

*Successful Learners* ✨

*Confident Individuals* ✨



*Responsible Citizens* ✨

*Effective Contributors* ✨

# *St. John the Baptist Primary School*

## *August 2023*

### *Welcome Newsletter*

*Please keep this newsletter in a safe place as it contains  
vital information regarding the school.*

Website: [www.st-johnthebaptist-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk](http://www.st-johnthebaptist-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk)

Twitter: @stjohnthebapps





## Head Teacher Welcome

Welcome to the first newsletter of session 2023/2024. As we wish to maintain our 3rd Eco Flag and wish to be more sustainable, all newsletters will be sent electronically via the School App and are also uploaded to the website for reference.

I continue to be impressed with the high standards of behaviour and uniform already demonstrated by the children and would like to thank you for your support in this. I have enjoyed getting to know our new Nursery and Primary 1 parents and carers and working closely with you to ensure that your children have settled and feel safe and happy in school.

We have an "Open Door" Policy whereby a member of the Senior Leadership Team should be available to see you if you feel you have an issue you urgently wish to speak about. However, we would be grateful if you could either call or email myself, Mrs Beacom, Mrs McNulty or Mrs Clarke first as we are very busy and sometimes in class. We will endeavour to call you as soon as we can.



## Staffing Update

Please see below for details of staffing updates:

<i>Current Post</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Update</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Starting Date</i>
<i>Head Teacher</i>	<i>Marie Beacom</i>	<i>Acting Head Teacher</i>	<i>Carol Anne McNulty</i>	<i>Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September</i>
<i>Depute Head Teacher</i>	<i>Carol Anne McNulty</i>	<i>Acting Depute Head Teacher</i>	<i>Kirsteen White</i>	<i>Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September</i>
<i>Principal Teacher</i>	<i>Laura Layden</i>	<i>Acting Principal Teacher</i>	<i>Roz Horne</i>	<i>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August</i>



## Annual School Calendar

The annual school planner is also being distributed electronically. I would ask that you save this on your mobile phone if possible so that you can note the huge range of events we have planned for this session. Please note that all dates are provisional and subject to change in accordance with current guidelines received from the Scottish Government and South Lanarkshire Council. In order to keep the school community safe we will make decisions nearer to the event and only if necessary.

It has never been more important to keep up to date with communication from the school and again we would like to highlight our means of communicating information to you.

<i>Parent Pay (via the email address you previously provided.)</i>	<i>Appropriate communication regarding your Parent Pay account</i>
<i>Twitter</i>	<i>Information about pupils' attainment and achievement</i>
<i>School App</i>	<i>This will be our main form of communication and will be used to send out reminders e.g. about forthcoming events, Newsletters, School Calendar etc.</i>
<i>Website</i>	<i>General information e.g. newsletters, Advent and Lenten homework etc.</i>
<i>Texts</i>	<i>Information that has to be communicated fast e.g. the school bus is late or cancelled due to inclement weather, school closures etc.</i>
<i>Paper copies of letters, flyers etc.</i>	<i>Information that comes from other stakeholders e.g. Active Schools and other appropriate information.</i>
<i>Google Classroom</i>	<i>This platform will also be used to communicate some of the above as a "back up" system to ensure that you receive information but will generally be used for the purpose of communication between parents and class teachers e.g. homework.</i>
<i>Parent Portal</i>	<i>This form of communication is new to South Lanarkshire Council schools and will gradually be used more and more e.g. EV5 Permission Slips will be communicated in this way so it is very important that you sign up for this. When the system is fully up and running we will revise our method of communication.</i>



### Standards and Quality Report

Also issued with this newsletter is our Standards and Quality Report Parents' Report for Session 2022/23. This is a summary of our attainment and achievement throughout the year and we would appreciate if you would take the time to read it and celebrate the achievements of the children and school as a whole.



### School Improvement Plan

The Parent version of the School Improvement Plan is also issued with this newsletter. This highlights our priorities for improvement in the nursery and the school.



### Annual Data Check

If you have not already done so we would be grateful if you could return the annual data check forms as soon as possible. It is vitally important that you note any changes particularly to mobile phone numbers so that we can contact you in an emergency. Any parent who has changed address should contact the school office.



