

Celebrating Success at St. David's Primary School

Welcome back to the excitement of a new year. Welcome to 2015 at St. David's Primary – I trust you all had a wonderful Christmas time with family and friends.



We welcome some new faces to the school – Mr Smith joins us to take Primary 2 – he is thoroughly enjoying his first few weeks and would like to thank all for the warm welcome he has received, especially the children of Primary 2 who have been working extremely hard!



This term always presents many challenges in terms of the Scottish weather and increased absence and late-coming. Please check the Midlothian Council Website for further information on preparing for inclement weather: http://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1608/severe_weather

Please also make every effort to ensure your child attends school on time, every day. Establishing routines of punctuality and daily attendance help instil positive attitudes and life skills in our children, helping develop responsible citizens and effective contributors to society. These skills are best learned at an early age and provide sound foundations for the future.

If your child is unwell it is your responsibility to contact the school office and inform. Also, if your child is attending a medical appointment, please inform the school office at your earliest convenience if you are unable to get an appointment out-with the school day. All children are expected to attend school from 8:50am to 3pm or 3:15pm in P3-7. Please do not request to take your child early unless in exceptional circumstances.



On occasion, school staff also may be absent from school – contrary to popular belief they too have an immune system – some even claim to have a personal life! Joking aside, the Council has clear procedures in place to deal with such circumstances. In the present climate it is, however, increasingly more challenging to secure cover for Council staff, i.e. support staff and teaching staff. In the event of support staff absence it is unlikely to obtain cover. In the event of teaching staff being absent another teacher, from the school or the supply teacher pool, or the Head Teacher may cover the class. Every effort is made to ensure continuity and progression in children's learning at these times. At this time, there is an unprecedented nationwide challenge in terms of supply teachers for all Local Authorities and Midlothian is no different. Midlothian has been extremely proactive in finding solutions to this challenge and everyone from the Chief Executive to school staff has been involved in this. We have not experienced the daily challenges some schools have faced and have worked hard behind the scenes to ensure stability for all our children. Hopefully this provides a bit of clarity on the process for your information. Thank you for your ongoing support of school staff.

Developing the Children as Leaders of Learning – Sharing our Learning

We plan many opportunities for the children to develop their confidence and self esteem as well as their knowledge and understanding. Children learn better when actively engaged in their learning therefore, presenting opportunities for them to share their learning in their own words and in a fun and interactive way helps the children learn from one another as well. It is also a great opportunity for the children to share their learning with their parents and the wider school community.

Please refer to the diary dates for information on class-led assemblies. Please note there are one or two amendments to these dates from the dates issued earlier this school session. Please update your diary accordingly.

Celebrating the Scots Language – Burns’ Day always helps to provide an exciting opportunity for Primary 1 – Primary 7 to engage further in their learning and celebrate our ‘mither tongue’, Scots, through music, poetry, culture, food, song and dance . With the recent debate on the National Anthem, there may be further requests again this year for ‘show us yer haggis’ to become the new National Anthem of Scotland! Guid luck to all children as they embark on this journey and celebration of Robert Burns’ and of Scottish song and literature. The Catering team have also put together a Scottish themed lunch which takes place on 27th January (please note, Haggis, Neeps and Tatties will be on the menu in place of Spaghetti Bolognese on this day –Week1, Tuesday on the Primary School Menu)

Leaders of Learning through Additional Pupil Responsibilities

Fairtrade Steering Group

P4 and Mrs Hadden have been continuing to promote the Fairtrade message this session. Thank you for all your support of their efforts in promoting the Fairtrade message. The two week’s commencing 23rd February 2015 marks the annual ‘Fairtrade Fortnight’. Look out for further information from the P4 Fairtrade Steering Group. Thank you to Mrs Hadden for her support of the children and their additional responsibilities – leadership at every level of the school!!!



Pupil Council – Improving our school through developing our ‘pupil voice’

Representatives from P1-P7 meet regularly with Mr Currie following discussions within their class on a range of school issues. Our action plan for this year is to:

- improve learning at St. David’s
- continue fundraising for charity
- improve our school playground
- make school even more fun!

