



Newsletter

Priorsford Primary School

Marmion Road

Peebles EH45 9BE

Tel : 01721 721236

Twitter: @PriorsfordPS

www.priorsfordprimary.co.uk

FaceBook: Priorsford Parents

Sandra.Macgregor@scotborders.gov.uk

'Supporting each other to grow and learn together'

January 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

With the evenings getting lighter and snowdrops beginning to appear, it definitely feels like spring is on its way. We are hoping for more news soon on further easing of Covid restrictions, which will allow us to restart more activities, both during and after school. We will let you know as soon as any updates have been sent out to schools.

Supporting our Children's Wellbeing

At Priorsford, we recognise the importance of promoting the positive mental and emotional wellbeing of our children, as we try to support children to manage the longer-term impact of Covid and lockdown. We have several approaches that we are using across the school:

Meet and Greet - to build positive relationships and make every child feel valued and have a sense of belonging at Priorsford, all class teachers welcome each child individually into their classroom every morning.

Soft Start - this year we introduced a Soft Start across the school, giving children the space and choice of activity first thing every morning. Overwhelmingly positive feedback from the children illustrates how they feel this approach helps them prepare mentally and emotionally for the day's learning. It gives children time to build relationships with each other and with their teacher, which is so important to help the children feel safe and secure at school. Information on our Soft Start can be found on our website.

Building Resilience - our assemblies last week focussed on 'Respect Yourself,' the next theme in our Building Resilience programme. We link our assemblies to the themes in this programme, which provide strategies the children can use to stay positive and manage challenging times. Full details of this programme can be found on our website.

Zones of Regulation - last term we introduced a health and wellbeing approach called the 'Zones of Regulation' across all classes, which complements our wellbeing work in place to support children's wellbeing. An information booklet and details of this approach can be found on our website.

Further details on all of these wellbeing approaches can be found on our website or emailed to you - please just contact the school office and we can send out this information out.

Jotters Home

To promote communication between home and school about your child's learning, we are sending home maths, literacy and achievement books this **Friday 28th January**, to allow you to see what your child has been learning in class. This will give you an opportunity to discuss your child's learning with them. These jotters **only give a snapshot** of the many different learning activities that take place in class. We use a wide range of practical, online, cooperative group and class strategies to support learning, therefore there may be limited work to see in your child's jotter. However, please take this opportunity to discuss with your child what and how they have been learning and write your own feedback in the sheet in the achievement jotter.

The children's jotters will go home again towards the end of March along with the annual pupil report. By that time, we very much hope that we can start to welcome parents back into school to see the children's classrooms and wider school learning environment.

Scots Poetry

As part of our celebration of our Scottish culture and to commemorate the life of Robert Burns, every year we encourage children to learn a Scots poem. Each class will hold their own competition for those who would like to recite their poem to their class. We will be holding a virtual whole school Scots Assembly on **Friday 11th February**, where the poetry competition winner from each class will recite their Scots poem to the school.

Reading for Pleasure - any book donations please!

As a school, we are committed to promoting reading for enjoyment for everyone. We are very fortunate to have Mrs Trudi Palmer, who is passionate about reading, and who has been managing and organising our library throughout lockdown and on our return to school. Before coming to Priorsford, Mrs Palmer set up a school library in her previous school and she has used her experience to develop our library to continue to provide such a wonderful environment to encourage children to enjoy high quality reading materials. You will have seen her fantastic library displays on our social media sites, which she has created to capture the children's imagination and help them choose from a wide variety of books available to borrow.

Next session, we will be working towards the Scottish Book Trust Reading School Award and will be organising events and activities to continue to encourage everyone to pick up a book and read. Planning has already started and more details will come out later in the year.

As part of this focus on reading, we will also be developing classroom reading areas. We would be delighted if you could **send in any children's books which are no longer read at home** to use in our class libraries. Please send any donations to the school office. Thank you.

Gardening Volunteers Needed

Outdoor learning and play is well documented as being beneficial to support children's positive mental wellbeing. We are very fortunate at Priorsford to have such large woodland areas and space in our school grounds for children to enjoy every day.

