

Meldrum School aspires to be a vibrant and inclusive learning community where learners can realise their full potential within a safe and nurturing environment, promoting equality and fairness, with a focus on continuous improvement and developing the capacity of all to embrace lifelong learning.



Meldrum School Newsletter

Newsletter No. 2

29th October 2014

Dear Parents/Carers

Winter Approaches

Please find enclosed with this newsletter our annual Emergency Closure Procedures information for parents and families. With the decision being taken nationally not to provide parents with access to the new Glow system, our principal communication of school closures due to adverse weather will be as follows:

- The Aberdeenshire School Closures web page
- The school's Telephone Information Line

Should a situation arise where we have to close the school early we shall advise parents via the Text Messaging Services.

Fingers crossed for a mild winter!

Student Placements

We have a number of Aberdeen University student teachers joining us for teaching practice in the coming weeks.

Next Monday, 3rd November, Mrs Clare Nicolson and Ms Abigail Hay return to Meldrum for four weeks, teaching in P7C and P6C respectively. From Monday 10th November we will be joined by Miss Rachel Dow and Miss Morgan McKay for a four week teaching practice in P1E and P1M respectively.

MPip News

Following the September AGM, the following parents were elected for the school year ahead:

Office Bearers	General Members
Chair: Leah McKinnon Vice Chair: Fraser Edward Secretary: Ruth Scott Vice Secretary: Kathryn Michie Treasurer: Helena McKerron Vice Treasurer: Lesley Buchan	Donna Sim, Jill Good, Lindsay Macdonald, Kirsten Laing, Sarah Mortimer, Estelle Winward, Libby Davidson, Gary Donald, Joanne Lord, Elizabeth Buchan, Rebecca McLennan, Elaine Yeats

MPip Group Reps

Following our meeting last month we've re-launched the Year Group Reps initiative with a slightly altered name and a streamlined group of parent reps:

Early Stages – Donna Sim, Julie Farquhar, Andrea Forbes and Maura Roberts.

Middle Stages – Melania Walker, Jenny McGillivray and Jane Nicoll.

Upper Stages – Joanne Evans, Sarah Stephen, Joyce Givans and Kathryn Rintoul.

The role of our MPip Group Reps remains the same though:

- To act as a point of contact for parents/carers & new families arriving at Meldrum Primary
- To assist with keeping families up to date with up and coming events/activities

- To assist with supporting fundraising events by coordinating helpers for events/donations/raising awareness of the event
- To attend MPip meetings

We would like to highlight, however, that your MPip Group Reps will not be involved in resolving any issues or concerns parent/carers have directly with their child. These should always be discussed directly in the first instance with your child's teacher.

Easy Fundraising

Further to last term's MPip email, this is just a reminder that MPip has registered with Easy Fundraising. This means that every time that you shop online you could be raising money for Meldrum School without any extra cost to yourself.

Over 2,700 well known retailers, including Amazon, John Lewis, eBay and Tesco will donate a small percentage of what you spend to Meldrum School to say thank you for shopping with them.

Just visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/mpip-meldrum-primary-school and follow the simple steps to sign up.

Easyfundraising has already raised over £7 million for over 55,000 good causes across the UK. Head to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/mpip-meldrum-primary-school to fundraise for Meldrum Primary School now!

Thank you for your support

Our thanks go to all parents and families for supporting our 'One Can Once a Term' collection so generously. We donated some three containers of food stuffs over the October break to the Aberdeenshire North Foodbank.

I would also thank everyone for supporting our recent Book Fair, with sales totalling £1562. All of the commission from the Book Fair will go to providing new books for the school library, class libraries and project kits for the children's topic work.

School Meal Service – Parent Survey

For some time now parents of academy pupils have been able to add monies onto pupils' cashless catering accounts online through the Aberdeenshire Council website. The Council is now looking to introduce online payment for primary school meals along with an improved meal ordering system for pupils. This would allow parents to pay for pupils' meals online by debit or credit card in addition to payment by cash or cheque to the school. A standardised ordering system across all primary schools will also greatly help to ensure that every pupil receives their chosen option of lunchtime meal and will help to reduce unnecessary wastage of food across the school meal service.

As part of this ongoing project Aberdeenshire Council would like to get feedback from parents of primary pupils with regard to the functionality they would like to see incorporated into an online payment system. To give your feedback we would encourage you all to complete a short survey which is available online at:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/aberdeenshire_schoolpayments

The survey will also be available to complete on the school catering webpages at:

http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school_meals/index.asp

Parents will also be able to complete the survey using social media as it will be available through both the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

It is planned for the survey to run from Monday 3rd November 2014 until Monday 24th November.

