

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 No. 1

3rd October 2014

Dear Parents

My apologies for not having issued this first newsletter of the session sooner.

Diary Dates for the Year Ahead

Our school calendar detailing holiday dates, closures etc for the year ahead was sent home last week. As usual, I included term dates for the whole of next session, 2015-16, to help parents plan family holidays and reduce the number of request for unauthorised term-time absence from school.

Please note the additional in-service training day for all primary schools on Wednesday, 19th November. This additional training day was granted by the Scottish Government to provide schools with further time to embed with staff further approaches to Curriculum for Excellence and to support reflection on learning and practice.

Early Years Consultations

Over the next few weeks Education and Children's Services will be consulting with parents, Nursery staff and other stakeholders regarding the provision of early learning and childcare in Aberdeenshire.

Consultation drop-in meetings are being held in 17 venues across the Shire in the weeks ahead. The consultation for this area is being held here at Meldrum in our GP Room on Monday 6th October from 4.00 – 6.00 pm.

In addition, parents can share their views via an online survey. The address for this is as follows:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WH8QJGS>

You can also access this survey by going to the Aberdeenshire Council website and selecting Education and Learning. When the Education page opens, you'll see a link to Education Consultations.

Tuck Shop Price List

Our healthy tuck shop continues to be popular with the children. This year's price list is as follows:

Apple or orange cuplet*	20p
Carton of milk (plain or flavoured)*	25p
Bottled water (still)	25p
Aqua juice (orange, apple, forest fruit)*	25p
Fresh fruit – prepared or whole	25p
Homebake of the day	20p

Please note that not all items listed above are available every day.

*These drinks are available for the children to purchase at lunchtime in the Dining Room.

School Lunches

'Let's Eat' - the Autumn/Winter primary school menu is included with this newsletter. The new menu commences straight after the October holidays on Monday 27th October. The menus also feature information about the Primary School Meals Email Box. Customers of the Service can offer comment and suggestions via the following e-mail address: primary.meals@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

The Aberdeenshire Council School Catering Services provides and manages school meals for all primary and secondary schools. School meals are paid for by purchasing meal tickets in singles at £2.00 each or in books of ten costing £20.00 per book. Payment may be made in cash or by cheque made out to Aberdeenshire Council. At Meldrum, our Dinner Ladies visit each classroom first thing on Monday morning to sell dinner tickets. From Tuesday – Friday one of the Dinner Ladies sells books

and individual tickets from the school library at morning break. Parents uncomfortable about sending a cheque or cash with their child for dinner tickets should place their payment in a sealed envelope with their child's name, class and number of tickets required clearly marked, and leave at the School Office. The Dinner Ladies will collect from the office and arrange the necessary book/single ticket.

PE Kit

At this time of the school year it is always worth reminding parents that we continue to make increased use of the school grounds in order to ensure that all pupils receive the Government's expectation of two hours physical activity each week. In addition to the standard PE kit for lessons in the gym hall, parents should provide children with a dedicated outdoor PE kit. This should consist of separate outdoor trainers and clothing suitable for outdoor PE activities, such as jogging bottoms and sweatshirt.

Please also remember that in the interest of safety, jewellery, including earrings, should not be worn during PE lessons. Children unable to take out earrings by themselves should bring plasters, micropore tape etc with them on PE days so that earrings can be taped over. Children with long hair should ensure that it is tied back during PE lessons to avoid any collisions or accidents.

Late Arrival at School

In the March newsletter I expressed concern at the high number of children coming in late to school. There was a significant reduction in the number children arriving late in the summer term, and as a result we did not move ahead with the notification of lateness letters to families that we had planned. However, this new school year has seen a return to unacceptably high numbers of late arrivals, with 118 instances of children arriving for school during between 19th August and 19th September (24 school days). From the beginning of next term we shall be alerting parents on a regular basis of any significant instances of lateness.

GLOW

As of this Friday, Glow as we know it will no longer exist. A new Glow is being introduced nationally in the coming weeks and Meldrum will move towards using this as fully and effectively as possible in the school session ahead. All P1-7 pupils will continue to have full access to support their learning, but there will no longer be any parental access to Glow as we've had in the past.

The removal of parental access to Glow has many knock-ons for us as a school – it was a point of contact for parents regarding school closures and bus issues, termly class updates, Nursery and School handbooks, general information on Active Schools opportunities etc. Consequently there will be a return to more school bag drops for routine information, so do please check your child's school bag regularly for any flyers and the like that might be lurking! As of 27th October and the start of the new term, we will return to issuing all families with a termly class update on paper, to be sent home during the first week of each new term. The update will include a class timetable for the term so all parents know, for example, their child's PE days, and an overview of the learning planned in language, maths and topic work for the term ahead.

Parent Parking

Parking in and around the school continues to be a problem for local residents. I have already received a number of complaints from local residents regarding parents parking across their drives, mounting pavements to park and parking on double yellow lines to drop off and collect children. We face similar issues in school where inconsiderate parking has resulted in congestion when trying to enter/leave the school car park, and a number of parents have voiced their concerns re the safety of getting children from the car park to the school playgrounds.

