015-2016				No of School Days - Pupils	No of School Days - Staff
Autumn Term	Start - Staff	Monday 17 August 2015	<i>In-Service Day (1)</i>	39	40
	Start - Pupils	Tuesday 18 August 2015			
	End	Friday 9 October 2015			
Autumn Holiday	Start	Monday 12 October 2015		10	10
	End	Friday 23 October 2015			
Winter Term	Start	Monday 26 October 2015		38	40
		Thursday 19 November 2015	<i>In-Service Day (2)</i>		
		Friday 20 November 2015	<i>In-Service Day (3)</i>		
	End	Friday 18 December 2015			
Christmas Holiday	Start	Monday 21 December 2015		11	11
	End	Monday 4 January 2016			
Spring Term	Start	Tuesday 5 January 2016		59	60
		Wednesday 17 February 2016	<i>In-Service Day (4)</i>		
		Thursday 18 February 2016	<i>Occasional Holiday (1)</i>		
		Friday 19 February 2016	<i>Occasional Holiday (2)</i>		
		Friday 25 March 2016	<i>Good Friday</i>		
		Monday 28 March 2016	<i>Easter Monday</i>		
	End	Friday 1 April 2016			
Spring Holiday	Start	Monday 4 April 2016		10	10
	End	Friday 15 April 2016			
Summer Term	Start - Staff	Monday 18 April 2016	<i>In-Service Day (5)</i>	54	55
	Start - Pupils	Tuesday 19 April 2016			
	End	Friday 1 July 2016			
				190	195

Notes:

Easter Sunday - 27 March 2016

School session 2016/17 will commence on Monday 15 August 2016 for Staff and Tuesday 16 August 2016 for Pupils.

