

**MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER**

Dear pupils, parents/carers and friends of Rattray

I am writing firstly, with a huge thank you from all at Rattray Primary School. Thank you for your outstanding support and engagement with home learning. We feel very proud of how we, as a school community, are working through these challenging times together. I hope you have all managed to stay safe and were able to enjoy the Easter break.

As lockdown continues, as a school staff we are aware that within our school community there will be many families experiencing different challenges from the norm. We really do appreciate that some families are juggling working from home, home learning, caring for relatives alongside the huge stressors related to the economic challenges that are being encountered by many during this difficult period. It is important to us that you know our school and staff are here to support in whatever way we can. Whilst we encourage and would hope our pupils continue with their learning at home, we also understand that this can be difficult. Be reassured that our expectations are adjusted to suit the current situation and staff are mindful that on some days home learning will be a chore for families. Please start each day afresh as we do not want any child (or their families) to be worrying or feeling pressure about learning at home.

**Thank you**

Thank you to everyone who managed along to the school on the 19th March to give our P7s and school crossing patroller Willie a wee send off. It was a wonderful turnout and it was so lovely to see you all. We do hope that there will be an opportunity to see you all again before the school year is out.

**Parent /Carer Communication**

We are working hard to ensure our communication in this current situation is clear, relevant and timely. We will continue to post regular updates from PKC with links to documents for our families through ParentPay (specific and personal communication), our school app (general and generic communication) and our Facebook page (general and generic communication). Can we please ask that any day to day communication with the school is still made through the school email address rattray@pkc.gov.uk. This email address in checked regularly and any issues/queries can easily be relayed to the relevant person. If you require a call back from the school, please leave a phone number on which we can contact you too.

It is crucial that the we have your most current email address, as this is our only means of communication with you at the moment. Can you also please ensure that your email address is up to date on Parent Pay, as communication personal to you can be sent through this facility. For example, we will require your email address in order to send out our pupil reports later this term, without an address you will not receive your child’s school report. We currently have 29 pupils (16 nursery/13 school) not registered on ParentPay or who we do not have an email for. Please do not assume that as you have registered for an older sibling you need not have to do it for a younger sibling.

**School Social Media Pages**

A reminder that our school Facebook page is being updated regularly. This is a good way to hear about pupil learning, school and community events and general information. We are also sharing current PKC updates. <https://www.facebook.com/Rattray-Primary-School-496557997081831/> We cannot receive private messages through Facebook messenger. Whilst some staff have administration rights to our Facebook page, we can’t guarantee that it will be checked regularly. However, all comments we receive on Facebook are very welcome, and we do try to respond to them, albeit not immediately.

**Rattray School App**

Our school app is live in the Apple and Google Play Stores. Using the app, you can also keep in touch with our events, news and receive important messages from us. To download the app, search ‘PSA’ or ‘PSA primaryschoolapp’ in the play app stores. Once you have opened the app, search for Rattray Primary School and download the app. You will be given a username (you should leave this blank) and our password is 1980.

**Home Learning**

Teams is the preferred method of sharing learning with our pupils and families, and it is proving to be an invaluable educational tool for us. We are delighted that the levels of learner engagement with our online learning materials continues to increase. This is largely due to the efforts from our staff who are working so hard to provide learning opportunities which will encourage, motivate and engage our pupils. Using Teams to share learning has really helped strengthen our relationships with families who have been very supportive and positive in their praise of our online learning efforts, we really appreciate this. Thank you to all the teachers for the incredible commitment they have shown to our school and pupils.

The staff love seeing the children’s posts, comments, and home learning tasks so please continue to upload these. It would be helpful for staff if all pupils were able to post learning daily, as teachers are building daily feedback opportunities into their day, but as previously stated we understand that family circumstances may make that difficult.

At Rattray, we do check all our pupil’s engagement with online learning and their submission of learning activities, and we will be contacting some families as we want to ensure that all our families can access Teams if they choose too. Therefore, if you are experiencing any difficulties in being able to engage and access our online learning materials please get in touch via the school office rattray@pkc.gov.uk As we may have solutions which can support your child’s learning.

Please remember that Microsoft Teams can, and should, be accessed through pupil GLOW accounts. Please also note that Office 365 is available free of charge, also through GLOW to download onto home devices. If you have lost the details for your child’s login, please contact the school email address too.

