



Dirleton Primary School

*Dream it, Live it, Achieve it*



# School Newsletter

January 2020

## School Priorities for 2019/20

- Review the implementation of activities to support the development of pupil Health & wellbeing
- Develop a consistent whole school approach to learning, teaching and assessment of learning
  - Develop approaches to engage parents/carers with family learning and partnerships
  - Develop approaches to support high quality play

Dear Parents

**I hope your year has started well,  
Lang may yer lum reek!**

### Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

I would like to make one last appeal to all parents to CHECK the lost property box – **it is overflowing!** If the clothes, coats and tupperware from this box are not claimed before the end of February they will be recycled thereafter.

### A Gentle Reminder

#### **Change of footwear for indoor PE**

We would like to remind all children & families to support us in keeping our gym hall clean, tidy and fit for purpose. We learn outdoors much more than in the past and it is more noticeable that our children’s footwear can be much dirtier. As a result of this we asked that you provide your children with a pair of indoor gym shoes for Mondays and Tuesdays. This is a gentle reminder to you as we are now in the midst of winter and the dirt being brought in to school on footwear is increasing noticeable. **It is very important that children bring a change of footwear on Mondays and Tuesdays.** We thank you in advance of your support of this.

### **Scots**

As part of the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, we study Scottish heritage, culture and language. We focus our learning on Scots themes at the beginning of each year. The Scots themes for learning through January and February this year are;

P1	–	Maisie Goes to Morningside
P3/4	-	Tales of East Lothian
P5/6	-	The Jacobites/The Battle of Prestonpans
P6/7	-	Scottish Farming

### **Scot’s Assembly**

To celebrate our Scots learning we invite you to come along on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February to our Scot’s Assembly when classes will share some of their learning through poetry, song and music.

### School Meals

***Is your child eligible for free school meals, and if so, have you registered?***

Schools receive additional funding of £1,200 from the Scottish Government for every pupil in P1 to S3 who is registered for free school meals. This is called Pupil Equity Funding, and schools use this additional money to help fund a wide range of initiatives to support achievement and provide the best possible opportunities for children’s learning.

How do I know if my child is eligible for free school meals? Please visit our website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) to check your eligibility and download an application form.

Even if your child does not wish to take up the option of having a free school meal every day, we would encourage you to register so that we will receive the Pupil Equity Funding allowance to support their learning. All children who are eligible for free meals, including those in P1- P3, need to be registered.

### **Staffing**

As you will be aware, we are currently recruiting for a P6/7 class teacher. Until we nominate a preferred candidate, it may be necessary that different teachers cover learning across different classes over the course of a school week. We thank Miss Maher for working with P6/7 on a Mon, Tues & Wed during January and we thank Mrs Corr who will continue to teach P6/7 on a Thurs & Fri. We continue to seek a music specialist to replace Mrs Peebles but until now we have been unsuccessful. We will keep you informed of progress in both these areas.

## Playground Play

One of our school priorities this academic session is to

- **Develop approaches to support high quality play**

We have invested a lot of time, effort and money to develop our playground over the last few years. Our staff have also invested much time to upskill themselves in how we can best support play and enhance learning. We have worked with our children to develop an awareness of play and how they can best manage themselves to responsibly engage with various types of play. We have also dedicated time to support our children in developing personal life skills to enhance their enjoyment of free playtime for themselves and others. However, we have noticed recently that some of our children continue to find it difficult to play in a manner that is inclusive and kind. Our school rules are **Ready, Respectful and safe**, these rules apply to all children at all times in school and are especially important when children have a responsibility for their own behaviour during free playtime. We repeatedly encourage our learners to live our school values of being **Kind & friendly, responsible, respectful and honest** when engaging with play and most of our children do this really well but some continue to need reinforcement and encouragement to do this better. I would ask all parents to talk with their children about the importance of play and how it is a personal responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that echoes the ethos of our school. I would ask that **ALL** parents stress the importance of children's personal space and that no child should be putting their hands on another at any time. I make this request at this time as **developing high quality play** is one of our priorities and we need all children and families to be supportive of our approach. When we return from the February break we will once again revisit our play guidelines and will be emphasising a zero tolerance approach when it comes to children engaging in play that is overly physical to each other. We have wonderful staff who support playtimes but we are finding that too much time is being taken up with supporting and managing behaviours from free playtime which is impacting upon learning in the classroom. Thank you in advance of your support with this.

## Homework

At the recent DSP meeting I informed parents that our approach to homework will change after the February break.

As a school, we have had many discussions about the success of homework as it is currently organised. We have supported parental requests to alter the pattern of homework. Previously homework was distributed on a Tuesday and returned on a Friday morning; at the request of parents, this pattern was changed and homework was distributed on a Tuesday and returned the following Monday. However, we have found that the return of homework can be erratic and the number and standard of completed homework varied.

In its current format, teaching staff do not feel that 'homework' is having the desired effect of improving the progress of our learners; teaching staff dedicate an enormous amount of time preparing, organising and

reviewing classwork and homework and currently feel that the time spent preparing, organising and reviewing homework would be better served in other areas of class and curriculum preparation. I have also had conversations that suggest some families find the expectation of homework a challenge and finding the time within a busy day to dedicate to homework problematic. Homework should never be a battle or impact detrimentally to quality family time in the evenings.

Therefore, when we return from the February break we will amend our approach to homework. Presently, we provide dedicated homework tasks in literacy and numeracy. We will continue to support these areas by providing options for engagement but the expectation to engage with these tasks will be at the discretion of children and families.

We feel it important that we continue to develop the culture of reading within our school so we shall remain focused on doing this with reading homework for our emerging readers in P1 & 2 continuing as it is currently. This has proven successful and our young readers are developing well. We shall continue to encourage our readers in P3-7 to use our school library to assist with their reading at home. We have invested money in our library and continue to use the 'Accelerated Reader' software; our readers will continue to complete book quizzes on completion of their library books and teachers will continue to set personal and achievable targets for their learners. We would encourage all our readers in P3-7 to read daily or to be read to daily as part of developing a reading habit and an enjoyment of reading. We would consider this as valuable reading homework and would encourage all parents to support this.

We have also purchased licenses for 'mathletics', which is an online platform for the development of numeracy and mathematics. Your children have a personal password that they will bring home to access this website, allowing them an opportunity to engage with a variety of online tools to support the development of number in a fun and engaging manner.

There will be other opportunities to 'opt in' to other tasks that will be accessed through our school blog. Other Primary Schools in our local area have also amended their approach to homework and have commented positively about the changes offered. NBHS have communicated that they have seen no detrimental effects to 1<sup>st</sup> year students from local schools who have changed their homework guidance to being optional. I am confident that you too will see the benefit of homework that is optional and that can be accessed when convenient to your personal circumstances.

## **Dirleton School Partnership – DSP**

A reminder that the next DSP meeting will be on Wednesday March 25<sup>th</sup> @ 7pm in school. All welcome.

## **P7 Camp Information Evening**

This will be held at Aberlady Primary School on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 6.30pm

#### **Dates for your Diary**

- **Friday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb – February holiday**
- **Monday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb – Staff In Service Day**
- **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Feb – Pupils Resume**
- **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> Feb –P7 Camp info Evening 6.30pm  
at Aberlady Primary**
- **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> April – Break for Easter holidays.**
- **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April –All resume**
- **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> May – May Bank Holiday**
- **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May – VE Day Holiday**
- **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May – In Service Day**

**B. Moody**  
**Head Teacher**