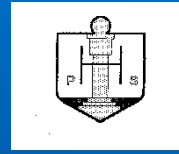


Houston Primary School

'Nurturing the Hearts and Minds of the Future'



Newsletter August 2020

26 August 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back...we've missed you!

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well. The return to school has been an exceptionally busy time. We are all learning to adapt to our new school routines. Our school is back operating at full capacity and it is looking clean and refreshed following the internal re-paint over the summer break. Despite the little changes here and there, our children have adapted wonderfully, shown great resilience and return each day excited to see their friends and learn together.

We extend a warm welcome to all those joining us for the first time at Houston Primary. We sincerely wish our new families a long and happy partnership with us and trust you are settling into village life.

Our school website hosts our HPS COVID Return to School Guide. A link to this document was emailed to all parents in June then again, once it was updated, just before school started in August. It remains live on our website. It outlined the key operative changes for our return to school, together with helpful information on school uniform etc. I hope you found this informative. An updated School Handbook will also be uploaded to the website. Please make sure you have a look.

Under the new guidelines, and in line with risk assessments carried out to ensure the ongoing safety of pupils and staff, I would ask that any communication for the class teacher is emailed to the houstonenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk rather than in letter or note form.

Despite the current restrictions, we remain proud of and committed to the positive relationships between our families, the wider community and ourselves.

Staffing News

Joining the Houston team this year is Laura Sim and Andrew Patterson. Both join us for their first year in teaching. Due to some long term absence and continuing maternity cover within the core staffing, we are joined by Ruth Gillen and Laura Duff who are both fulfilling Non Class Contact Time roles across the school on a full-time basis, and Alison Steele is fulfilling a similar role on a part-time basis.

Congratulations to Mrs Susan McGeoch and her husband, Neil who are expecting their first baby at the end of the year.

Our Early Learning and Childcare Class has an ever-expanding staff. At the start of the new session we were joined by Laura Anderson and Helen Greenhorn, both Depute Heads of Centre, Hayley Cochrane and Zoe McIntyre joined us as Early Learning and Childcare Officers (ELCOs) and Alison McKnight, previously one of our Support Workers, was appointed as one of our new ELCO also.

New ELCC Building

Due to lockdown the completion of our new Early Learning and Childcare Centre was delayed. Completion is now expected to be November but if you have been around our school lately, you will have seen how impressive it is all looking as it takes shape.

Some aerial footage was recently shared on the Houston Community Council Facebook page and this can also be seen on our school website.



Homework

The use of Google Classroom proved a lifeline during the months of learning whilst at home. In order that our children continue to use and build upon their IT skills, any homework tasks will be communicated, and often completed, using the Google Classroom and Google Docs. For those of you new to this way of working, a guide will be issued to help you at home. Each child will use their GLOW login and password to access the Google Classroom tile which sits within GLOW. Alternatively, the Google Classroom App can be downloaded for easier access.

We have attached some useful guides for your reference.

There will be no Personal Organisers transferring information between home and school this year. **Please check your child's homework folder/school bag for details. Homework started on Monday.**

PE guidelines state that all PE must take place outside and we will endeavour to do this as much as possible so please ensure your child is suitably dressed. Until updated PE guidance is issued, your child can come to school dressed in their outdoor kit (see HPS Return to School COVID Guide). **A list of class PE days is also attached.**

The Annual Data Sheets, which normally come home to be updated at the start of each school session, will also be done electronically. This will be accessed through the Parents Portal, which ParentPay is already part of.

ParentPay is the cashless system used by Renfrewshire schools. Anyone new to us will be issued with instructions on how to sign up soon. This online platform allows you to

receive communications from the school, give consent for outings and make payments for trips and lunches.

Text messaging is used for very short messages due to the 121 character limit.

Thank you for your continued support with our new drop off and collection routines. Despite alarm caused due to large numbers gathering during the first few days of the new session, I am delighted with the response to requests to minimise adults on the paths surrounding the school in an effort to support Scottish Government advice to physically distance and the wearing of facemasks in crowded areas.

A small number of complaints have been addressed and further advice was sought from the Corporate Health & Safety Team from Renfrewshire House. A site visit to audit our procedures was carried out last Wednesday. The officer was entirely satisfied with what was in place, recognising the constrictions, i.e. the exits and volume of pupils. It was recommended that the school should continue to share regular reminders of government guidance.

We have introduced a 'Sibling Meeting' point in the rear playground where you may wish your children to meet and then leave the school together. This has been explained to all of the children. The meeting point is by the basketball stands.

School staff are at the gates at the beginning and end of each day. Our priority at this time remains the safety of our children and staff and I would ask that adults remain on the back path and avoid approaching school staff to convey any messages.

We would normally issue an Annual Calendar at the start of each school session to help you plan ahead. Although not ready to do so yet, we hope to have one to share with you soon.

Thank you to our parents, carers and wider community members who consistently support our school. In this photo, the children are seated outdoors in the Outdoor Classroom on the logs supplied by local tree surgeon, Mr McGill.



School Photographs

Julie Vance Photography will be in school week commencing Monday 7th September 2020. Dates for classes will be communicated soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Jennifer Murray
Head Teacher