**Teacher’s Online Presence**

As I am sure you can appreciate, working from home will also be a challenge for our staff too. Some of whom have children, caring duties to other family members and such other challenges to overcome. Whilst our teachers are going above and beyond now to ensure continuity of learning for our pupils, it is also very apparent that being tied to a computer or laptop all day is not conducive to anyone’s wellbeing. Therefore, in line with government and council advice, I have advised teachers that they should not be ‘online’ all day, every day. Each teacher will be available online to the pupils and children each day for 3 ½ to 4 hours during the school day, the times they are available will vary depending on the teacher and their own family circumstances. Teachers will ensure that their availability is posted online. Whilst offline, teachers will be planning learning and participating in other school/council activities. This means that your child will not always get an instant response from their teacher, however they will endeavour to respond at the first available opportunity.

Teaching staff (in line with other schools in the local area) will sign off from Teams at 12 noon every Friday this term. Teachers are entitled to time for planning and preparation and this is working effectively for us during this period as we can also share good practice and take time to meet virtually as a staff.

**Contacting School Staff**

Please find below the contact email addresses for all teaching staff which can be used over the school closure. This will give you direct access to your child’s teacher to support you with your learning. For any other issues please contact Mrs Robertson or for IT related issues contact Mr Brown.

Mrs Robertson HT gw09robertsonjoanna2@glow.sch.uk

Mr Brown DHT gw14browncraig1@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Ritchie Nursery gw10ritchiejillian@glowmail.org.uk

Ms Harrison Nursery gw16harrisongillian@glow.sch.uk

Ms Wigmore P1 gw19wigmoredonna@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Gregg P1/2 gw18gregghelen@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Russell P2 gw16russellsarah@glow.sch.uk

Mr Masterton P3 gw16mastertonross@glow.sch.uk

Ms Johnstone P3/4 gw18johnstonelyndsey@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Strachan P4/5 gw14strachandebbie@glow.sch.uk

Ms Rae P4/5 and Nurture gw19raegyl@glow.sch.uk

Mrs McCarthy P5 gw14mccarthyfiona@glow.sch.uk

Ms McCulloch P6 gw17mccullochkaren@glow.sch.uk

Ms Robertson P6/7 gw19robertsonalison1@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Johnstone P7 gw09martindiane2@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Brodie PST gw09brodiesandra@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Case RCT gw19casekatie@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Murray RCT gw19murraycaroline@glow.sch.uk

Mrs Walker RCT gw17walkermarielouis@glow.sch.uk

**Learning Equipment**

A large supply of jotters and stationery have been dropped off at Scotmid and Bowls of Help (Blairgowrie Bowling Club). Please take what you need but take sparingly.

**Children’s Activity Centres**

As some of you may be aware, Newhill Primary School is being used as one of the PKC Children’s Activity Centres for the children of key workers and other children in the community. A number of staff from Rattray and other local schools have been supporting this activity centre and other centres too over the past few weeks. My thanks go to all our staff who have been involved in this. Perth & Kinross Council is providing childcare for the children of key workers at six Children's Activity Centres and through partner providers and childminders.

Children’s Activity Centres look after the children of key workers who have no other means of childcare. Key workers involved in the response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak can [submit applications](https://bit.ly/pkc-covid-support) for places at Children's Activity Centres by visiting the following link <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/coronavirus/schools?fbclid=IwAR2I9TrT5qvI6nJ1m3WVqkpqDTKocEbuM8uwuie9r387d5l9fe2XAfK5MDI> Additionally, key workers whose partners work in food production, agriculture, postal and delivery services or in the agriculture/food haulage sectors can apply for places if they cannot care for their children at home.

**School meal provision**

While schools remain closed, school meals cannot be provided in school buildings.  PKC will provide direct payments to families entitled to free school meals with the first payment being made week commencing 23 March 2020. Payments will be made to parents fortnightly.

If you have not made an application for free school meals previously because of automatic entitlement (likely to be Primary 1 to Primary 3 pupils) parents should email ecsschools@pkc.gov.uk or call 0345 30 111 00 to let PKC know bank details to process payment.

If you are now in a position where financially you need to apply for free school meals. An application can be made by completing an online application and providing evidence of qualifying benefit criteria, by following this link <https://www.pkc.gov.uk/article/17410/Free-school-meals-and-school-clothing-grants-primary-and-secondary> If a family has a tax credit letter or a universal credits statement, pictures of this can be sent as proof. If an application is completed quickly together with proofs of benefits, families can be processed for free school meals within a matter of days.