We are hugely indebted to Jimmy Urquhart, one of our support staff, who has worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, during term-time and holidays, to create our new gardening area to replace the area we lost with the building of the new nursery. He has rebuilt the polytunnel, built new raised beds, fruit cages and accessible pathways, as well as plan a new summer house, complete with water and electricity, where whole classes will be able to come out to work in the garden and polytunnel, regardless of the weather.

We were very grateful to Tillicoultry Quarries, who donated and delivered building materials last week to help landscape the area.

Our gardening area is a wonderful learning environment for the children and as it is developing, we are now looking for volunteers from the community - parents, grandparents, local resident - who might be able to spare even a hour a week to help Jimmy maintain the garden area for the children. Because of easing of lockdown restrictions outdoors, we can now welcome volunteers to support outdoor activities, as long as they adhere to the school's Covid Risk Assessment mitigations - a negative LFT and social distancing.

If you know of anyone who might be able to help Jimmy, please get in touch by phoning or emailing the school.

Christmas Fund Raising

In these very difficult financial times, we are exceptionally grateful for the continued generosity of the school community in supporting both the school and wider causes with our various fund-raising activities.

Thank you to every family who sent in a donation for our class Christmas crafts. We raised a magnificent **£1265**, which will go to the PTA. We hope to start spending some of these funds on playground improvements, which will include painting games and activities on the playground for children to enjoy at break and lunch times.

PTA Fund Raising - Priorsford Lottery

Our PTA continues to work extremely hard to find new and innovative ways to raise valuable funds for the school. Our latest fund-raiser is our new Priorsford PTA Lottery. This is drawn four times per year, with a chance of winning a termly cash prize of £100, £50 or £25. Full details and the entry form can be found on the school website - www.priorsfordprimary.co.uk

Priorsford World of Work - Postponed

As part of our wider curriculum, our Parent Council organise our 'World of Work' event every two years, inviting parents, grandparents and members of the local and wider community to talk to the children about their jobs. Our school community have many wide and varied types of employment and we want to make the best use of this expertise to engage and inform our children of the opportunities available to them in the future.

We are extremely keen to welcome this year's World of Work visitors to school in person, therefore we have decided to delay our World of Work events until the weeks of **16th and**

23rd May when we will hopefully be able to welcome visitors in person to school to lead workshops and give presentations on their jobs. If you feel you can support this event, please look out for details coming out from our Parent Council or email elaineannewatson@gmail.com

Parent Council Meeting

Our next Parent Council meeting will be a virtual meeting on Monday 22nd February at 7.30pm. Details of how you can attend will be emailed out soon.

Primary 7 High School Transition - Parent Meeting

There will be a virtual presentation for P7parents from the Peebles High School rector, Mr Campbell Wilson, on the evening of **Thurs 3rd February**. Details will be emailed out once they have been finalised.

Thinking Day / Founders Day

We will be celebrating World Thinking Day for Guides and Founders Day for Scouts on **Tuesday 22nd February**. We would be delighted if all girls and boys who attend Brownies, Beavers, Guides, Cubs, Scouts, Rainbows etc. could wear their uniforms to school that day. We will take a photo first thing in the morning of the many children who enjoy and benefit from being part of these organisations.

Health Guidance - Reminder

If your child experiences a bout of sickness or has an upset tummy, please follow NHS Borders health protection advice.

*'Where a child has shown symptoms of diarrhoea or vomiting, he or she should not return to nursery/school until a **48-hour period** has passed, during which time there has been no diarrhoea or vomiting.'*

Please adhere to this advice and keep your child off school until 48 hours after the last episode of sickness, to avoid infection of other children and adults in nursery and school.

Mid-Term Holiday

Please note that school will finish for the mid-term break on Friday 11th February and return on Tuesday 22nd February. The nursery hub will remain open throughout the school holiday.

Achievements

The school is very proud to hear of the activities that our children take part in, both within and outside school and it is very important that we recognise and celebrate their achievements. Please email photos of any achievements outside school that your child would like us to share and we can celebrate them through our social media sites and at assemblies.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any issues or concerns regarding your child's education.

Sandra Macgregor
Headteacher