The school and Parent Council are taking these concerns forward with Aberdeenshire Council, Robertson FM, community groups and local Councillor, Paul Johnstone. With the school roll continuing to rise significantly over the next three –four years and the extended Nursery opening hours we need to make every effort to find a longer term solution to this issue in our community. Your co-operation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Health Matters

Flu Vaccination

All families will have received a letter from NHS Grampian regarding this year's Flu Vaccination Programme for all children from P1 – P7. We need to ensure that all parent permissions are returned to the School Nurse, Debbie Smith, well ahead of the planned vaccination days of Wednesday 5th, Thursday 6th and Friday 7th of November. With this in mind, I would be grateful if all parent response envelopes could be returned to school by next Friday, 10th October.

Norovirus (Winter Vomiting Bug)

As part of this year's norovirus seasonal awareness campaign, the NHS has provided all schools and nurseries with a small supply of information leaflets – these are available in the School Reception and in both the Rainbow Room and Otter Room. The leaflet provides general information on what the norovirus is, how to avoid catching the virus, what to do if you do catch norovirus, and how to care for someone with the virus. *The key message of this campaign is to advise the public to stay at home for 48 hours after their norovirus symptoms have stopped to avoid spreading it further.* Further information on the norovirus can be found at: www.nhsinform.co.uk/norovirus

One Can, Once a Term

The Aberdeenshire North Foodbank aims to provide food for families who are going hungry in our local area. With a distribution centre established in Inverurie, the Foodbank continues to seek the support of schools in the Meldrum and Inverurie area, asking pupils to provide 'one can, once a term' to feed families who would otherwise go hungry. This term's Foodbank Appeal takes place next week to coincide with our Harvest celebrations and we would ask that each pupil brings one item of food (a can or dried foodstuff such as pasta) to school between now and next Friday 10th, October to support the work of the Aberdeenshire North Foodbank.

School Improvement Plan and Priorities for the Year Ahead

As reported earlier this week at the MPip AGM, we are in the process of finalising our Standards and Quality Report for last session. A paper copy of the new style Authority format will be issued to all families early next term with the October Newsletter. Building on our work and progress from 2013.14 and our stakeholder feedback (parents, pupils and staff), our priorities as a school for the year ahead are as follows:

The Curriculum

We will be planning a cycle of improvement across curricular areas, starting with...

- The completion and launch of our new Science programme of study over the course of this session
- The auditing of PE resources
- The redesigning of our Religious and Moral Education programme

Active Literacy

- Here we will be completing the resourcing of Active Literacy for P1-3 classes
- Active Literacy will this year be introduced to our P4-7 classes with a focus on spelling, reading and writing programmes. We will also be developing Active Literacy resources for P4-7 classes over this year and next.

Attainment and Achievement

- Here we will be focussing on the development of Third Level planners for Maths, Reading, Writing and Talking & Listening. Under Curriculum for Excellence, Third Level is generally undertaken from S1 – S3.
- We will be reviewing our Target Setting and Achievement programmes
- And over the course of this year and next, we will be looking at the introduction of Co-operative Learning opportunities across classes, to ensure motivation, consistent pupil engagement in their learning, and a variety of engaging teaching approaches

Nursery

In Nursery our focus is to ensure the smooth introduction this session of the Government's 600 hours early years agenda – the increased Nursery day and related increase in Nursery staffing.

- We are having to review our planning process
- We are building a new Nursery Team that has now expanded to 17 adults – and we are looking at procedures that will ensure consistency, continuity and progression for the children's learning experiences

- We aim to refresh our Nursery Home Learning packs this session (funding permitting)
- And we are having to look at the impact on parents e.g. local child-minders

In addition....

A major focus for the school this year, and indeed for the next three - four years, is planning and implementing changes associated with our increasing school roll. Over the next four years our roll is being projected to increase as follows:

August 2014: 370 pupils, and a sharp increase in the number of P1 children (from 50 to 70)

August 2015: projected numbers of 390 pupils

August 2016: projected numbers of 401 pupils

August 2017: projected numbers of 418 pupils

August 2018: projected numbers of 428 pupils

- We have already taken forward discussions with Aberdeenshire Council and Robertson FM regarding the serving of school lunches over the last few months and a further meeting is scheduled before the October holidays.
- We are having to consider the space within the infant playground – currently we have some 120 children in P1 and P2 using this area at morning break and lunch time.
- Negotiations began in February regarding the conversion of our computer suite to a 16th classroom – work is scheduled to begin on this in July 2015. Associated with the loss of the computer suite is the ability of our existing Wi-Fi to cope with a further 30+ computers accessing the network in this way. I will be seeking assurances from the Council that the 30 + computers in our suite will be replaced with Wi-Fi enabled laptops for next August
- Impact of the increasing school roll (and altered Nursery day) on parent parking, both in school grounds and locally, as mentioned above.

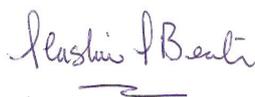
One final issue to be taken forward this session is the school's consultation process to reconfigure the school day. Although I started the consultation process with our Head of Service last session, delays in responding to my request meant that I had to put any consultation on hold until this school year. Immediately after the October holidays I will be looking to request approval from our new Head of Service, Andy Griffiths, to undertake a consultation process with all stakeholders, with a view to any changes to the school day commencing from August 2015.

And finally...

We look forward to seeing you all over the course of next week for our first Parent-Teacher interviews of the session.

The school closes for the October holidays on Friday, 10th October and we reopen for the start of the Winter Term on Monday, 27th October.

Yours sincerely



Alastair Beaton
Head Teacher