



Law Primary School
Haddington Road
North Berwick
EH39 4QZ

Tuesday 22nd June 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

The final week of term is upon us and we are now looking at our final celebrations for the children finishing their primary education or moving onto new schools. We also have a number of staff finishing their teaching career or moving on to new schools. Staff and pupils staying with us will see their new teachers on a video this week and be shown where their new entrance points will be etc.

We are hoping that all restrictions will be lifted by August but as reported in the press this week there are COVID cases in a number of East Lothian schools. We must stay vigilant and rely on everyone in the school community to pull together to keep us safe.

The school will be planning for a return with similar restrictions to those currently in place as directed by East Lothian Council. Decisions will be taken over the holidays depending on the spread of the virus and changing guidance based on the current scientific evidence.

With this in mind we would like to look at soft start and thank the parents who took the time to express their thoughts on the recent survey.

Start and finish times

The teachers will be in the playground ready to welcome children into their class from 8.30 till 8.45am on the first and second day of term only. This is additional hours for the staff and therefore it cannot be continued.

As per this year the parents of P4-7 children should not enter the playground after the first two days. This has worked well and allowed the children the space to enter the school safely. Only one parent should enter the playground with a P1-3 child. After the first two days the doors will be open for children between 8.45 -8.50am for P3-7 pupils. There will be no need to line up and no bell so children can filter straight into school. Teachers will welcome children into their classrooms. This means that children should all be settled and ready to learn by 8.55am.

Primary 1 and 2 children will be able to enter their doors from 8.50-8.55am. This gives a five minute gap for the playgrounds to clear and footfall around the school to disperse. Primary 1 parents will receive a separate letter about entry to school during the first two days.

As doors will need to be closed to ensure the safety of all children at the end of the opening times, any child who is late to their class door can enter through the main reception.

There was overwhelming positivity for the continuation of the soft start and we will not be returning to lining up. Children will be expected to enter the school in a safe manner and continue to wash their hands before settling to the first task. This allows the teacher to welcome each child into

school, complete the register and confirm lunch orders etc. before the first teaching task commences.

The five minute gap between the older children starting and the younger children should allow time for the playground to quieten down and for the parents with children in older classes, time to drop them off before heading to drop off the younger children.

Children in P3-7 should be particularly punctual to school on days when they have a Specialist lesson (Art, P.E., Music) first. The lessons are limited to 50 minutes and lessons cannot start until all children are ready.

We will review the starting times procedure with the Parent Council at their first meeting and throughout the year.

We will be returning to specific finishing times, so P3-7 will finish at 3.15pm. The P1 and 2 children finish at 2.55pm which allows sufficient time for the footfall to clear before the older children are dismissed.

The current arrangements for Friday seem to be working well so P1 and 2 pupils will finish at 11.55am with P3-7 finishing at 12.20pm.

School lunches

The current menu will continue for the first two weeks of term until new guidance can be analysed. This means that P3-7 children will continue to have lunch in their classrooms. We hope to be able to use the Dining Room from September.

New classes

I apologise for the delay in telling pupils who would be their teacher next term due to the late announcement of Newly Qualified Teachers and Scottish Government funding for additional staff to help with COVID recovery. We will explain our use of this money at the start of next session.

Building work

As always we have building work scheduled for the summer holidays and the focus this year is on Asbestos removal. We have some aertex ceilings and these are all to be removed over the summer holidays. The bulk of these are in the P1 area and the radiators in these areas will also be changed. While the builders are there they are going to replace all the ceiling tiles, as many are damaged from water leaks over the years. The Primary 1 teachers are currently packing up the whole department. The other area to be renovated is the Dining Room so the After School Club who run the holiday club will be using the Movement and Dance studio (old gym hall).

Vandalism

Over the last few months we seem to have been the target for mindless vandalism on a semi-regular basis. It seems to be that vandals are getting onto our roof space and have great delight at kicking in our roof lights. This has resulted in the janitors having to ensure all broken pieces of glass are cleared away before the children can enter the area affected. This has tended to be the P1 wing.

Could I ask that parents cast an eye over the building whenever they are passing and if they do see anyone on the roof out of working hours to call the police on 101.

Anti-vandalism measures will be put in place after the current building work schedule.

Survey

The HMIE parent survey highlighted some areas for focus next year and we will be sharing this through our Standards and Quality report and with the Parent Council meeting in September. Thank you to all who have taken part in providing feedback.

P7 leavers

We plan to say farewell to our P7 pupils on Friday. May I ask all parents of P1-3 pupils to pick up their children at 11.55am. **Please note the earlier finish for the P3 pupils.** This is to allow the playground to clear so that we can pipe out the P7s. P4-6 pupils will be dismissed as soon as the P7 procession has passed their classrooms or standing position. No P4-6 parents should be in the playground, as per usual.

P7 parents will receive a separate email with the details of the morning's events.

PTA

A brand new PTA team started in January 2021. We've been quietly working away on exciting new events for the (hopefully normal) return to school in August so make sure to like our Facebook page to keep updated. <https://www.facebook.com/lawpspta/>

We were lucky to have a couple of events in 2021.

- The Easter Trail (with an art competition, pebble painting and activity packs)
- World book day
- Summer dress down day
- A bake sale by Lottie Dickie

These events raised almost £1000 for the school (not including the summer dress down donations which are still in quarantine waiting to be counted!)

Over the holidays you can easily raise money for the school from the comfort of your own home

- Stikins Name Labels <https://www.stikins.co.uk/>

Using our school code 1170 will earn us a percentage of your spend.

- Easy Fundraising <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/lawprimaryschool/>

Allows you to shop through your normal retailers who then donate a percentage to the school (e.g. Amazon, Tesco, John Lewis, M&S, Boots, Currys etc).

