Burray Primary School

August 2026 Newsletter

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Welcome back!

It has been lovely to welcome back all our children, families and staff to school after the summer break. We have had a busy start to the term, and it has been great to see the children enjoying their classroom activities. This week, I have been in the classes speaking to the children about what makes them proud of Burray School. The children had lots of thoughtful ideas including being proud of Burray because it is a sporty school; the resources that are available to them; the activities/ equipment available in the playground; being good readers; having good sportsmanship; being kind to others; our teacher; and having a big school even though we are a small island!

This school year ahead holds lots of interesting and exciting opportunities. Across the year, we will have projects related to looking after wildlife in our local area, cooking, enterprise, life in Neolithic times, Space, careers/ world of work, and our community and democracy. We can't wait to get started!

Dates for your Diary

At the end of the newsletter, there is a list of important dates. We will send a print copy of that page home for you to keep for reference.

Open door policy

It has been wonderful to see everyone at Hope and Burray on my return from maternity leave. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with me if you have any questions, ideas, or concerns. I am always happy to be contacted by email at catherine.mackenzie@orkney.gov.uk. I operate an open-door policy, and an appointment can be made with me at any time by contacting the school office or by emailing me directly.

I received the feedback from the surveys that were sent out last term. Thank you to everyone who took the time to share their views and ideas. Your feedback is valuable and helps us as we consider and shape our plans moving forward. I will take some time this term to share the main themes and ideas arising from the surveys with the Parent Council Chair and at a Parent Council meeting. A number of comments related specifically to aspects of my leadership of the schools. As the majority of the surveys were anonymous, it has not been possible for me to follow up directly with individual parents. However, if there are any matters you would like to discuss, please feel very welcome to come and speak with me at any time. I am always happy to listen, provide context around decisions or approaches, and have an open conversation about any concerns or questions you may have. I genuinely value feedback, both positive and constructive, and appreciate the open and positive relationships we have within our lovely school community.

Staffing

Until Christmas, I will be working on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesday afternoons, and Fridays. Mr Huggard will also be Acting Head Teacher on Wednesday mornings and Thursdays.

Homework

We have met as a team to discuss a clear policy on homework across the school. We have considered carefully the evidence around the effectiveness of homework and also balancing this with the busy lives that children have outside of school and their need for rest and relaxation too. We believe that supporting children's reading through home activities is particularly effective. For some children we recognise that they need clear distinction between home and school; therefore, please just speak to us if you feel that homework will not work for your child.

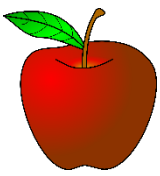
Homework activities:

- All children will have reading books for homework. For younger children, this will be their school reading book and any words as appropriate. For older children, this will be their Accelerated Reader book from the school library. Older children will also have books they are reading in class but these will stay at school.
- We will share the children's Times Tables Rockstars and Sumdog logins. Parents/carers can choose to use these tools if they wish to support their child's fluency and recall in their number work.

Additional homework information available on request:

- There are also sheets available for Times Tables Rockstars. If you would like these, please ask us and we will provide them for you. We can also provide information about maths learning on request.
- We are happy to share information about the sounds being taught for spelling as part of our Sounds Write programme. If you want to be told on a regular basis the sounds your child is working on, please ask and we will provide these.
- If your child is undertaking the 'Closing the Numeracy gap' intervention to support their number skills, there are additional activities that can be sent home if you would like these. (Miss Stanger will inform you if your child uses Closing the Numeracy gap.)

General Information, e.g. water, snacks, etc.



- Please remember PE kits. We have PE on Wednesdays and teachers will let you know the other PE day in their newsletter. Children should wear comfortable clothing for PE such as t-shirt, jogging bottoms, and trainers. Footwear must be suitable for PE.
- Please make sure your child has a water bottle which they can refill with water at school and a healthy snack each day.
- As the weather can change at any moment, please do send your child with a coat every day***. Please label all clothing.***

Attendance

- Please remember to contact us by 9.30am if your child is not going to be at school due to illness or an appointment. Please let us know why they are off as we need to be aware of illnesses etc that may be circulating. For all other absences, please email Mrs Mackenzie or Mr Huggard, e.g. to attend family wedding, etc.

