



Parkhead Primary School & ELC



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Dear Parents/Carers,

With our festive break beginning today, I'd like to thank all of you for the warm welcome you have given me in my first term as Head Teacher at Parkhead Primary School. It has been a very quick and busy term getting to know families, staff and some of our wider partners. As Mrs Gordon and I have recently joined the Senior Leadership Team we have been very lucky to have Miss Moses passing on her knowledge about routines, history of the school as well as what is going well and working with us to identify next steps for improvement.



Thank you to those of you who completed our last quick question about what you'd like to keep, adapt and adopt here at Parkhead Primary. Your feedback is so valuable to us!

Mrs Delargy & The Parkhead Team

What you'd like to keep...

My children really enjoy attending PPS. The teachers have a nice presence around my children.

Supportive and inclusive ethos is fantastic! Keep hold of your teachers - they are golden.

The teachers and the learning environments.

The caring attitude the staff have towards pupils.

Teachers have always been very helpful with we have needed extra assistance for learning.

All the staff are friendly and helpful

The school values. The inclusive atmosphere and helping everyone to succeed and be the best version of themselves.

Breakfast club, values, atmosphere, excellent

Communication—teacher is fantastic at keeping you informed, sending see saw updates etc.

Academic excellence and advancement than other councils, Email comms, lovely meet & greet of kids & parents at PTA and other school events.

The staff, the emphasis on the school values in every aspect of the pupil's day

Some of the teaching staff are excellent and really make a difference to the pupils.

Warm and considerate staff

Friendliness of the staff

Lots of opportunities for parents to get involved and come into the school

What you'd like to adapt:

What you'd like...

Our response...

More nursery staff for children.

We have ratios of between 1:8 and 1:10 in nursery depending on the length of the child's session. We are meeting these requirements. However, we are aware that there have been some key staff absences recently and this has had to be covered by other staff who are not our usual staff members. We aim to maintain familiar faces when we are having to call upon supply staff, wherever possible.

Earlier breakfast club start time.

A number of weeks ago we were able to adapt the start time of breakfast club to begin at 8:00am instead of 8:10am. We have already had positive feedback to thank us for this change and hope it has eased the pressure for the families who use this service.

Support for fussy eaters at lunch time.

We encourage families to get in touch if there is anything we can do to support their child in our dining hall. We want our children to have a healthy and balanced diet and are more than happy to support individuals who require this wherever we can.

For the children to have the same start and end times as this creates difficulties at pick up with longer waiting times for older children.

I have recently become aware of a number of families who this is an issue for. This also has other implications so I will be issuing a quick question to gauge feedback on start and finish times. [Click here to complete this.](#)

Less litter on the school premises.

I have noticed this recently. Respect for environment is something we will continue to address.

More outdoor learning and better use of outdoor space. Improved use of playground space.

Outdoor Learning is an area within our school improvement plan and plans are underway. We've had Learning Through Landscapes in to help us in planning to make the most of our outdoor space.

Spending school funds on something other than technology such as iPads.

Although having access to devices to support learning (particularly as we look to improve the process for pupil profiling of learning) is important so I understand why this has been a focus for spending in recent years. However, we will also share how we have used our funds to support and enhance other areas of the curriculum and support.

Music tuition. More opportunities for class wide musical enjoyment and more targeted instrumental tuition.

I am passionate about the expressive arts and believe that learning an instrument and/or having the opportunity to perform can open up even more doors for our learners. I will endeavour to explore any further options to expand our expressive arts curriculum.

Swifter resolution of poorly behaving children.

I understand. All children have the right to an education including those who struggle socially and emotionally and those who do not. We will continue to work with families and other agencies, where required, to improve the educational experience for not only them but the other children who share a class with children who can become dysregulated. We are also addressing children who make the wrong choices and natural consequences are in place for these pupils. We are also going to re-launch our school values and expectations of pupils in the new year. We thank all of our parents and carers for supporting us with this when we make contact to discuss behaviour.

Better explanations of events & what's involved.

We will now seek to provide an additional description of what you can expect at the various family/learning events we hold in school.

Friday packed lunch contents—my child does not receive a drink.

I will look into this and what should be provided in the packed lunches.

I'd like the return of golden time as it gave children something to work towards.

Whilst we don't have golden time, we do have lots of ways the children can experience a sense of achievement e.g. class token jars, line of the week, cloakroom of the week, class/table points, house points.

Extra-curricular activities and push children towards any inter school competitions participation.

