



Elphinstone Primary—Community Newsletter March/April 2016

- Important Dates
- Message from HT
- Winner Jan/Feb
- Trips
- Online Payments
- Book Week
- Swimming
- Parent Council News
- News from the Playgroup.

Important Dates

- 1 Mar Funky Fun club continues every Tuesday
- 2 Mar P5-7 Class Assembly
- 3 Mar World Book Day
P1-2 Outdoor Day
- 4 Mar P3-4 Eco Professor trip
- 7-11 Mar BOOK WEEK
- 8 Mar P5-7 Outdoor afternoon
- 9+10 Mar Coffee Morning/
Open Morning/
Parental Consultations
- 14 Mar a.m. P6-7 Risk Factory
p.m. Grp 2 Mountain biking continues
- 15 Mar P5-7 Outdoor afternoon
- 16 Mar P7 transition event @ Meadowmill-details to follow
- 16 March P1-6 Easter Service at Tranent Parish Church
- 17 Mar P1-2 Outdoor day
- 18 Mar Rag Bag Collection day
- 22 Mar P5-7 Outdoor Afternoon
- 23 Mar P1-2 Butterfly World
- 24 Mar Last day of term
- EASTER HOLIDAYS**
- 11 Apr– ALL RESTART
- 14 Apr– P3-4 Swimming lessons start every Thursday.
- 22 Apr P3-4 Rugby training starts
- 27 Apr P5-7 Bake Sale

Message from the Head Teacher

Dear Families,

Welcome to manic March! If you thought the start of the year was busy, wait until you've finished reading this Newsletter!

The boxes of reading books were collected on 25.2.2016 to start their journey to Zimbabwe. The receiving school is delighted. They will send photos once the boxes arrive which we will share with you.

We have an up and running Parent council at last. I am delighted and thank all those who give up their time to come onto the council. Our joint project is to introduce a Play Pod into our playground. We were lucky to have a free trial on 29.2.16. A funding application is being submitted so that we can buy the equipment and receive the training.

Why are we so excited about encouraging play?

Here are some of many reasons why:

In their play, children use first-hand experiences they have had in life.

Children rehearse the future in their play. Play helps children to learn to function, in advance of what they can do in the present.

In play children try out their recent learning, mastery, competencies and skills and consolidate them. They use their technical prowess and confidently apply their learning.

Children at play co-ordinate their ideas and feelings and make sense of relationships with family, friends and culture. Play is an integrating mechanism which allows flexible, adaptive, imaginative, innovative behaviour. Play makes children into whole people, able to keep balancing their lives in a fast changing world. (Tina Bruce; *Developing Learning in Early childhood*, 2004:149)

Last but not least and on an entirely different note, please ensure that you sign your child's homework. This indicates to us that you have been involved and supported this important part of their learning. Here are some links to websites that advise the 10 top tips for homework.

<http://www.oxfordlearning.com/make-the-homework-hour-happy-hour-top-10-tips/>

<http://www.parenting.co.uk/education/homework-tips.cfm>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/homework.html>

I hope you have a happy, healthy month and that we all enjoy the benefits of more light, less chill and the awakening of Spring!

Best wishes always,
Heather



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Congratulations!

Well done to Rebekkah Jamieson-Love who was the winner of the prize for reading the Jan-Feb 2016 newsletter and returning the slip. Who will it be next?

IMPORTANT

There are lots of trips taking place over the coming few weeks. Please ensure that your child always arrives at school with the correct clothing, packed lunch etc for each event.



Online Payments for school trips, nursery snack etc

The online payment system is becoming more and more popular which is great to see. It can be accessed through the East Lothian Council 'Pay for it' webpage or by the link on our school website. This will be for anything e.g. Milk, school trips, nursery snack etc but NOT for school meals. If you prefer you will also be able to continue to pay using cheque payable to East Lothian Council or by cash.

Book Week and Parental Consultation Week 7-11 March 2016



Look out for our separate flyer about Book Week and Parental Consultation week which will be issued this week.

Swimming



The children in P3-4 are due to start swimming lessons at the Loch Centre Pool every Thursday from 14 April 2016 until the end of June 2016. Consent forms will be issued before the Easter break.