As always, we would love to have new members join the team. We can only come up with ideas and run events with the help and support of the school family. Get in touch through our Facebook page or come along to a meeting (hopefully in person in August) to find out more.

Have a happy, safe and hopefully sunny summer holiday break.

PTA team

Parent Council

The Parent Council have really enjoyed working with the school over the 2021/21 academic session and have been trying hard to involve parents/carers and make sure that our voices are heard and to encourage the flow of information between the school and parents/carers.

Hearing first hand from the Headteacher has been of enormous value and we can't thank Mrs Mackinnon enough for her honesty and open communication at each of the meetings. She keeps in contact in-between meetings and regularly asks us for parental input on a number of key issues and policies. We are grateful to have built such a positive working relationship with her at such a challenging time in her new(ish) role.

We have been really encouraged by the number of parents who now attend the Parent Council meetings - we hit a record high of around 90 parents at one meeting, and overall saw between 50-80 parents / carers attending every meeting, which take place every 6 weeks. So a huge thanks to all of you, the teachers and Councillors who joined, listened, shared their questions and concerns over the last year. We plan to keep the PC meetings online for the foreseeable future as we have received so much positive feedback about it being much easier to attend.

Despite the obvious challenges over the year we have made lots of progress and worked hard to represent your diverse needs. From re-distributing second-hand laptops over lockdown to thinking around the P1/2 pick-up times. Our Active Travel group has been particularly active. We've been involved with:

- pushing for the final installation of 'Aldi traffic lights';
- improving proposed pedestrian access for new nursery;
- ongoing discussions with ELC about key problem crossing points, and the proposed Law Path.

There is still lots to do next year - the playground needs a refresh, there is ongoing work to ensure our children can all walk to school safely and our new Connecting Families sub-group is aiming to support all families to feel more included in our community. The Nursery is part of the Parent Council too!

We are a small volunteer group, who are all involved because we have a particular skill, interest or are keen to feel more included in the school community. It's a great way to get to understand how the school works, influence some key decisions and get to know a wider group of parents/carers. Hopefully out of around 1,200 parents with children at Law Primary School we should be able to get some new members of the working team for the next year. If you are keen to get involved in the Parent Council please do email us - we are a friendly group of parents and always welcome new voices and ideas.

With thanks - Law Parent Council

lawprimaryparentcouncil@gmail.com

Farewell messages

Mrs Alison Smith and Mrs Shona Borthwick both retire on Friday from our teaching staff and Mrs Catherine Miller is retiring from our office staff. You will see from their farewell messages that there is a lot of expertise and talent leaving our staff on Friday and we wish them all a long and happy retirement.

Mrs Alison Smith

I started my career in a Yorkshire village school where I stayed for three years, followed by a year in the city of Accra in Ghana, where I was a teaching volunteer with VSO. After a move to Scotland and a break to look after my own children, I worked in West Lothian and then East Lothian, teaching at North Berwick Nursery school, Meadow Park School and then at Law Primary School. I am amazed to say that 24 years have passed since I first stepped into the nursery and tried to stay calm whilst children hammered away on their creations at the woodwork bench!

Over my time at Law I have taught at almost every stage in the school in my capacities as class teacher and learning support teacher. There have been many memorable moments along the way from dressing angels and fixing camels for the P1 nativity to recording poems at the Rocket House Studios with P5/6 and enjoying medieval banquets with primary 3 as well as countless outings and trips.

It has been a privilege to work with the children and families at Law over all these years. I'd like to express my gratitude for all the support I have received from the many parents and grandparents who have come into my classroom to help with reading, numeracy, painting, chopping vegetables, baking, making soup and a myriad of other tasks! During these strange Covid times thank you for being supportive in many other ways, not least in your patience, as we navigated the new world of Google Classroom. Finally I would like to thank my ever supportive and dedicated colleagues for their friendship and laughs along the way.

Mrs Shona Borthwick

I have worked at Law Primary for almost all of my 20 years of teaching and it has been an amazing career. My 7 years of teaching P7 in the Upper area were packed full of special moments and memories especially the wonderful Musicals and adventurous camps at Lagganlia and Loch Insh. Sport was an important part of the year too - Athletics at Meadowbank as well as lots of Basketball, Football and Rugby tournaments. My 6 years in P6 were spent at the other end of the school enjoying our Victorian and Europe topics and some camping at Yellowcraigs. My 7 years of P5 started in the Middle area before our exciting move to the Bass Building. Learning about John Muir over these years has been amazing - lots of beach cleans, pond dipping and improving our local environment. I hope that my greatest achievement at Law Primary has been encouraging and inspiring a generation to read through supporting our two wonderful libraries with the help of my colleagues and library volunteers.

Having now taught some children of the pupils I taught all those years ago in P7 it is time to retire and enjoy some exciting travels in my camper van.

School Library Books

As we look forward to using our two school libraries again next session, we would like to ask you to have a look around for any school library books which may still be at home. Going back as far as the first lockdown we are missing lots of books and it would be really good if these could be back on the shelves for starting back in August.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many parent helpers, library volunteers and PTA committees who have supported the libraries over the years and created what I hope you will agree are two superb learning resources within our school. Thanks, Mrs Borthwick

And finally,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support over the last two years. I am really looking forward to a “normal” year next session where we can focus on teaching and learning as well as health and wellbeing. We have an ambitious improvement plan which will be available on the website in due course and eight new teachers to welcome to the school community.

It’s been a very rocky road over the last two years with lots of obstacles to overcome but thanks to the talented staff team we have made progress in a number of areas and projects and are united as a community.

I wish you all a very restful holiday and look forward to welcoming everyone back into the building in August.

Best Wishes

Jacqui Mackinnon
Head Teacher