

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to all who sent me such warm good wishes, cards and flowers during my recent absence. I was very touched and the lovely home-made cards which arrived in the post really cheered me up. Thank you to Miss Spencer for acting up in my absence and to the staff team for supporting her.

**Staff Update**

A warm welcome back to Mrs Brown who has returned to school after long term absence after surgery. She is enjoying settling back into her role as p1/2 teacher and will continue to work closely with Miss Allen to plan opportunities for the class and p1 children to work with each other. Miss McLernon has now taken up a post in Killearn Primary and we wish her well.

**Permanent Supply**

You may hear the children occasionally refer to teaching staff you are not familiar with and who do not appear on our staff list. These teachers are not Strathblane School staff, they are ‘permanent supply staff’. I thought it would be useful to explain why these staff are in Strathblane Primary at times so that you are fully informed.

Stirling Council, like all councils across Scotland face great challenges due to a teaching staff shortage. A lack of essential supply cover is putting a strain on schools and authorities trying to cover teacher absence for training purposes, illness, maternity leave, meetings etc. To try to address this Stirling Council has agreed a policy of having a bank of permanent supply teachers who are linked to each ‘Learning Community’. These supply teachers are fully qualified and are appointed by the lead Head teacher in that community through competitive interview. I am the lead Head teacher in the ‘Balfron Learning Community’ and Strathblane is the ‘base school’ for permanent supply teachers. This means that I line manage and quality assure these staff and allocate them to schools across the learning community as required. Currently there are 8 permanent supply including two recently appointed staff, Miss Andrew and Mrs Lepper. Whenever these teachers are not working in other schools they will be based in Strathblane and will assist with learning and teaching activities and cover classes if required. As of today all staff are allocated to other schools to cover teacher absence on a long term basis, either full time or part time. The agreement for ‘permanent supply teachers’ is that after undertaking two years of supply they will be granted a permanent teaching post in a school within this learning community when a vacancy arises.

**School Uniform**

Our children are beautifully turned out in their school uniform and I thank you for supporting our uniform policy. I have however noticed that a growing number of children are wearing trainers to school and I would ask that all children wear proper school shoes and keep trainers for sports activities. I thank you in anticipation of your support with this.

**Outdoor Learning and play.**

As a school we embrace the outdoors and believe children should access outdoors in all weathers. We have wonderful grounds for our children to enjoy and we are encouraging our teachers and classes to engage in regular daily walks around the playground for 15 minutes every day. I joined p1, 2, 3 and p6/7 today for their walk and it was great fun and exhilarating. The daily walk stems from an initiative called, ‘The Daily Mile’ which started in St Ninian’s Primary School, Stirling, supported by Stirling University and has attracted attention from far and wide. The HT was awarded the Pride of Britain Award, ‘teacher of the year’ for her contribution to tackling childhood obesity and promoting health and wellbeing through exercise. Unlike many schools our children are fortunate to have vast grounds to run around in if they choose. However more exercise can only be a good thing!

Just a wee reminder that all children should have wellingtons and waterproofs for rainy days and warm jackets, Gloves and hats for very cold days. **Please label everything**.

**Welly Day on November 7th**

We are still collecting clean 2 litre clear bottles to help repair the greenhouse. Please hand in to the school office.

**Lost property**

We have a regular amount of lost property which we store in the medical room in school. Children and parents/carers can access this to locate lost items at any time. Every last Friday our lost property is put out into the front porch so please take time to check it if you are missing anything!

**Parent Consultations**

As you know form the list of dates sent out at the start of term, parent consultations are due to take place on Wednesday 4th and Thursday 12th November 6-8pm. Miss Spencer is meeting with staff this Thursday to organise appointments and these will be sent out after that.

**Communication**

During the year parents have two formal opportunities to attend parent consultations with their child’s class teacher, and parents of children on staged intervention attend two further formal review meetings per year. Out with these times please feel welcome to contact the class teacher, in the first instance, if you wish to discuss your child’s progress and learning. You are also welcome to meet with me to discuss any concerns you may have.

Unfortunately there have been a number of occasions when parents attending a meeting with myself or a class teacher assert that, ‘lots of parents’ or ‘other parents’ have concerns or issues and on some occasions, although discouraged by staff, other parents have been ‘quoted’. This can lead to misrepresentation and is unfair on the staff member and the person who is being quoted. I therefore would ask any parent who has a concern or issue to speak directly with school staff themselves.

My staff and I will always endeavour to listen, understand and work with you to find a resolution or to give assurances. Please feel welcome to come into school or contact me no matter how small your concern may be.

**Website**

Please remember to check our new school website for updates and information. You can sign up for alerts which will let you know when new information is added. If there is anything you would like to have included on the website please contact Miss Allen in the first instance. Each class has responsibility to keep their own class page updated and children are encouraged to share any achievements out with school on the website too. If you have pictures of your child participating in an event or receiving an award that you would like posted on the class page please send in an electronic copy if possible, or a paper copy for scanning.

**School Upgrades**

**STAFF ROOM**

The staffroom in Strathblane Primary was upgraded during the recent break. Damp cupboards were replaced and new seating and flooring was installed.

**WIFI**

I have again contacted Stirling Council about a date for installing WIFI in the school, but have been informed that there is ‘no confirmed date’.

**ICT**

As you will know from our School Improvement Plan (available on the school website) and from recent questionnaires issued to parents and carers we are developing an ICT strategy for our school. We have asked that it is this area the Parent Council focus on to fundraise for. Stirling Council schools have a ZERO budget for ICT therefore our strategy, which will focus on upgrading current ICT over three years, will be supported by fundraising only. Thankfully Strathblane Primary School has a very supportive and hardworking Parent Council and Fundraising Group and parents/carers and staff who support their events. Together we can, over time, improve and enhance facilities and opportunities for our children. The outgoing parent council have donated £1,500 from last year’s fundraising money to the school to support ICT upgrade.

**BOILER ROOM/HEATING ISSUES**

The building of the boiler room which was delayed due to planning issues should now go ahead at Easter time with a whole new heating system planned for installation next summer break. It will be another summer holiday of major upheaval but will be worth it and hopefully by this time next year we will be facing winter in a much cosier school. In the meantime we need to just add extra layers during cold spells. Our heating is insufficient and we are limited to the number of plug in heaters we can use in an emergency as these overload our system. Our staff, janitor and children have been very understanding and patient for a long time, but the end is in sight!

**THE C WORD**

I cannot believe I am writing this already but we are now about to go headlong into the preparations for our Christmas events e.g. The Christmas Show, The School Pantomime and the Church Service to name but a few. This is an extremely busy, but very happy term for staff and children alike. We look forward to inviting our parents and community along to share the learning at the finished events however, in the meantime if you see a member of staff approach you smiling broadly, they are looking for volunteers, or a big favour!

**CHRISTMAS CARDS**

Please could all orders be returned by **Friday 30th October**? Cheques to be made payable to Strathblane Primary School. Please forward correct amount if paying in cash. Thank you for your support.