We will seek out opportunities for pupils to get involved in these opportunities and will bring these to the attention of pupils and parents in our communications.

Have a clear indoor shoe policy where even the youngest pupils are expected and guided to change into and from plimsolls.

In the poorer weather, I agree that a change of shoes is beneficial. However, the learning time saved by not sending children to change their shoes 6 times per day is something I noticed in my previous school post covid. What we could consider is in winter/wet weather encouraging children to wear wellies but change into different shoes. I'd be keen to get feedback on this.

What you'd like to suggest:

Your ideas...

Our response...

More after school clubs.

We'd love to offer more extra curricular experiences for our pupils. Our staff offer after school clubs on a voluntary basis but we will look into whether we can offer or signpost more externally organised after school clubs.

Maximise learning time and share specific learning with parents.

We have now re-introduced the ['Fantastic Friday' videos](#) and the 'weekly' snapshot updates as well as photos and blurbs of what the pupils have been learning can be found on the class pages on our school website. If you are not sure how to find your child's class page you can find it by clicking on the links found on our [staff page](#)

Sharing learning sessions being available after school (early evening or Friday afternoon) to allow working parents and families to attend.

We understand that attending sessions during the day can be tricky for parents. Therefore we do try to ensure these are either offered at the beginning of the day and towards the end of the day or after school wherever possible. We will take this feedback on board when planning future family learning sessions.

More fun/interactive ways of learning spelling. More use of West Calder library and the community woods and garden. Swimming lessons.

We have recently been working as a team to consider how to ensure learning is meaningful, relevant and inspiring to our pupils including accessing and using the community to enhance our curriculum offer. This is a work in progress and something we will continue to work on.

Asking parents for help, either financially or through donating time to improve the school.

We are mindful to not ask parents/carers for too much money, especially at expensive times of the year but we will consider ways we can ask parents who can and are willing to support us financially to do so. We have a fantastic PPA group who support us with fundraising but we would also love to have parents on board to help us improve the school as part of our Parent Council and have recently sent out a form for anyone who is interested in being part of these discussions.

New lighting for the stage to then have more shows, talent showcases or drama opportunities for the children.

I am passionate about the Expressive Arts and have also noticed that the school would benefit from a new lighting system. This is expensive but we are happy to explore any options to make it possible. We also have a group of pupils who have learned how to work the lights and will be great peer tutors to pass on this wisdom to younger learners to enable us to put on more performances.

Could PPA share what they are doing outside of big fundraisers and give families the opportunity to contribute throughout the year where they are able to?

We will share this feedback at our next PPA meeting which is being held in January. I'm sure the PPA will be delighted to share their fundraising plans and how families can contribute if they are able.

Complete phone ban—phones are detrimental to mental health and other children having them in school pushes parents hand as to when to get them.

The previous AAL guidance encouraged pupils to 'bring a device' to support learning how to use this device to access online learning. However, in recent years this has often been incorrectly translated as 'bring a mobile phone to school' which was never the intention.

I agree it has then often made families feel the pressure to buy a phone for their child long before this could be deemed necessary. I wholeheartedly agree that primary school children should not have free access to their own mobile phone device. The negatives of having a mobile phone at this age far outweigh the positives, in my opinion. Please do not buy your child a mobile phone because you believe the school encourages mobile phone use in children. This is not the case. I would actively advise against children having free access to mobile phones, particularly smart phones.

Stronger academic curriculum, more challenge for highly able pupils and perhaps more day visits for pupils to explore Scottish heritage and history and more trips into the community.

We are undergoing a curriculum review. We'd love to hear everyone's feedback regarding what curriculum means to you and what our learning community values in our curriculum. Read on in this newsletter to find out more.

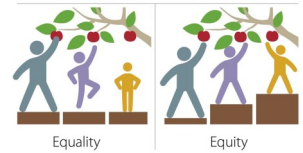
Offer this kind of opportunity for feedback more often.

We will provide a 'Quick Question' in every newsletter to find out your views. Please look out for these. We'd appreciate a high response rate.

Equity—Attainment & Attendance

Mr Jeffrey and Mrs Hogarth share a development post this year to improve equity, support and attendance throughout the school. One of the various supports they have introduced is a 'walking bus' for some identified individuals to support them getting to school safely. This has been very successful and we are seeing an increase in attendance as a result.

Our pupils have also recently been involved in creating weekly challenges in the playground. This has allowed pupils to develop their leadership skills and also for all pupils to be involved in fun and engaging experiences (with healthy competition!) in the playground. It has been lovely to see them all participating so enthusiastically.



