

St Mary's RC Primary

Newsletter 3

November 2020



Please find below a message from the Executive Director of Children, Young People and Partnerships – Mrs Fiona Robertson.

Dear Parents and Carers

We are delighted our schools are open, allowing children the chance to continue their education and meet up with friends in a safe environment.

We have already seen some changes in the national guidance all schools in Scotland are following, and we will see further change from Monday 2 November.

As you will likely be aware, the Scottish Government is placing each local authority area within new framework Levels from 0 to 4. At each level, different steps are taken to limit the spread of coronavirus. This includes some changes in schools.

Midlothian has been placed in Level 3, and as from Monday 2 November, the following changes will apply:

- *all staff and pupils should wear a face covering in classrooms during lessons in the senior phase (S4-6)*
- *parents or guardians should discuss with their GP or clinician whether children with the highest clinical risk (shielding) should still attend*
- *Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to the school (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop-off and pick-up*

All schools will review the existing measures they have in place to reduce the spread of coronavirus, and remind all pupils of the importance of complying with these measures.

Please help us reduce the risk to all pupils and their families by encouraging your child(ren) to follow all the instructions they are given to maintain their health, safety and wellbeing. Many thanks for your co-operation.

Best wishes

Fiona

Robertson

Executive Director Children, Young People and Partnerships

Thank you to everyone who is already complying with the requests to wear masks in the playground and respecting the need to keep a distance from other households. Your support is much appreciated.

Mrs Liz Laird – Head Teacher

PARKSMART Thank you to Mr Collins and our P5/6 pupils who have conducted the Parksmart surveys over the past few weeks. We are pleased to report that there has been a 40% reduction in unsafe parking since our first survey – thank you for your support with this. Key areas for improvement and still causing concern are:

- **Cars parking too close to junctions**
- **Cars parking on the pavement blocking access for pedestrians**
- **Cars performing U turns on Rosewell Road – safer to go to the car park at Poltonhall Pavilion to do this**

Please do not park in the school car park if it is already full – please be patient as the builders finish off work to the fencing at the bottom end. Last week two cars were bumped in the car park. Please also respect a 5mph speed in the car park. The spaces at the charging points can be used by parents and carers with mobility issues with the prior agreement of the HT. A card giving permission to use these spaces can be issued by the school.

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL This week poppies are available in all classes for a small donation. Please send in what you can to support this worthy cause.

CHILDREN IN NEED Next week we will join in the fun of Children In Need with a dress down day on Friday 13th November. Again please send in what you can to support the many causes this fund raiser supports.

Thank you to the staff for making Hallowe'en a fun morning of activities in school. Thanks to the Parent Council for the Hallowe'en treats too. Look out for a Parent Council Newsletter coming home with news about our plans for celebrating Christmas and fund raising without a Christmas Fair!!

POLITE REMINDERS

- **PUPIL ABSENCE** – parents **MUST** contact the school either by phone or email to report pupil absence. Please give child's name, class and reason for absence when leaving a message. **Tel: 0131 271 4690 email stmarys_ps@midlothian.gov.uk**
- Please check that your child has everything before they leave for school in the morning. We are starting to have a lot of forgotten items such as lunch bags/glasses/water bottles being handed in to the School Office at a time when we should be having as few people in the building as possible. If your child is late, they need to be signed in at the school office then taken to their class. This is very disruptive to the Office and the class. Please aim to get your child to school just before 9am please so that they can line up in the playground.
- Please return information to the School Office or Nursery by the date indicated on the letters – paperwork needs to be quarantined at the office before being processed and delays are causing a back log of work at the Office
- **HEALTHY SNACKS** Please provide a small, healthy snack for your child for playtime – this is only 15 minutes so one item is really enough. Please also provide your child with a reusable water bottle to have in the class. This will come home each day to be washed. Please label the bottle with your child's name. **WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL – NO NUTS/NUTTY CEREAL BARS/ NUTTY BREAD ETC.**
- **Please tie back long hair for school as we have a number of cases of head lice at the moment.**

Active schools have a range of clubs on offer in various locations in Midlothian. Check the link to the flier on the school website and on twitter.

<http://edublog.mgfl.net/stmarysps/2020/10/29/active-schools-cluster-club-information/>

DIARY DATES

w/b 2 nd November	POPPY APPEAL – poppies for sale in all classes
FRIDAY 13 TH NOVEMBER	CHILDREN IN NEED – DRESS DOWN DAY
MONDAY 23 RD NOVEMBER	NEW P1 ENROLMENT FOR 2021
MONDAY 30 TH NOVEMBER	FLU VACCINATIONS
TUESDAY 8 TH DECEMBER	FIRST CONFESSIONS 1.30PM
23 RD DEC – 5 TH JANUARY	SCHOOL HOLIDAY
WEDNESDAY 6 TH JANUARY 2020	ALL RESUME

ST MARY'S RCPS – STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT

Successes and Achievements in Session 2019 - 2020

This session St Mary's has had a few staff changes.

