



Dear Parents and Carers

The start of term was very positive and only seems a few days ago; we are really impressed with the pupils enthusiasm, motivation and keenness to start learning after all of the upheavals they have had over the past 18 months. You should have received a stage newsletter and your class teacher will have made contact with you via Google for Meet the Teacher or phoned if you were unable to access the link.

If for any reason you have not had the newsletter, or were unable to access Meet the Teacher via Google Meet, please contact the school office as we want to ensure you are receiving our communications and Parents Night in October will also be via Google Meet.

As from **Tuesday 21st September** we are able to put in place some changes to the school routines following guidance from the Health Protection Team and East Lothian Council. We will be using our dining halls at both campuses and we will be able to remove class bubbles. This will mean that our morning breaks and lunchtimes will move to one session.

Our timings will therefore be from Tuesday 21st September:

	P1	P2	P3		P4 – P7
Soft Start Time	8.45am – 8.55am	8.45am – 8.55am	8.45am – 8.55am		8.45 – 8.55am
Break Time	10 – 10.15am or 10.15 – 10.30am				10.45 – 11am
Lunch	11.45 – 12.45pm	12 – 1pm	12.15 – 1pm		12.45 – 1.30pm
Leaving Time	2.45pm (12.00 Friday)	2.50pm (12.10 Friday)	3.10pm (12.20pm Friday)		3.10pm (12.20pm on Friday)

Please can we ask that pupils are in the school building by 8.55am – this is important as formal lessons will start at this time and we need your help and support so latecomers do not miss out on vital learning experiences and the important information at the start of the day.

Arrival and Dismissal from School

At John Muir we have been really impressed with our Primary 1 pupils who have embraced the idea of the ‘soft start’ and are managing so well at getting themselves through the gate and into the classrooms. Thank you to parents and carers for supporting this as it means pupils are in the class working straight away rather than having to line-up, wait for the teacher and then queue at the different doors whilst 5 or 6 classes file into the building.

If your son or daughter is still finding ‘letting go’ tricky can we ask that you bring them just a little bit later to let the keen beans and old hands from P2 and P3 to get in and then we can help at the gates when there is more space and less parents around.

We also need to ask that just like at dismissal time you keep the semi-circle in front of the main entrance free to allow pupils to have room to come in and staff to see them.

Our Primary 4 pupils at Lochend have been amazing and we are so proud on them and the way they have picked up the routines of ‘Stop, Hop and Drop’ at the gate and having spoken to lots of them recently they are loving their new classroom and outside areas.

In our parental survey we carried out at the end of the session the majority of parents were keen to keep to the arrangements we have in place for allowing pupils the independence of coming into school, plus the security of a member of staff ensuring the P1-P3 pupils leave the gates to meet someone. We feel this is working well and as we get to know you, and your child remembers where to look for you, it will get quicker and slicker!

In School Learning

I am hoping that your children are coming home and sharing what they have been doing at school; however I do remember from my own daughter that they are more keen on getting something to eat or getting out to play once they get home, rather than recalling what happened. To help with this we are regularly posting on our school and stage twitter feeds and the school website, and experience from many of you is that bath time or bedtime are often the times children decide to share their news.

Website: www.edubuzz.org/dunbarprimary Twitter: @DunbarPrimary

Recently though as I have been moving in and out of classes I have seen really interesting, amusing and impressive work on Titanic in P7, Spies in P6, novel studies from P3- P5 have included Harry Potter, The Famous Five, Evie & the Animals and Flat Stanley. Whilst in P2 they have been having great fun with *The Day the Crayons Quit* and in P1 they have started their phonics work, numeracy activities and outdoor play work.

Mobile Phones and Money

Please remind your child that their mobile phone must be switched off when they enter the school grounds. They must give any electronic devices to their class teacher who will lock it away in the classroom safe. Any money should also be given to the class teacher to keep safe rather than leaving it in the cloakroom or school bag.