Cycling to School—Safety Reminder

If your child cycles to school we'd like to remind everyone that whilst we absolutely encourage active travel to school (by walking, cycling or by scooter) this should be done safely. We've had reports of some pupils riding bikes in an unsafe manner and without helmets.

I'm sure all parents would agree that safety of children is paramount and they should take all safety precautions. Particularly the basic safety rule of wearing a helmet when riding a bike.

If your child does not have a helmet, we can provide support in obtaining one. Please just contact the school and we can assist you with this.



P1-3 Christmas Performance

This year the P1-3 pupils put on a Christmas Variety Performance where all children got to sing their favourite Christmas songs for their audience and our older children had the opportunity to narrate the Christmas story. A massive well done to all of our little performers. They did a fantastic job of putting us all in the Christmas spirit. We are aware that some of the little ones were difficult to see when the audience was in place. We thank you for your patience and understanding and will take this on board for future performances.

You can see a short recording of the P1-3 children on our website.



Lovely News!



Before I started at Parkhead Primary School, we had 5 members of staff expecting babies. I am delighted to announce that all 5 babies have now arrived safely—some took us by surprise and arrived before their due dates! Mrs Dobie, Miss McGinlay, Mrs Griffiths, Mrs Watton and Mrs Blackburn and their babies are all doing well.

We shared with our pupils at the church on Wednesday that we now have 4 baby girls and 1 baby boy who have joined our Parkhead family. We are delighted for all of them and I'm sure you'll join me in wishing these staff members well during their maternity leave.

Choir Christmas Concerts

Our lovely P5-7 Choir group have had a busy time recently performing at a local residential home and then for an audience of parents/carers, visitors and staff. They did a wonderful job of putting us all in the Christmas mood. Their lovely voices coupled with many memorised actions was very impressive! Thank you to our choir and to Miss Hart for all of the effort put into making this possible. We will shortly be adding a short video of some of their performance for you to view on our school website. We hope you enjoy!



More Lovely News!

We are excited to announce the lovely news that this week our wonderful Depute, Miss Moses, just got engaged to her partner. We love hearing wedding bells and we are just delighted for them!



Our Curriculum Development

Our school improvement priority is:



I met with the Pupil Council and we did some self evaluation of the school.

The pupils told me the following...

Things going very well:

- ◇ Children's rights and children being involved in the vision and values.
- ◇ Staff are caring and help us to feel safe in school. We feel happy, safe, respected and included within our school community.
- ◇ All staff support us to do well. They challenge us to try new things and build our confidence. They know we might not get things right first time and actively encourage us to persevere to find solutions.
- ◇ Our staff are good role models for us. They promote positive relationships in and around our school.
- ◇ Our school has strong nurturing approaches which support us to build positive relationships and wellbeing.
- ◇ We get helpful feedback on our work. We understand what we've done well and what we need to do to improve.
- ◇ Our learning is helping us develop strong literacy and numeracy skills. We feel confident that we are able to use these skills to support us in different situations.
- ◇ Children and young people are developing skills and attitudes that support them to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning.

Things the pupils felt were OK but needed to improve were:

- ◇ The school to provide a variety of learning opportunities that match our interests and aspirations and that as we move through the school, we are able to deepen our learning through specialising in some areas.
- ◇ The need for everyone to show respect towards others and staff and pupils to set high expectations for behaviour in our school.
- ◇ To ensure no one in our school feels discriminated against because of their age, gender, ethnicity, religious belief, sexual orientation or disability.
- ◇ Ensuring pupils listen attentively and behave well so that we are able to get on with our learning.

Parents/Carers—Please complete our [Quick Question](#) about what Curriculum means to you!

Positive Relationships, Positive Behaviour

During term 1, staff introduced a new positive relationships and positive behaviour policy. The strategies used, ensure that pupils are reminded of our expectations and given an opportunity to change their behaviour. They can also have an opportunity to reflect on their behaviour with an adult and the consequences of their actions as well as what they can do to resolve the situation and to prevent this happening again.

In order to ensure children are able to meet high expectations of behaviour and attitude to learning, we are working on getting all of the basics right consistently across the school.

This is why we want to ensure all pupils are:

- **Ready** – Knowing and living our school values, coming to school wearing uniform and demonstrate that they are ready to learn by coming into school calmly and quietly and listening to and following instructions from staff.
- **Respectful** – Moving through the school calmly and quietly and ensuring they are not disrupting the learning of others. Having positive and polite interactions with others. Following instructions and trying their very best in class and throughout the school.
- **Safe** – Following the school rules to ensure they are being safe and that others are able to feel safe.

