

PORTMOAK PRIMARY NEWS

NOVEMBER 2016



Staffing Update

Mrs Kellie has been successful at interview for the Invergowrie Depute Head post and will be resigning her post at Portmoak Primary School as of the Christmas holidays. The post of Principal Teacher will be advertised on a permanent basis after this date. I am grateful to Mrs Woods for agreeing to stay on as Acting Principal Teacher and teacher of the P6/7 class until such time as the post has been filled on a permanent basis. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Mrs Kellie for the years of dedicated service she has given to Portmoak and to wish her very well in her future career. Mrs Kellie will be coming to the pantomime, so looks forward to seeing some of you then.

Helpers in School

Your child may have come home speaking about new faces in class of late. We have several parents volunteering on a weekly basis: Mrs Jeffrey and Mrs Smith and shortly also Mrs Gray. We also have members of the community helping in class: Mrs Lawson and Mr Fraser and shortly also Ms Robertson. All helpers who wish to support the school on a regular basis have had a meeting with me and a formal PVG (disclosure) check prior to starting. If anyone else would like to offer their time on a regular basis, please do get in touch.



Coffee and a Catch Up

Thanks to those who came along for our termly coffee and catch up at the start of this term. It was lovely to see so many people making the time to come. The next session will be on Wednesday 18th January and I have asked the support staff to join us in the library from 9am, so that you can put faces to the names of the staff who help support our children in classes and in the playground.

Primary One Enrolment

Can all parents let friends know of the date for our P1 enrolment week? The new P1 pupils for 2017 are invited to register for the next session week beginning Monday 16th January 2017. Prospective parents should call the school office to make an appointment during enrolment week.

Christmas Lunch

The school Christmas lunch will be on Tuesday 20th December this year. A sheet with menu choices will be sent out to you shortly, please do get back to us as this is a very busy dinner day and the ladies like to be as organised as possible.



School Times and Routines

Our school day is 9am to 3pm for children, unless they are attending one of our after-school clubs. Thank you to the majority of our parents who help us by sticking to these times.

Children arriving late to school has an impact on the morning routine, much of which is needed to be carried out within a time scale to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children. The priority of office

staff in the morning is to check those children who are absent and alert parents in cases where no reason for absence has been given. Delays to the morning register being completed impacts on this. Arriving late also makes some children feel anxious and unsettled and does not give them the best start to the day.

Please ensure that you leave enough time in the morning so that all children arrive at school in time to be in their class line for the 9am bell. I would also ask that parents call the **absentee line on 01577 867196** rather than the school office number to report your child's absence each day your child is off, unless you have a need to speak to a member of staff. This service is available 24/7 for parents to access. It is important for the office staff to have information about a child's absence as early as possible to ensure they can follow up unexplained absences quickly.

Please note that we need to know where to expect your child to be every day, so if you have phoned up on day one of their illness, unless you advised in this message that your child would be off for two days, we would still expect to hear from you on day two. You can also email this information if this is easier.

If you are not going to be in time for collecting your child at 3pm, please let us know. There are quite a few children being collected late on a regular basis. This takes time away from teachers' planning and preparation time. We also often have meetings at the end of the day which are then delayed starting as teachers are waiting with children. 20 minutes extra per day is over an hour and a half per week out of preparation time, so please do ensure you are here for 3pm.

Christmas Parties

The school has been divided into three for the parties again this year. The dates (all afternoons) are:



- * Monday 19th December – Christmas Party for P1/2 and P2/3
- * Wednesday 21st December - Christmas Party for all of P4/5 and P5's from Miss Kettles class
- * Thursday 22nd December - Christmas Party for P6 from Miss Kettles' class and all of P6/7

Children will be given time to change at the end of the lunch break. They should not come to school for the day wearing party clothes unless they are returning for the afternoon after a home lunch.

Nativity Invitation – 20th/21st December

As you will be aware, we are having two performances of our Nativity, titled *Counting on Christmas*, one on the evening of Tuesday 20th December starting at 5.30pm and one on the morning of Wednesday 21st December starting at 9.45am. This year, in response to parents' comments, we are trialing having an after school performance for the first time and I would be happy to receive your feedback on whether this is something you would like to see again going forwards. As usual, I would like to invite you to attend one of the shows rather than both. All classes have learned songs for this performance, which is narrated and acted by P1-3.



Ladies' Night at Portmoak Hall

We made over £1100 at ladies' night and there are still a few things coming in. I would like to thank all those who gave up their time organising and helping at this very successful event.