Parents Evening and Reporting

We have had a look at the reporting and opportunities for parents to find out how their child is learning and progressing. Reporting opportunities will include:

- Parents Consultation Evening in Term 2 and Term 4
- Termly Celebration of Work event (afternoon and evening): An opportunity to come in every term to look at children's work and jotters. This is a nice opportunity for parents/carers to speak to their child about their learning achievements. Mrs Mackenzie will also open one evening per term so that you can pop in to look at your child's work if you can't make it during the day.
- Children will choose an item of work they are particularly proud of in each term.
- In Term 2, we will give you a written copy of your child's attainment levels in Literacy and Numeracy at the Parents Evening.
- End of year summary in Term 4 with a copy of child's attainment levels across the curriculum and a personal comment about your child's year in school
- Each term we will let you know your child's attendance.
- Updates on SeeSaw, e.g. photos, information about learning happening in the class, etc
- Opportunities to share learning, e.g. Assemblies
- Achievement Certificates

We will post information about what the children have been learning in class/ school on SeeSaw. It can be tricky to ensure photos of children's work are clear enough to look at, and therefore items of work will be available termly in school to look at instead. We are keen that the teachers' time is prioritised in preparing learning experiences for your child's class. Please do pop on a 'like' for any SeeSaw posts that you see!

We will consult about these updates at the Parent Council.

P6 Outdoor Activities

The Outdoor Education Instructors will be leading activities for P6 children from Hope and Burray. This activity costs over £122 per pupil. We have been able to provide this free of charge thanks to a generous donation from the Parent Council combined with our school fundraising fund from school events etc.

Communication

If you need to get in touch with the school about any aspects related to admin, medicines, meals, attending appointments, or if your child is going to be absent from school due to illness, please contact the school office.

In school, please **do not** use SeeSaw to send any important information about absence, appointments, or being collected early/ or by different people as we might not see this in time. **Please contact the office with this information.**

Time for Reflection Assemblies and Class Visits (Religious Observance)

Dr Marjorie MacLean, Church of Scotland, is working with us to deliver the Time for Reflection (Religious Observance) provision and from time to time, other visitors may support us with this too. Please see the dates for your diary for details of any visits with Dr MacLean. Parents/carers have the opportunity to withdraw their children from Time for Reflection assemblies. If you wish your child(ren) to be withdrawn, please email Mrs Mackenzie/ Mr Huggard.

School Diary Dates

There will be more dates to follow but some initial dates for your diary are listed below:

<u>Useful dates for your diary: Term 1</u>

Thursday 10th September: Dr Marjory McLean visiting classes for 'Time for Reflection'

Tuesday 15th September: Parent Council AGM and Meeting It would be super to see lots of you there.

Thursday 17th September: Fluoride Varnishing

Monday 21st September 2-3.30pm: Parental Engagement Afternoon/ Opportunity to look at children's work and jotters. Mrs Mackenzie will also be in school from 6-7pm for parents/carers to drop by to look at their child's work if they can not come during the school day.

Tuesday 22nd September: Flu Vaccinations

Friday 2nd/ Monday 5th/ Tuesday 6th October: P6 Outdoor Education at Hope School

Wednesday 7th October: P1 Heath Screens

Friday 9th October 2.40pm: End of Term Service at school

Friday 9th October: Last day of Term 1

<u>Useful dates for your diary: Term 2</u>

Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th October: In-service days, pupils not at school.

Wednesday 28th October: First day of Term 2

Thursday 12th November: Childsmile Dental Inspections

Tuesday 8th December: Afternoon and Evening School Christmas Show

Thursday 10th December: Group of children singing at Hope Church Carol Service

Friday 18th December 2.45pm: Christmas End of Term Service with Dr MacLean