We will remind pupils of these expectations and if a child is not meeting this, we will refer to the following reflective questions:

- * Are you showing that you are ready for school and ready to learn?
- * Are you being respectful of others and of the environment?
- * Is this a safe behaviour?

We value our partnerships with parents and thank you all for your continued support in ensuring these expectations are met and that you are supporting us and your child to uphold the Parkhead values.

Uniform Expectations

In the last newsletter I highlighted the uniform expectations. It was pointed out that we forgot to mention that both grey and black skirt/trousers/shorts/pinafores are acceptable. Apologies for that.

By having uniform expectations that everyone is expected to meet it creates a sense of belonging and community as well as a collective respect for the rules and expectations we have for our pupils in school. We thank all of our parents and carers for supporting us with this.

I am aware that since the pandemic, uniform expectations have not been reiterated or enforced. I am also aware that we are half way through a school session which I why I had stated that we don't expect people to go out and buy new shoes at this time but that if/when these are being replaced over the coming months, that black shoes are purchased as part of our school uniform.

Some parents have also purchased school coloured hooded/zip up tops for their child to wear in place of a cardigan or sweatshirt. Again, as money has already been spent on these items for this school session, they are perfectly acceptable for the remainder of this session.

We can make a referral to the school clothing bank for new items for any families who would benefit from this. This can be done at any point in the year by us here at school.

Very soon, we'll have an easily accessible sustainability station for parents to access as we have a parent helper who has kindly agreed to lead this and work with a group of pupils to ensure it is kept stocked up and well presented. Our unit has just arrived and is awaiting stock to fill each box!

Therefore, **if you have any uniform items your child has outgrown, please send these in and our pupils can add these to our stock.** Our Sustainability Group will then arrange to have these laundered, packaged up and available to families.

We can't wait to see how many uniforms we can ensure are re-used instead of buying new. Great for the environment and the pocket!

Staffing Update

As Mrs Watton is now on maternity leave following surprise safe arrival of her baby girl, we have a new acting EYO joining us in the nursery after Christmas to cover Mrs Watton's maternity leave. Her name is Iona Harrow and she has been visiting the nursery to get to know the children and staff. We are very much looking forward to having her join us full time after the Christmas holidays!

Some other news is that Mrs Purdie has announced that she will be retiring in February. Mrs Purdie will be a real loss to Parkhead Primary School and to the profession but I'm sure you'll join me in wishing her all the best in her new exciting chapter. We will let you know in due course who will be teaching in Primary 7a after the February holiday. We know that change can be tricky for children and we will work to prepare our children as best we can for Mrs Purdie's departure. If your child is Mrs Purdie's class, please do get in touch if there is anything we can do to make this transition easier for your young person.

Mrs McAffer is sadly leaving us as she embarks on a new exciting chapter in her life, as she continues her studies. Although we will all really miss her here at Parkhead as an Early Years Practitioner, we are very happy that she is taking this exciting step and we wish her all the best. Her post has been advertised and we hope to have a new EYP in post soon after the new year.

Welcome to Miss Brady who has joined us in the school as an additional Pupil Support Worker Monday – Wednesday until Easter. We are also currently seeking a Pupil Support Worker for the Thursday and Friday until Easter to allow our PEF interventions to continue. This post has been advertised and we hope to have this filled in

Diary Dates

Friday 20th December	Festive Holidays Commence
Monday 6th	All Pupils Resume
Tuesday 7th	PPA Meeting @ 7:30pm
Friday 10th	Winning House Party - Mull (blue house)
Monday 13th	Choir After School Club 3:15 - 4:15pm
Wednesday 15th	Big Breakfast Healthy Eating Event
Tuesday 21st	Photography Catch-up Day Nursery - P7 Classes
Friday 24th	P5b Class Assembly @ 9:15am - Parents/Carers Welcome
Friday 24th	JrNBA Competition (invited players only)
Friday 31st	Reminder No Assembly—P7b assembly rescheduled to February
Friday 31st	Dress Down Day (P1 - P7 Classes Only) - Donation of bottle for PPA Easter Fayre is very much appreciated.
	Click here for 2024-25 term dates

Communication

You can call us on 01506871404
Our [website](#) has lots of information for parents and carers
You can [email us](#) with any questions you have
Fill in our [online questionnaire](#) with your query