



Burray Primary School Newsletter: August 2024

Welcome back!

It has been a great start to the term and it has been lovely to see everyone back in school. Welcome to our new starts in Nursery and Primary 1. The children have settled well into their new classes and we have welcomed Mrs Armet and Miss Smith to our team for this year.

We have started the term with the P6 Outdoor Activity days which brought together children from Burray, Hope and North Ronaldsay. They worked really hard, tried new things and have been a credit to the schools. It was lovely to have all the P7s together too for a couple of days and thank you to parents/ carers for assisting with the transportation of the children to the schools. This was very much appreciated.

Rights Respecting Schools



As part of our work to incorporate the United Nations Right of the Child across our work in school, we are working towards the Silver Award of Rights Respecting Schools. Once a fortnight, we have a focus assembly on a child's right or an area relevant to children's rights. We are starting to make links to rights in learning experiences and in our policies and procedures as a school team.

Useful dates for your diary

w.c. 9th September: Children are taking part in a range of Science festival activities

Thursday 3rd October 2pm: Family Learning event

Friday 4th October: Continuous reporting termly summary to be sent to parents

Friday 11th October at 2.30pm: Harvest Assembly in school with Dr MacLean. All parents are welcome and children will be sharing their learning.

Friday 11th October: Last day of Term

Wednesday 30th October: First day of Term 2

Friday 8th November: Dr MacLean Remembrance Assembly; parents are welcome to attend.

Thursday 28th November: Parents Evening

Friday 29th November: Christmas decorating afternoon

Parent Council

Our next Parent Council Annual General Meeting and Parent Council meeting will take place on 11th September 6.30pm. Please come along; it would be super to see as many parents as can make it along to get involved.

PE kits

We would encourage children to bring a change of clothes for PE as this develops good habits for changing out of sweaty clothes after physical activity. Children should wear comfortable clothing for PE such as a t-shirt, jogging bottoms, and trainers.



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

Please make sure your child has a water bottle which they can refill with water at school. As we are a health promoting school, we recommend a healthy snack for break, e.g. fruit and a yogurt or a carbohydrate such as a bagel.

Useful healthy living information for families can be found in this booklet:

<https://www.vaorkney.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/NHS-Orkney-Healthy-Families-Leaflet.pdf>

As the weather can change at any moment, please do send your child with a coat every day. We would be grateful if you could label your child's clothes and belongings.

We would be grateful if you could help your child to arrive at school on time as this helps them to be ready to start the school day and helps to ensure a calm and purposeful start to the day.

School jumpers

We are conscious that our guidance on school uniform should help to reduce costs for families. In Scotland, wearing school uniform is not compulsory.

At Burray, we have jade school jumpers, white, navy or jade t-shirts, or white/ navy polo shirts available as uniform to be worn at school. We understand the broad range of opinions that exist on potential benefits or disadvantages of uniform. We do not have a strict uniform policy and leave decisions on clothing to the discretion of parents in consultation with their children.

We would appreciate when **children are on trips or for school performances**, if children could wear their school jumper as it promotes a smart appearance when children are representing the school and makes it easier for children to be quickly identified when we are out and about.

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.**

If you have any concerns, queries or just any issues that you would like to talk through, parents/carers can get in touch with me at any time using my email address (catherine.mackenzie@orkney.gov.uk) or by contacting the school office using their phone number. If your child is going to be absent during the school term for any reasons apart from illness or attending appointments, please email me directly to let me know.

Staff will try to get back to parents in a timely manner within working hours. Staff won't always manage to get back in touch on the same day due to other work commitments. We will however try to contact you as soon as we are able to do so.

Christmas Show

I can't believe I am mentioning Christmas already...! Just to let you know we will be having a Christmas production this year; more details to follow at the start of Term 2. There will be an opportunity for children to participate in the Evening Carol Service at Hope Church too on Thursday 12th December.



Continuous Reporting

We will be using SeeSaw to provide information about your child's learning across the school year. Following survey responses at the end of the year, we will trial a 'continuous reporting' approach this year rather than using an end of year report. We have updated our guidance to include an overview of the planned continuous reporting for the year. Please see attachment.

Information about learning/ homework

Class newsletters will include information about what the class is working on this term in school. Look out for these on SeeSaw!

We met as a team to agree homework expectations for this term. We appreciate the importance of consistency of expectations across the school. We have also taken on board advice from Educational Psychology in our approach. We hope that our approach will give you enough information to be involved in supporting your child's learning and progress at school without adding to what can already be a busy family life! If you have any feedback on this, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

How will we share information about learning and homework?

At the end of the week, a review of the week will be posted on SeeSaw. This will have bullet points about the main areas of learning covered that week in class. This will include:

- the specific focus of Maths
- the specific Sounds Write spelling sound/focus for that week

If you wish to review any learning that your child has been undertaking, e.g. Maths, Sounds Write spelling sound, you will be able to check this weekly review and follow this up if you wish. If you need further information from the teacher to support your child, you are welcome to get in touch.

In P1-3, your child will have reading every week. Depending on their stage of reading, they may also have sounds/ reading words which your child's teacher will send home.

In P4-7, your child will have a book to read for enjoyment at home. Once we have our Accelerated Reading library up and running, they will be able to choose a book and they will complete a comprehension quiz on this book when they are next in school.