Aberdeen Endowments Trust

We have received a small supply of application forms and information from Robert Gordon's College regarding bursaries available through Aberdeen Endowments Trust and the College itself for any P7 parents considering application to Robert Gordon's for their son/daughter's secondary school education. Please contact the School Office for further details.

Vandalism

We reopened on Monday to discover that the school had been subject to significant damage over the weekend. One set of goal posts used by the children at break and lunch times was completely destroyed, drain pipes/guttering were removed from the front of the school, grit boxes were stacked up on the playground picnic tables and Nursery equipment was removed from our outdoor play area. In addition, our Janitor spent much of Monday morning clearing broken glass right across our school grounds. The matter has been reported to Police Scotland. If anyone noticed any anti-social activity in or around the school over the weekend and can help the Police to identify the culprits, then please do contact Police Scotland, telephone number 101.

Infant Playground

At last month's MPip meeting we discussed issues raised by parents regarding congestion in the infant playground at the beginning and end of the school day. Issues included parents not staying clear of the children's class lines at the start of the school day, parents crossing between the lines of children as they are going into the building etc. It was felt by many that the noise and volume of parents now in the playground can make it a very unsettling place for some children.

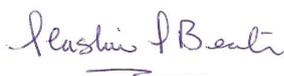
Please find listed below new guidelines for the Infant Playground. Weather permitting, the janitor will mark out an area on the tarmac in the next few days and we would ask that parents stand in this area when the children are going in/leaving school. We hope to introduce this new system early next week.

1. The janitor will mark out on the playground the area that parents are requested to stand in. This is intended to ensure that
 - the children have space to line up in their classes at the start of the school day
 - class teachers have a clear area in which to lead the children out to be collected at the end of the school day.
2. At the first morning bell parents should say their goodbyes and allow the children to stand in their class lines. Any parents staying to see their children go in to school should stand in the marked area.
3. At Meldrum we use the 'hands up' system. When the class teacher comes out to take in the lines she raises her hand. This is the cue for the children to put their hands up, face the front of the line and stop talking, ready to come into school. We would appreciate the support of parents in helping the children to follow this system, by standing back as mentioned above and not talking as your child prepares to go in to school.
4. At the end of the school day, please stand in the marked area to allow plenty space for the teachers to lead their classes out to be collected.
5. Any child whose parent is not there to collect will, in the first instance, return to class with their teacher.

In-Service Day Closures

And finally, just a reminder that the school will be closed on Monday 17th, Tuesday 18th and Wednesday 19th November for staff in-service training.

Yours sincerely



Alastair A Beaton
Head Teacher

Meldrum Nursery and School

Emergency Procedures – Information for Parents

Emergency Contact

On occasion it is necessary to carry out the school's emergency closure procedures which involve attempting to contact a parent of a child due to illness and/or accident. Where we are unable to make direct contact with a parent the next step is to phone the Emergency Contact – a friend, relative or neighbour. **Please ensure that you keep the school office updated of any changes to your child's emergency contact details.**

Snow addresses

This information is requested from all those living outside Oldmeldrum. Forms are sent home annually at the beginning of Term Two (after the October break) or earlier. It is essential that these are returned to the school office promptly in order that emergency contact details can be prepared well in advance of the winter months. *Parents who have difficulty in arranging a contact within the village must contact the School Office. If you live in the village and would be prepared to act as a Snow Address i.e. to provide emergency accommodation for one or more pupils in the event of severe weather, please contact the School Office.*

School Transport

Please note that on stormy mornings the school transport contractor is the best person to decide whether or not it is safe to pick up your child and take him/her to school. The decision is based on first hand knowledge of local conditions (remember the school buses/taxis cover side roads as well as main roads), weather reports e.g. storm warnings and perhaps advice from the Head Teacher. **Please contact the bus or taxi company directly to find out if transport is operating in stormy conditions.**

Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services Policy states: 'If school transport is not running *please* don't take your child – or other children – to school yourself. You will be responsible for ensuring that the children you took to school are transported home again.'

Arrangements for Sending Children Home Early

Should conditions begin to deteriorate during the day the Head Teacher, or in his absence, the Depute Head Teachers, may decide to send home early those children who are transported to school by school transport contractors. This decision will be based on local conditions, storm warnings and the advice from school transport contractors or parents contacting the school as conditions near their homes deteriorate.