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FROM THE PARENT COUNCIL...

March Update

Last week an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of the Elphinstone Primary School Parent Council was held. This was an unusual situation following the Annual General Meeting (AGM) having too few parents and carers there to formally elect a new Parent Council. Thanks to all who attended the EGM.

What is a Parent Council?

A group of parents selected by the “parent forum” to represent all the parents of children at the school, plus the head teacher and sometimes other school staff or local councillors attend too. The parent forum is every parent, carer or guardian of children who attend the school – i.e. YOU!

Nearly all schools in Scotland have a Parent Council. Find out more via this link– type all the letters into your browser to use the tinyurl shortcut. tinyurl.com/hx4s83p

When does it meet?

At Elphinstone, the Parent Council meets once per term. Childcare is provided to help parents and carers to attend. The meetings are short and a great chance to hear more as well as support and give your views.

To take forward the business of the Parent Council, at Elphinstone there are at least six members elected as members, usually two representatives per class. They joined at the meetings by any other parents and carers who wish to attend. The Parent Council is there to support and help the school, it welcomes the views of all parents. It does not discuss individual children. Elphinstone has had no Parent Council at all for a few months. We were the only school in East Lothian without one so it is good to have it back up and running. Members elected at the EGM on Wednesday 24 February will hold these positions until September 2016 when the usual AGM will be held and new people can be elected. Although these are the named representatives, more people are always welcomed to get involved.

P1/2 – Helen Spencer (Leah, Matthew and Jessica) & Nicola Gregory (Evie)

P3/4 – Rob Moore (Jamie) & Fiona Fleming (Grace)

P5/6/7 Judith Dunn (Alistair) & Katharina (Kat) Skwara (Huw and Leon)

The parent council office bearers:

Kat has agreed to continue as Treasurer. Judith Dunn/Helen Spencer will be co- chairs.

What will the Parent Council do this year?

Well, that is up to all the school parents to come along to the next meeting and decide on this. There is a funding application in for grant funding to pay for Play Pod equipment for the school playground and there are plans to run another Mini Mudder in May. A date still to be confirmed and helpers will be needed please for Megan, Helen and Kat to run this.

Please parents come along to the next meeting, give your ideas and volunteer to help to do what you think needs done.

In past years, in addition to supporting the school and sharing parents’ views with Mrs Williams and Mrs Thomson at our meetings, we have organised fun events such as discos and Burns suppers. There has also been a huge effort on fundraising via grant applications for big developments like the Trim Trail in the playground in recent years, as decided by the parents.

When there have been enough parents getting involved a fundraising sub-group has also in the past organised sponsored events like the Mini-Mudder, supermarket bag packing, raffles, selling tea towels and bags, and running stalls at the Elphinstone summer fair. Those funds then belong to the Parent Council and Elphinstone parents, at the Parent Council decide how the funds are spent.

In the past some examples of this have been subsidising the cost and/or paying the transport for school trips, paying for the school/parent text messaging service, buying gardening equipment, and subsidising the cost of P7 leavers hoodies as some examples. Currently the parent council has almost no funds left. Therefore it will be up to all school parents to attend the next meeting and form a fundraising sub-group if parents want these things to happen again in future.

Next meeting: Wednesday 23 March 5.00-6.30pm in the school. Please pop along, have a cuppa and say what you want to see happening at our great wee school. You will be made very welcome and don’t worry you don’t need to speak there and you will not be asked to DO anything unless you want to.

Please get in touch and give your ideas and views.
Judith Dunn, co-chair Jude.h@virgin.net or 0777 635 6380





News
from
other
groups
in
Our
Community

News from the Playgroup

We have had a busy start to the year and there are a few new faces. We have a lot to look forward to in the coming months especially with Easter coming up. It is a really busy time of the year and again we would love to take the opportunity to thank all our parents/carers for your continued support. As many already know we are looking for a new chairperson, secretary and some more active involvement in the committee. If you would like to hear more about the committee and these roles please speak to Ashley.

Kind regards

Nancy, Isobel, Ashley & Vicky



*Happy Easter
to everyone
from the staff
at Elphinstone
Primary*