Children are also encouraged to use Times Tables Rockstars and Sumdog to practise their Numeracy skills.

From time to time, children may complete a homework project related to their interdisciplinary learning topic in school.

If your child is working with an adult on an intervention to support their spelling or numeracy skills, we will check if you would like consolidation materials for home.

17th May Bulletin- add info Play Spaces Survey

A final call has gone out to children and young people on their views on the play areas and hang out spaces available in Orkney.



An online survey is available here - [Outdoor Play Space Survey \(smartsurvey.co.uk\)](https://smartsurvey.co.uk)

Please complete by 30th September.

School Meal Payments

P6s and P7s need to pay for school lunches. Primary school meal payments can be made online through the Orkney Islands Council website <https://www.orkney.gov.uk/Online-Services/pay-it.htm>

School meals and uniform allowance

Families that are eligible for free school meals and clothing benefit need to apply every year. Even if you have children in P1-5 who all receive free meals, you can also apply for the clothing allowance. If you have not yet applied, please apply here:

<https://www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/education-and-learning/grants-emas-and-bursaries/school-meals-and-clothing-allowances/>

The school receives additional funding related to numbers of children eligible for free school meals.

School Age Payment and Deferred entry to school

School Age Payment has opened for new applications. If your child is deferring entry to school families should apply based on the child's date of birth and **not** on the date starting school.

Your child's date of birth	When you can apply
Between 1 March 2019 and 29 February 2020	Between 1 June 2024 and 28 February 2025
Between 1 March 2020 and 28 February 2021	Between 1 June 2025 and 28 February 2026

Check out further information on the following links [Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods - mygov.scot](https://mygov.scot)



Find help to balance your budget

If you're on tax credits or certain benefits, you could be entitled to five family payments including School Age Payment.

Apply between 1 June 2021 & 28 Feb 2022

The illustration shows a man looking at a document, surrounded by icons of a graduation cap, a laptop, a smartphone, and a school bag.

If your child was born between 1 March 2016 and 29 Feb 2017, you could be eligible for a Best Start Grant School Age Payment of £252.50. You don't need to take up a place at school to get it.

Go to mygov.scot/beststart or call 0800 182 2222.



Help to balance the costs of early learning

The illustration shows a man thinking, surrounded by icons of a graduation cap, a laptop, a smartphone, and a school bag.

Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment is a one-off payment of £314.45 when a child is between the ages of 2 and 3.5 years. If you get Scottish Child Payment we'll check if you can get Early Learning Payment and pay you automatically.



Attendance

Orkney Islands Council have a policy which outlines the responsibility of schools to monitor and track the attendance of children and young people and to intervene if attendance is or becomes a concern. As part of our responsibility in this area, we may need to get in touch with you regarding your child's attendance at school.



If your child is going to be absent from school, please contact the school office by phone or email (by 9.30am) to let them know. Please do not send these messages on SeeSaw as relevant staff may not see it in time.

If your child is not at school and we have not received a message, we will phone or text you to check why they are absent. This is to ensure safety. We need to ask you why they are off school, e.g. illness, etc., because we are asked to record the reason for absence.

If your child attends Nursery, it is also helpful if you let us know if your child is going to be off and the reason for absence; it is helpful for the staff to know who may be running late or is not coming.

If you need to request for your child to be absent for a specific reason, e.g. attending a wedding, please get in touch with me by email (catherine.mackenzie@orkney.gov.uk) or contact the office to ask them to make a phone appointment. A range of authorised absences may include illness, family weddings, lack of transport due to bad weather, sporting and cultural events that are approved by the school, exceptional home circumstances or appointments. This list is not exhaustive. Please note that in some instances, I'll have to let you know that the type of absence, e.g. family holiday, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence according to the policy.

If your child's attendance has dropped or children are consistently late to school, we will get in touch with you to see how we can help and to identify if there is anything that can be put in place to support your child to attend school. We take a proportionate response to this as we understand there are lots of reasons, including bugs and illnesses, that can lead to a temporary dip in attendance and we encourage responsible actions with regards to following guidelines for keeping children off school if they are ill to prevent spread of very infectious illness, e.g. vomiting bugs.

Where children's attendance drops to below 90%, you will receive a standard letter from us to let you know that we are monitoring your child's attendance. This is part of the local authority policy.

Time for Reflection Assemblies (Religious Observance)

Time for Reflection makes a contribution to the ethos and life of the school because it can influence how children and young people develop values and behaviours and it gives an opportunity to plan creative and interesting events which expand or deepen the spiritual awareness of the school community. It is a requirement that schools must plan at least six opportunities for Time for Reflection (Religious Observance) in each school year and share the dates with parent/carers. Dr Marjorie MacLean, Church of Scotland, is working with us to deliver the Time for Reflection provision and from time to time, other visitors may support us with this too.



We have planned the following 'Time for Reflection' dates between now and December:

Dr MacLean popped in to our start of term assemblies in the first week to say hello to everyone.

Friday 8th November 1.35-2.20: Remembrance Assembly – parents are welcome to attend.

We will be holding a Harvest End of Term Service on **Friday 11th October at 2.30pm** and our Christmas End of Term Service will take place on **Friday 20th December at 2.35pm** in the school hall. We hope that you will be able to join us for these services. Dr Maclean will attend our End of Term services also and will give a short talk with relevant songs.

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.