Their efforts will be made visible through improvements to the playground, through our Lenten charity fundraise campaign (normally for SCIAF but may change) and helping to develop everyone’s understanding of themselves as a learner. [For more information on the Pupil Council please click here.](#)

Extra-Curricular Activities at St. David’s

A huge thank you to all school staff and partners who give of their own time to offer the extra-curricular opportunities throughout the school – without their enthusiasm and commitment these additional opportunities would not be possible and they are such a great means of improving the ethos, life and work of our school as a community [follow us on Twitter to keep up to date with our extra-curricular activities!](#)

Some examples of the experiences offered this term include:

Tuesday – Gardening Club – Mrs Jones and Mrs Canavan are looking forward to spring time and softer ground so they can continue to upkeep our lovely school grounds. They are extensive and require regular maintenance, more than the children can achieve themselves so if you see yourself as a Beechgrove gardener or Mr Bloom from Cbeebies or if you just want to lend a hand please let the school office know.

Wednesday – Chess Club – back by popular demand! Mr Ross, Miss Dunnigan and Mr Currie will lead a chess club at lunchtime. Mr Currie is undefeated in 2015 (the children tell me that is because the club hasn’t started back yet!)

Thursday – School Library – please remember to return your child’s library book on a Thursday once they have finished with it. Thanks to the sterling efforts of Mrs Kettle in continuing to run a very slick operation – an extremely worthwhile opportunity for all our children to explore and enjoy reading.

Friday – Street and Hip-Hop Dance continues to go from strength to strength! The children are so talented and love the opportunity to express themselves and to perform. Thanks to for her energy and enthusiasm!

Basketball club will resume shortly with a new coach in place for a 6week period following Mrs Mason and Mrs Waddle's retirement after outstanding service and support of the school over many years!

I would encourage anyone who is interested in leading or supporting the basketball club to get in touch with Mr Currie to discuss further – there is an opportunity to work alongside a coach this term also over the 6week period – it would be great to have sustainability for the basketball club. The next Festival takes place in March at Danderhall Leisure Centre – always a highlight for the children.

Other activities making their debut this term include Board Games, Teddy Bear Hospital, as well as old favourites such as Netball, Maths club, French Club and Cross Country. See additional letter for more information and booking details – places are limited.

Celebrating Catholic Education – Catholic Education Week is due to be celebrated between **Sunday 8th and Saturday 14th February 2015**. This year's theme - **“Proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel”** - is inspired by 'Evangeli Gaudium', the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis. The theme provides a good opportunity for parents, schools and parishes to consider how we are all “Proclaiming the Joy of the Gospel” in word and action in our daily lives. This year there will be a particular appeal to all parish communities to encourage young people to consider aspiring towards Teaching as a profession which is so important to the formation of young people. All classes will be engaged in activities throughout and following this week to make visible the many different ways we can proclaim the joy of the Gospel.



Sacramental Preparation We have pencilled in the following dates for our children to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist. Please speak with Monsignor Allan should you require any further information:

P3 Sacrament of Reconciliation – 2pm on Tuesday 10th March 2015 in the school hall

P4 Sacrament of Confirmation – 7pm Wednesday 22nd April 2015 St. David's Church

P4 Sacrament of Holy Eucharist – 11am Sunday 14th June 2015, St. David's Church

Please remember the children of Primary 3 and 4 in your prayers as they continue to prepare for the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.



Parent Council The first meeting of 2015 took place on Monday 19th January with some good discussion and some possible solutions for improving the experience of dropping and collecting our children from school and ensuring the road safety message is even more clear within our school and local community. We celebrated the many successes of the children last term and look forward to the outstanding experiences planned this forthcoming term. Plans are to continue to raise funds for the playground improvements and we're hopeful of the monies being made available to the school and the children in time to purchase equipment and materials for spring. Exciting times at the Parent Council!

Next Parent Council Meeting will be held in the school on Monday 2nd March 2015 at 7pm.

Minutes of previous meetings available via the school website.

School Website

Please note that the school website is currently under reconstruction and will be moving to a new platform hence little updates before Christmas. We will let you know of the relaunch once the facility is open to us again – thank you for your patience in the meantime continue to follow us on Twitter.



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