

Being the best I can be

PORTMOAK

Headteacher's Newsletter – October 2020

Dear Portmoak Families and Friends,

We have had a very settled return to school following the October break, with staff and pupils very glad to be back. As we have only had two weeks of school since the previous Headteacher email, there is not much to report. Here is a little update of some things that have happened:

- The whole school enjoyed a Halloween Fun Day on Thursday 29th October (please see photos below from that day).
- Our two eldest classes began their virtual Mandarin lessons.
- P6s and P7s had their first Bikeability lessons with Mr Ainsworth.
- Mrs Baird and P3/4 installed a Raingarden with the support of Kinnesswood in Bloom and Brian D'Arcy.
- We are now able to offer hot lunches again and most classes are enjoying eating in the dining hall once again.
- Our committees have recommenced.

Looking ahead to the rest of this month:

- Our younger classes will be rehearsing and presenting the nativity 'A Bundle of Joy'
- The older classes will begin preparing for their pantomime 'Cinderella'.
- P1/2, P2/3 and P3/4 will each go on a trip to Portmoak Moss.
- Parent Contact sessions are being arranged – please make sure you have completed the survey for your child.
- We have a Big Scottish Storyteller virtual session booked for each class.
- Book Week is the week of 16th November and P1-P3 will be issued with their Bookbug/Read, Write, Count bags then.
- Mrs Doran, the Community Link Worker for the Kinross Cluster, will be in school for a few days working primarily with our P7s, but also with some P6s.

Best wishes, Paula Woods



Updates

Covid Update

Ventilation and Heating – As part of the Scottish Government mitigation measure which state that our rooms must be well ventilated, the windows in each of the classrooms need to be kept open throughout the day. If your child is complaining of feeling cold, or if the forecast is to be particularly cold, you may wish to send in an extra jumper – this does not have to be Portmoak colours. I will be meeting with the PKC property team over the next few weeks about how best to achieve a balance between heating and ventilation, taking into account our storage heating system.

School Lunches - our new system of most classes having their lunch in the hall is going well. The pupils are served their school lunch to minimize movement in the hall. The tables and chairs are cleaned in between classes using them to ensure we are following COVID health and safety guidance.

Further Updates – an update to national guidance has just today been issued. I will take time over the next few days to digest this and will let you know of any changes in due course.

House Competitions

Each term, our House Captains will create a House Competition for the whole school. Last term, there was a 'Question of the Week' and the winners were Lomond. All pupils in Lomond received a goody bag as their prize.

This term our House Captains have decided to come up with a different challenge each week. For the first challenge, pupils have been asked to create a fireworks picture using any media they wish. This can be completed during free time in school or at home, or for some classes will be part of a whole class lesson. All pupils who take part in the competition will receive 10 house points. The House Captains will judge the pictures and give 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards within each class. 40 house points will be given for 1st place, 30 for 2nd place and 20 for 3rd place.

Committees

Due to classes having to stay in their own bubbles, we are doing committees differently this year. The p1/2, P2/3 and P3/4 classes will complete committee activities in their classes. For the first term, they are working to develop our Eco journey activities and were looking at battery recycling during their first committee session.

P5/6 have been split into 2 committees – Rights Respecting (Mrs Woods) and Eco/STEM (Miss Kettles). The Rights Respecting committee were planning a link with Malawi schools and looking at the steps we need to take on our Gold Rights Respecting journey. The Eco/Stem committee were working out how to reuse the plastic containers that are used for fruit and salad in school dinners.

P6/7 have also been split into 2 committees – Digital (Mrs Mossom) and Health & Sports (Mrs Cole). The Digital Committee were making 'How To' guides for Glow and Teams to support using them at home. The Health & Sports Committee were looking at ways to ensure we are promoting health and sports within our school.

Finally, we have four JRSOs who were elected by their classes. The JRSO committee work with Mrs Davies and today were planning activities and competitions for the year which promote road safety and active travel to school.

Student Teachers

Claire Williamson, a PGDE student teacher from Aberdeen University is completing a 6-week placement in the P6/7 class until Friday 11th December. We also have another PGDE student teacher, Sarah-Jane Pollard, starting a placement in the P3/4 class from Monday 9th November until Friday 4th December. She will return for a longer placement block in January.

PE

As we are currently required to deliver PE lessons outdoors, Mr Ainsworth is focusing on running, with the aim of older children achieving a 5K run. Mr Ainsworth always gives children the opportunity to walk if they are finding it difficult, however we have an increasing number of children complaining about injuries and not being able to take part in PE.

If your child is unable to take part in PE due to injury, please inform the school. If we are not informed of injury or illness by a parent, pupils will be expected to take part in the PE lesson.

Raingarden

The P3/4 class have been involved in the creation of our rain garden. Bryan D'Arcy organised the installation of the rain garden and the P3/4 class planted a variety of plants and added leaves and foliage to make it look inviting. The class have also learned how a rain garden works and the benefits of reducing runoff from the roof during heavy rain in terms of reducing flooding.

Pupil Council

The Pupil Council met this week with Mrs Mossom and received their Pupil Council badges. They worked together to start planning a Reindeer Run event. The pupils will raise money by running wearing a santa or reindeer hat. Half of the money raised will go to CHAS and the other half will be for the school. More details about this event to follow.

Inset Days

This is a reminder that Thursday 12th and Friday 13th November are In-service Days and the school will therefore be closed to pupils. Staff will be working on the curricular areas of Literacy and Numeracy. They will also be analysing data that we have gathered in assessments in reading, spelling, writing and Health and Wellbeing in order to look at next steps for our learners.

Flu Vaccinations

Flu vaccinations for our Portmoak children are not scheduled until Wednesday 9th December and we will share more information about this nearer the time.

Autumn/Winter

A number of our children are coming to school without waterproof coats and a few were caught out this week with drizzly rain at break and lunch times. Please make sure your child has a waterproof coat with them each day, no matter what the weather forecast states!

Friends of Portmoak School: Parent Council

I would like to say a very big thank you to the Events and Fundraising Team for organising three events for us this term – the Bag 2 School initiative, the Christmas Card fundraiser and the Usbourne book sale. The Bag 2 School was very successful in raising over £130 for school funds.

Don't forget to save both school numbers 01577 867290 (school office) and the absentee line & answer phone on 01577 867196