### Pupils Exiting the School at 3pm

Primary 1 exit the school via the bottom gate at 3pm. This area is particularly congested and so we will keep the order that classes are dismissed the same every day so that parents and carers can judge when their child is exiting the school and then move forward. Classes will be dismissed in the following order:

**Room 3 -> Room 4**

Primary 2 and 3 exit the school via the middle gate at 3pm. This area is also congested and so we will also dismiss the classes in the following order:

**Room 3 -> Room 5 -> Room 6 -> Room 7**

We would be grateful if this message could be passed on to any grandparent, relative or childminder who collects children from the school.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.



### Absence Procedures

As part of our absence procedures, if your child is unwell and will be absent from school then you should call the school office to let us know. You may leave a message on the answering machine or speak to Mrs Houston or Mrs Cowan and we will record the reason for your absence.

If your child is absent and we do not hear from you then we will call you to ensure that your child is safe. If we cannot contact you then we will use the alternative phone numbers on your annual data check.

We would also be grateful if you could contact the school if you are choosing to take family holidays during term time. There is an increasing number of parents who are doing this which interrupts your child's education. Unless you contact the school and have a valid reason for removing your child during term time, we will record your child's absence as unauthorised in line with South Lanarkshire Council's absence procedures.

Thank you for your continuous co-operation with this matter.



### Google Classroom

Google Classroom proved to be invaluable for our remote learning during lockdown. We will still use this resource to display weekly homework tasks for each class. We will also ask you to submit certain pieces of homework so that we do not use paper. I would urge every parent to ensure their child can access this as we will also use this learning platform to share achievements within the class and communicate other information.

If you are experiencing difficulty accessing Google Classroom, please email or call the school office.



### Mobile Phones

*In line with South Lanarkshire Council policy, we request that you only send your child to school with their mobile phones if absolutely necessary. Whilst I understand that there may be a need for some children to bring a mobile phone to school to clarify pick up arrangements etc. we do not want to encourage this. There have been incidences in other schools where children have filmed other pupils in the classroom and this footage has appeared on social networking sites. We thank you for your support in this matter.*



### PARK SMART

*Once again I ask for your co-operation with the issue of parking. In the interests of pupil safety please be considerate to pedestrians, including children, other road users and local residents when dropping off or picking up your children from school. Please also ensure that you do not park in front of residents' driveways, on the pavement or in the bus bay as it is difficult to manoeuvre buses around parked cars. Please continue to keep the turning circle at the bottom gate a pedestrian area at 3pm for Nursery and Primary 1 parents and carers. A huge thank you to the parents who are either parking at the church or further away from the school. Although the road outside the school is very congested at 3pm, parents and carers are very patient in waiting their turn to exit North British Road.*

*Thank you for your continuous support to keep our precious children safe!*



### Dangerous Snacks!

*To ensure the safety of all children we ask for your support in maintaining our school as a "Nut Free School". We have a number of children with a severe nut allergy and the best way to avoid any danger to pupils is to ban all snacks containing nuts e.g Nutella, Snickers etc. We would also appreciate if you do not send in birthday cakes or sweets when it is your child's birthday. As we are a Health Promoting School I would also ask that you continue to ensure that your child's snacks are healthy. Finally, please ensure that children do not bring lollipops to school to avoid the risk of choking. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.*



### Parent Council

*The Parent Council AGM was held on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August with the following office holders elected:*

<i>Chairperson</i>	<i>Kevin Smith</i>
<i>Vice Chairperson</i>	<i>John Devitt</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Kelly Weir</i>
<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Mhairi Devitt</i>
<i>Church Representative</i>	<i>Father Ivan Boyle</i>

*The date of the next meeting has still to be arranged.*



### Primary 1 Welcome Mass

*We would like to invite all Primary 1 parents, carers and families to a Welcome Mass in the school Gym Hall at 5pm on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September. This is an excellent opportunity to be formally welcomed into the school and parish community by school staff and Father Ivan. There will be tea and coffee available afterwards so that you can meet school staff and other parents and we would love for you to join us.*