In light of current school closures, any prepaid school meal funds will remain in pupil accounts until schools reopen. Alternatively, parents/carers can request a refund of any prepaid school meals funds by emailing SchoolMealRefunds@pkc.gov.uk stating each pupil's name, class and school.

**Community Support**

Several local organisations have sprung up in response to the current situation. As a school we can put you directly in touch with them or arrange for items to be delivered to your homes. Therefore, if you are struggling in anyway please do get in touch with us. One such local group is Bowls of Help, which some of our parents are involved in. They provide a community food and toiletries larder alongside other supplies available for those struggling financially. They also provide delivery. Only yesterday, another community larder was placed outside the hub. So, please if you are struggling or if you can donate items please get in touch with these organisations or the school.

**Allocation of School Place and Placing Requests**

The Scottish Parliament passed The Education (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Coronavirus) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 which come into force from 23 April 2020. These Regulations make amendments to the legislation relating to placing requests and the procedures for appeals. The changes made by these Regulations are necessary as a result of coronavirus.

The Regulations amend the time limits relating to decisions on placing requests and amend time limits relating to the hearing of appeals. The deadline to notify parents of decisions about placing requests for the coming school year in August has been extended from 30 April to 31 May 2020. The time limit for hearing any appeals submitted has been extended from 28 days to 3 months.

Perth and Kinross Council are working to ensure that **all parents will receive a decision about their placing requests by 31 May 2020**.

**P7 Residential – Lendrick Muir**

We are delighted that we were able to arrange a full refund for all our participating pupils. Thanks to the office staff for all their efforts in supporting the return of this money to our families.

**School Handbook 2019/20**

Our school handbook for next session is available to view on the council website or in paper form from school office. Visit

<https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/32309/Rattray-Primary-School-Handbook-2020-21/pdf/Rattray_handbook_2020-21.pdf?m=637110714968230000>

**Roots of Empathy Project**

It is fantastic that P2 are still able to participate in this worthwhile project. Mrs Russell and the boys and girls of P2 are delighted that baby Alfie has learned to crawl and he loves dancing. Alfie has been showing his moves via video which have been posted on the class’s teams page. The children have noticed how big Alfie has grown, and many of them have said how much they are missing him coming to visit their classroom. We can’t wait to see more videos – thank you to Alfie’s Mum and Granny.

**Virtual Glee Challenge 2020**

During term 3 the Glee choir perfected their performances of Light Up and Make Your Own Kind of Music ready for their big performance at Perth Concert Hall. They even had Glee coach Ruth visit and give them amazing feedback. It was sure to be the best performance yet!

Unfortunately, our Glee choir were unable to perform at the annual Frission Foundation competition on April 1st due to current circumstances. The whole choir were disappointed by they should be assured their hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed.

The Frission Foundation knew how many disappointed young people there were across the country so they made the decision to launch Virtual Glee. This has provided an opportunity for pupils to join a national choir, take part in workshops ran by highly skilled musicians and will ultimately lead to a whole choir virtual performance. We know that some of our families are taking part and we can't wait to see the results.

**Holiday dates and Inservice staff training day**

Both staff and pupils will be on their May Day holiday this coming Friday 8th May. There is also a previously timetabled staff training day on Friday 22nd May. We are not expecting children to participate in online learning on these days, and staff will not be available online either.

On behalf of all the staff I would like to thank you for your continuing support. If you have any questions or queries regarding any of the items within this newsletter, please don’t hesitate to contact the email address below.

Please stay safe, take care and do stay in touch with the school in whatever way you can.

Yours faithfully



Joanna Robertson

Headteacher (Interim)

rattray@pkc.gov.uk

**Future Dates (In anticipation of a school return this school session!!!)**

**May 2020**

Friday 8th – **Public Holiday school closed to all**

Friday 22nd - **Inset Day school closed to pupils**

**June 2020**

Wednesday 3rd – Nursery Sports Day

Thursday 4th – Sports day (Upper School AM/Infant school PM)

Wednesday 24th June – Nursery Graduation

 Thursday 25th June – P7 Prom in Rattray Community Connect

Friday 26th June – P7 Leavers Assembly

Tuesday 30th June – Prize giving (Upper School AM/Infant school PM)

**July 2020**

Wednesday 1st – School closes for Summer Break (12 noon)

**\*FURTHER DATES MAY BE ADDED\***