The following steps will be taken:

1. The safety of your child is of paramount importance. He/she will only be sent home where it is considered safe to do so.
2. We will endeavour to contact you by telephone, perhaps requesting that you phone another parent to assist us. As you will appreciate, this may take some considerable time. Therefore, information regarding early closure will be published on the Aberdeenshire Council School Closures website, a message will be broadcast on the school's Telephone Information Line and a text message sent to all relevant families who have signed up to the text messaging service. Wherever possible, local radio will also be contacted as a further means of advising parents of the school's decision to send transport pupils home early.

3. The school transporters will be requested to come.
4. Pupils whose parents have been notified by telephone will be sent off in the bus/taxi. School transport contractors are instructed not to allow children to walk home alone from drop-off points under any circumstances during extreme weather conditions, so please be prepared to meet the bus or taxi. If no adult appears, the driver will return the child to school *once all other pupils on the route have been taken home*.
5. Pupils retained at school, as no contact could be made with the parent, will remain at school. Meanwhile, we will continue to attempt to contact the parents.
6. At the end of the school day those pupils still at school will be sent to their Snow Addresses.

Early Closure of the Whole School

There may be occasion to close the whole school early in an emergency due to unforeseen circumstances e.g. failure of the school's heating plant in winter or severe storm warnings.

Pupils living outside Oldmeldrum who travel to school by bus/taxi will be dealt with as detailed above.

Procedures for pupils living in Oldmeldrum will be as follows:

1. We will try to ensure that the school crossing patrols are available.
2. We will endeavour to contact all parents or emergency contacts to advise of early closure and to request that they come to school to collect their child/children. As stated above, this may take some considerable time and the following steps will also be taken to alert parents to the school's decision to close early:
 - Information will be broadcast on Aberdeenshire Council's School Closures website
 - A message will be broadcast on the school's Telephone Information Line
 - A text message will be issued to all families who have signed up to this service
 - Local radio will be contacted.
3. Children will remain in school until collected by a parent, emergency contact or another adult authorised by the parent of the child concerned. *Upper stages pupils (Primary 5 - 7) living in close proximity to the school may be allowed to walk home alone provided the parent has been contacted and given their permission.*
4. All staff will assist in ensuring that every care is taken to return your child safely home or to an emergency address.

Whole School Closure Before 9.00 a.m.

Due to very stormy conditions the Head Teacher may take the decision to close the whole school before the start of the school day. Once again, this decision will be based on local conditions, storm warnings and the advice from school transport contractors.

Where such a decision is made the following steps will be taken to inform parents:

1. A message will be posted on the **Aberdeenshire Council School Closure website**.
2. A message will be recorded on the school's **Telephone Information Line**.
3. **Local radio stations** will be advised of the school closure.
4. Where possible, a closure message will be recorded on the school's **telephone answering machine**.

Details of the services are given below.

School Information Line

All Aberdeenshire schools have a telephone information service which can be used to inform parents of closure due to adverse weather. This allows parents to listen to a recorded message from the Head Teacher. The school will endeavour to keep the system updated during periods of severe weather affecting the opening of the school.

To use the service:

- Dial Aberdeenshire Council's access number: **0870 054 4999**
- Enter the 6 digit pin number for Meldrum School: **02 2220**
- You will then hear the school's name. Ensure that this is correct before continuing
- You will be given four options from the main menu:
Press 1 to hear a message about adverse weather (e.g. whether the school is to close or if transport arrangements have been affected)

Press 4 to enter the pin number for another Aberdeenshire school (Parents may have children attending different schools e.g. Meldrum Academy. This option allows you to move from one school's messaging service without having to redial)

** Please note that the School Information Line is an 0870 service and charges are slightly higher than normal. However, there is no queuing and an adverse weather call should only last about one minute.*

Aberdeenshire Council website

Notice of school closure will also be available on the Council website:

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/closures/

Schools are listed alphabetically. Where a decision has been made to close the school you will find details of one of four closure states: closed to everyone, partial closure see comments, closed to pupils, closed to school transport pupils only.

Parents visiting this page on the Council website will also have the opportunity to

1. Register for Aberdeenshire Council email alerts regarding school closures
2. Subscribe to the School Closures RSS Feed
3. Follow school closure updates via Twitter

Local Radio Stations

Local radio stations are automatically informed of school closure whenever an announcement is made on Aberdeenshire Council's website.

School Answering Machine

Where possible, a message regarding school closure will be placed on the school's telephone answering machine. Please note that this service will very much depend upon a member of office staff being able to access the school.

Alastair A Beaton

October 2014