### Curriculum Evening

*As stated in the school calendar we will host a Curriculum Evening on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 5-6.30pm. This will give all parents the opportunity to meet with their child's Class Teacher and see their child's learning environment for the first time this year. Class Teachers will display resources and discuss strategies which are used to teach the children. Please note this is NOT an opportunity to discuss your child's learning progress. You will be given this opportunity at the first Parents' Meeting on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October. This event is for parents and carers only and so we would appreciate if you did not bring your child. We would respectfully suggest that you arrange a babysitter or only one parent attends. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.*



### After School Clubs

We are planning a range of lunchtime and after school clubs for various year groups throughout this session. We already have 2 very successful clubs running for Primary 3-7 pupils namely; Chess every Monday and Judo every Thursday. Please contact the school office should your child wish to join any of these clubs.



### Primary 1 Intake

We welcomed 47 children into Primary 1 this year and they have settled quickly into full time education and are thoroughly enjoying school. They have been very well supported by their excellent Primary 7 buddies.



### School Uniform

Our children continue to look very neat in their new school uniforms including blazers. As stated before I am impressed with the high standard of uniform and feel that the children are very distinctive in the local community. Thank you for your continued and excellent support. Children should wear school rain jackets over blazers in adverse weather or navy outdoor jackets to match the school uniform. Whenever possible pupils will go out to play at break times as indoor playtimes will only be organised when absolutely necessary. Pupils should, therefore, dress appropriately.

Please also remember to purchase a pair of soft indoor shoes (Gutties or Penny Blacks depending on your age!) for your child.



### Water Bottles

Please issue your child with a reusable water bottle every day so that they can have access to drinking water whilst in class. Research has shown that children learn better when their brains are hydrated. Children are allowed to drink water any time the teacher is not teaching.





### School Photographs

We have arranged for Maureen Bell, the photographer, to come to the school and nursery to take school photographs on Monday 6<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November. She will begin at Primary 1 to do the same and work through the school over the 3 day period. For this reason children should wear full school uniform for those days, even if they have P.E.



### Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club proves to be very popular and any parent wishing their child to attend should contact the school office. Please note that since it is a Breakfast Club and not a Childcare Club, children are expected to eat something.



### Celebration of the Sacraments

Please note that the annual calendar contains dates for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Bishop Toal has still to release the date for Confirmation. For ease of reference dates are as follows:

Sacrament	Location	Date	Time
First Reconciliation	Church	Thursday 14/03/24	6pm
First Communion	Church	Saturday 18/05/24	11am & 1pm

Father Ivan and I have arranged for children to enrol for each sacrament at 10am mass in St. John the Baptist Church on the following dates:

First Reconciliation	First Communion	Confirmation
Sunday 05/11/23	Sunday 12/11/23	Sunday 19/10/23

Please note that Primary 6 children will be given the opportunity to enrol for the Pope Francis Faith Award at a school mass on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November which is All Saints Day.



### Free Apples!

We have an abundance of cooking grade apples in the small orchard garden at the middle gate. You are welcome to help yourself as some of the children and staff have already done so. We can vouch that the apples are good quality as the staff have enjoyed a range of home baked apple cakes and pies!



### Dates for Your Diary

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> September	5pm Primary 1 Welcome Mass
Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> September	5-6.30pm Curriculum Evening
Fri 22 <sup>nd</sup> -Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> Sept	September Weekend Holiday
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> October	3.30pm Parents' Night
Mon 9 <sup>th</sup> - Wed 11 <sup>th</sup> Oct	P7 Residential Visit to Barcaple
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup> - Fri 20 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Midterm October Break



### Apologies!

I am aware that this newsletter contains a huge amount of DOs and DON'Ts but I must emphasise that they are designed to ensure the safety and security of your precious children. Including the nursery, the school now has almost 400 pupils on the register. If everyone follows the rules then the children will be safe and our fantastic school will run smoothly.



### Finally... A Word of Farewell

I have been totally overwhelmed by everyone's kind words, generosity and beautiful gifts on the event of my retirement. I have enjoyed 13 years of working with fantastic children, parents and staff to make the school the success it is today.

I am sure the children will continue to SHINE in Mrs McNulty's very capable hands.

Mrs Marie Beacom