STAFFING

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Mrs Laird continued in the Shared Headship of St Mary's and St Andrew's with Mrs Macaulay securing permanency as DHT. Thanks to the hard work of all the staff leading to continuing improvement and progress being made at St Andrew's, Mrs Laird was able to spend more of her time at St Mary's this session returned full time to St Mary's in August 2020.

NURSERY

Our Nursery hours were increased to offer 30 full time spaces in August 2019. The Nursery team expanded to include Angela Wilson and Stephanie Munro, and we had the addition of a Catering Assistant to support with the delivery of lunches. Over the course of the year we said a farewell to Sara Plamer and Gillian MacFarlane, and welcomed Tracy Long, Laura Weddell and Leona Westwood as Modern Apprentices. Laura will be staying with us in August and Gillian MacFarlane will be returning to the school. We also welcome Helen Ewart and Fiona Lavery to the team in August. We are sorry to say goodbye to Mrs Wendy Crawford, but wish her well as she takes up a new post at Gore Glen Nursery.

LEARNING ASSISTANTS

We wished Mrs Zena Atchison a happy and healthy retirement in October 2019. We were delighted to welcome Mrs Jenny Halliday and Mrs Amanda Grigg to the Learning Assistant team before Christmas. We also welcomed Mrs Kirsty MacArthur and Mrs Maura Fraser in January to support in P1.

VISITING SPECIALISTS

This year all classes benefitted from specialist teaching in Drama with Ms Cheryl Aird. Ms Aird has returned this session. Mrs Macaulay provided specialist Music and Art lessons throughout the year and so far has taught art in all classes since returning in August. Mr Collins will also be teaching technology in all classes.

GOODBYE OLD ST MARY'S

We had many planned endings this year for our Old St Mary's building. We enjoyed a wonderful whole school production of "Silent Night" at Christmas. Every pupil in the school was able to take part with many playing untuned percussion and others showcasing their learning in playing tuned instruments. Our final Christmas Fair was very well attended and raised nearly £2000 for the school. We were also able to support local food banks through charitable donations over the Christmas period in school. We welcomed the wider family and community of St Mary's to the school in February 2020, for an Open Day where we were able to share our many artefacts and old school photographs as well as memories, stories and a cup of tea! There were many family reunions during the day and we were delighted to be supported by local Councillors and our Provost.

Sadly for our P7 class they did not get to experience all the endings that we plan for them as a transition from Primary to Secondary School, as the schools were closed due to the Covid – 19 pandemic. We were able to mark their moving on with a special socially distanced outdoor graduation ceremony on the last day of term. This was even more emotional than normal due to the circumstances, but the heartfelt messages from staff feature in their yearbooks – created virtually but handmade by Mrs Phillips and Mrs Hogg!

The new school was due to open on 20th April 2020. Due to the Covid-19 school and construction site closures, this was not possible. The school has however been completed and we were able to move in to our new building for the start of term in August. Thankfully we were able to arrange for every pupil to visit the new school ahead of the school closures with our Nursery children giving their new setting the biggest thumbs up ever. We look forward to welcoming you in to the new building when it is safe to do so.

Over the course of Session 2019 - 2020 the school offered opportunities for our learners to develop under the four contexts of CfE, for example:

ETHOS AND WIDER LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY and OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT

- Pupils participated in the full range of sporting events organised by the Active Schools teams and again ran a full timetable of lunchtime activity clubs to promote health and wellbeing and an active lifestyle.
- Our P6 and P7 pupils participated in a range of learning opportunities with staff at St David’s High School as part of our Transition planning.
- Our Nursery pupils were able to broaden their learning in the Community with learning walks, visits to shops and Post Office Sorting Office, and regular trips to Lasswade Library.
- Our P6 and P7 pupils have enjoyed buddy opportunities with P1 and P2 throughout the year .

DISCRETE CURRICULUM AREAS and INTER DISCIPLINARY LEARNING

- All learners have experienced a wide and varied curriculum mapped to progressive and coherent planning frameworks.
- All learners have been encouraged to make connections across curriculum areas by working on interdisciplinary projects in class and at home
- All learners have been able to share their learning with parents and peers by participating in Showcasing the Learning events
- Senior pupils have participated in transition events at St David’s High School developing their understanding of learning in Science, French and English
- All learners in P1 –P7 were given the opportunity to access their GLOW accounts during the school year and were able to put this learning to good use during the school closures where learning continued via Google Classroom.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT 2020-2021

PRIORITY	WHAT WILL WE DO
PRIORITY 1 – Improve attainment in Literacy and Numeracy	Identify learning gaps for all pupils following lockdown. Use PEF funding to provide additional teaching hours to prioritise groups for SFL and reduce poverty related gap
PRIORITY 2 – Improve children’s Health and Well Being	Staff training in Healthy Respect and Emotion Works Introduce Emotion Works throughout the school to develop consistent approach to teaching emotional literacy Implement the Recovery Curriculum for all learners following lockdown Development of Outdoor Learning Opportunities Work with colleagues across the Learning Community to implement updated RERC lessons
PRIORITY 3 – Improve Digital Learning	Continue work from school closure in all classes accessing Google classroom via GLOW Introduce SEESAW in Nursery, P1 and P2 Staff training in digital learning to widen opportunities for learners Develop STEM teaching in technology