Important Dates for Diaries

Friday 17th September and Monday 20th September are both school holidays

Monday 11th & Tuesday 12th October are **P1 – P3 Parent Night appointments via Google Meet – info will be sent out**

Wednesday 13th & Thursday 14th October are **P4 – P7 Parent Night appointments via Google Meet – info will be sent out**

Wednesday 13th October – Flu Vaccination in school for pupils if parents/carers requested

Monday 18th October to Monday 25th October (inclusive) is the October ½ term break. Pupils return on Tuesday 26th October.

School Uniform

I am very grateful to Anna C, Laura Smith and Kate Ainslie, as they have kindly volunteered to run our School Uniform Bank. They have sorted out the generous donation of uniform, wellies, waterproofs, helmets, etc. and they held the first of many regular sessions where the racks and boxes are available for parents/carers to select from near the main gates at John Muir Campus. Dates will be shared with you for next dates of this happening. We are an eco-school and being able to pass on uniform is a great way of stopping items going to landfill.

However, if you ever need anything please contact either Anna C or Miss Thomson, DHT at John Muir or Mrs Percy-Davis at Lochend and we will happily give you anything you are needing, as we are starting the October term with the wearing of uniform a priority in school.

Prior to the start of this term we have been much more relaxed about our school uniform, however I now feel that as from October 26th we want to welcome all our pupils back in school colours and taking a pride in the DPS uniform. We hope you will agree that wearing the uniform in school creates a pride and ethos of belonging and we hope it supports you at home knowing that the rules of wearing red, black grey and white items are what we expect. A reminder though that hoodies are *not* part of our school uniform but can be worn as part of P.E kit.

We are still happy that pupils come to school wearing their PE kit on the 2 days they have PE, but we still ask that this does not include football tops or crop tops. As the weather gets cooler we need pupils to be dressed for outdoor PE lessons and this can include a hoody. We need pupils to come with a waterproof jacket everyday so they can take part in lessons, break and lunchtimes when it is wet or inclement weather.

DPS School Improvement Plan and Standards & Quality Report

Unfortunately, the current COVID restrictions mean that I am unable to meet you all in the hall at each campus and talk to you about our whole school plans for the coming year and to reflect on last session. We have produced a family friendly version of our School Improvement Plan for 2021/22 and our school Standards and Quality Report which looks back to 2019/20, which we can all acknowledge was the very strangest of times. I will arrange for these to be sent to you via email. Full versions of both documents are also on our school website.

Website: www.edubuzz.org/dunbarprimary

I am really looking forward to the year ahead in school when we will hopefully be almost free of restrictions and we will be able to keep our pupils in the classroom learning all year. To support our recovery programme and using money provided by the Scottish Government we have employed an additional 6 classroom assistants & 1 Speech & Language teacher (one day a week in Nursery – P3) to ensure we are supporting pupils and parents with early language development. In P7 our Pipe Band programme is underway. We have doubled our capacity in our Nurture Base and have been working with P2 and P3 pupils, and plan to open up another room to work with P1 pupils after October. Our P7 Columba 1400 Leadership cluster programme starts soon to support the transition to DGS and develop the skills and qualities needed for life and work.

Communication

Communication is crucial in our school to ensure that we keep you updated and informed; equally it is vital that you feel able to contact us with any questions or concerns. In most instances your child's class teacher is the best person to contact. We know that the best time is to call at the end of the school day once the pupils have been dismissed. Members of the Senior Leadership Team all look after a specific stage and if the teacher cannot be contacted in the first instance then you should contact this person:

Nursery: Miss De'Ath

Primary 1: Mrs Hay

Primary 2: Mrs Kavanagh/Mrs Wight

Primary 3: Mrs Gillanders

Primary 4: Miss Eunson

Primary 5: Mrs Kelly

Primary 6: Mrs Eeles

Primary 7: Mr MacRury

Members of the Senior Leadership Team are often contactable during the day via telephone or email, however we are unfortunately unable to meet in the school unless in exceptional circumstances. If you do need to come into school you need to wear a face mask, complete the T&T form and sanitise your hands.

Finally, we are issuing a Friday email each week which will have any updates on COVID-19, information relating to pupils and any arrangements for the upcoming week. Please look out for this on our school website and DPS Twitter page.

Yours sincerely
Mrs Helen Gillanders