Committees

This year, as part of our continual drive to improve we have decided to refresh what we are doing for committees. Previously P1-7 have been represented on all of the committees. We are still committed to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to contribute to making our school a better place, but have adapted the offering somewhat. We are now going to run a 4 weekly cycle:

- Week 1 – P4-7 committees
- Week 2 – P1-3 committee
- Week 3 – P4-7 committees
- Week 4 – Pupil Council



The P1-3 pupils are all going to be involved in school grounds committee with a view to developing the school grounds to make it a better place for younger people to learn and play.

The P4-7 committees are: Health and Sports, Rights Respecting, Eco, Digital, School Environment and Junior Road Safety officers.

We are working on developing our outdoor learning this year, so as part of this we are offering all pupils the chance to do work on the school grounds, not just those in the school grounds committee. On week 4 of the older classes will be taking part in this initiative on a rotation.

Free School Meals / Clothing Grants



Clothing Grants: One application per academic year will be considered for a grant towards essential school clothing for children up to the age of 16 if you are receiving:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income Based Job Seeker's Allowance (IBJSA)
- Any income related element of Employment Support Allowance



Free School Meals are offered to **ALL** pupils in P1-3 **without the need for parents/carers to submit an application form**. However, an application form must be completed if you also require assistance with school clothing/footwear for your child in P1-P3.

If your child is P4 or above, you can claim free school meals for your child(ren) if you are receiving:

- Income Support (IS)
- Income based Job Seeker's Allowance (IBJSA)
- Any income related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (CTC), but not Working Tax Credit, and your income is less than £16,105.
- Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Working Tax Credit (WTC) and your income is less than £6,420
- You may also be eligible if you are an asylum seeker receiving support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit

You can find out how to apply on the link below. We also have forms in school if anyone would like to be sent a paper one just let me know.

<http://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/1845/Schools---grants-and-benefits>



Christmas Post

Children who want to use the post box in school for their cards can do so from Monday 5th December.

End of Term Arrangements

As you will be aware, our school finishes at 12 noon on Friday 23rd December 2016

The Kingdom bus will depart just after 12 noon. The 201 Stagecoach Service bus will depart approximately 13.00 if there are pupils who have a bus pass and wish to travel on it. This is not open to paying passengers.

Stagecoach children's parents: Please therefore could you let me know if this affects your child what your plans for 23rd December will be? If you have already let me know by email thank you for this, no need to get in touch again.

P6-7 Bikability

Some of our oldest pupils had a fun but frosty trip around Loch Leven on Friday 25th November. Thanks to Mr Ainsworth, Mrs Woods and Ms Gibbons as well as the parents who volunteered their time to help for a very successful event. Thanks to the parent council too for organizing hot chocolate on their return, such a lovely idea to thaw them all out on their return!



P4-7 Ski Trip

Letters will be coming out soon about this year's ski trip. We have decided to make this P4-7 rather than P3-7 as this is a better spread of ages for such a trip, it will also be a more suitable size of group for the lunch hall provided.

Dates for Your Diary:

- Friday 2nd December – P4/5 Advent Assembly (P4/5 parents please join us)
- Monday 5th December – Panto box office and Christmas post
- Wednesday 14th & Thursday 15th December – Dick Whittington Pantomime - 6pm start
- Monday 19th December – P1, P2 & P3 Christmas Party
- Tuesday 20th December - School Christmas Lunch
- Tuesday 20th December – Nativity 5pm arrival for 5.30 start
- Wednesday 21st December – Nativity – 9.45am start
- Wednesday 21st December – P4 & P5 Christmas Party
- Thursday 22nd December – P6 & P7 Christmas Party
- Friday 23rd December – End of term 12pm
- Monday 9th January – Term starts 9am
- Monday 16th January – New Primary 1 enrolment week
- Wednesday 18th January – Parent Coffee & Catch Up 9am
- Wednesday 25th January – Burns Lunch Menu
- Friday 10th February P4-7 Ski trip to Glenshee
- Tuesday 14th February – Dental visit for P1 & P7
- Wednesday 15th February – In-Service Day
- Thursday 16th & Friday 17th February – Half Term Holiday
- Friday 24th February – P5/6 Sharing our Learning Assembly (P5/6 parents please join us)
- Tuesday 28th February – Pancake Day Menu
- Monday 13th & Wednesday 15th March – Parent contact sessions
- Friday 17th March – P2/3 Sharing our Learning Assembly (P2/3 parents please join us)
- Thursday 23rd March – Rotary Quiz 3.30pm for P7s on Rotary Quiz team
- Friday 31st April – Easter Service with P1/2 in Portmoak Church (all parents please join us)

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

