

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER/CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS



Our vision for Auchnagatt School is a secure, happy place to learn where everyone is encouraged to take pride in themselves, those around them and their work and where everyone's efforts are valued and celebrated.

Dear Parents/Carers

Christmas is going to be different for everyone this year with the restrictions we have in place and I realise that will be disappointing and challenging for many families. This is similarly the case in school but we have been working hard to try to keep Christmas a magical time for the children while adhering to all the current guidelines. Things will be different and I am awaiting final guidance but I think what we have planned will sit comfortably within whatever further advice we are given so any changes will be minimal.

Christmas Cards

As I mentioned in my email to you last Monday we will not be doing our usual Christmas Post. Please **DO NOT** send Christmas Cards into school for children to distribute. Instead each child will make a Christmas Card in school, these will then be shared so that each pupil receives a handmade card on behalf of their class. This not only complies with Covid rules but is more environmentally friendly.

Pupils will also make a card and calendar to bring home to their own family.

Parties

Each class will have their own party - see below for dates, all parties are in the afternoon.

I would ask that children 'dress down' for their party, they will need clothes that they are comfortable in all day and are warm enough for going outside at break time and lunchtime. If they have a Christmas jumper this would be ideal.

Thank you once again to the Parent Council who are providing the funding for the food and prizes for the parties.

Santa's Visit

Those of you who live in the village may have seen Santa's Sleigh arrive at the Village Hall over the



weekend, if you have not seen it yet it is worth coming down for a look. Pat and John Anderson have worked very hard to build this and it certainly brings some festive cheer to the village.

Santa is not able to visit in person this year but he is going to send us a recorded message from his grotto in the Great Hall at Crathes Castle. In his message he will let the children know that he will leave their gifts in his sleigh outside the Village Hall. All being well technology and weather wise, the children will watch the recording on Monday 14 December then each class will walk down to the hall with their class teacher and an elf (many thanks to Mrs Edwards and Miss Greenlaw for volunteering for elf duty) to collect their presents. We will ask the children to take their presents home to open - it is up to you whether they keep them until Christmas Day.

Thanks again to the Parent Council for supporting us with this.



Christmas Lunch

School Christmas Lunch is on Thursday 17 December.

Although we cannot all sit down together for this, we will have Christmas music and the Parent Council will provide crackers for the children. Children can also wear their Christmas jumper to add to the festive feel.

You should have already returned your form indicating your child's choice for Christmas lunch, if you have not returned this please do so as soon as possible. If your child is not taking the school Christmas lunch, they will require a packed lunch.

Samba Performance

Those of you who have pupils in P2-6 will remember that prior to lockdown all classes received a number of Samba sessions led by Tim Brain from Louder than Life. This opportunity was funded by the Youth Music Initiative. Tim

and the Louder than Life team have been working to produce videos of the sessions for staff to deliver in school, our plan is to work through these and each class record a performance which we can share with parents. This is a pilot and is a steep learning curve for staff but the feedback from pupils has been very positive. We are finding that it is more beneficial to provide a quality experience for the pupils rather than try to race through the sessions, therefore each class will reach a different stage depending on how much they remember from last session and how well they pick up the new learning. Indeed this is totally new to the P1s so our expectation of what P1/2 will achieve is vastly different from what we would expect from the P5-7 class. We therefore aim for each class to perform and record a different aspect from the sessions to share with you. This is very much a work in progress but we will look to share our performances on Google Classroom in the last week of term.

Panto

We are unable to visit the panto as we usually would at this time of year but we are very hopeful of bringing the magic of the panto to school! Aberdeen Arts Centre have a recording of their panto from last year, Aladdin. We have signed up to receive a copy of this and are awaiting further information. Our intention would be to show this to the children during the last week of term.

Christingle

Many of you will know Janet from Maud and Savoich Church, she leads the annual family Christmas service in Auchnagatt Village Hall on the Sunday before Christmas, this has become very popular with locals from the village as well as families from the school. Janet is recording a short Christingle message with craft activities for the children to take part in. Classes will take part in these activities during the last week of term.



Each class will also take part in their own Christmas themed activities, look out for pictures of these on Google Classroom.

In other news.....

Jamesie, who usually comes to visit us for an Assembly each term has also recorded an Assembly for us to watch in classes.

Adverse Weather Arrangements

As we head into the colder weather I just wanted to remind you of the adverse weather arrangements. Should the school be required to close this will be announced on Aberdeenshire Council's Website:

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/Apps/school-s-closures/>

You also have the option to sign up to receive email alerts when your school(s) updates their closure status:

<https://online.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/myAberdeenshire/>

A message will also be left on the School Information Line: Tel: 0370 054 4999 then 021240. Please note that, "where school transport is not running, please do not take your child(ren) to school yourself, unless it is safe to do so. If you do take your child(ren) to school, you must also be able to collect them at the end of the day or earlier if the school is required to close".

In the event of a closure class teachers will use Google Classroom to post work as we do for homework.



Term 3

Term 3 is due to begin on **Tuesday 5 January** but we are waiting to find out if this will be a return to the school

building or virtual learning. We will begin the term with a whole school co-operative week focusing on literacy, with a particular focus on different languages. Exactly what we do will depend on the situation at the time.

P1 Enrolment Week

Although we do not have details of the dates for next session's P1 enrolment, this usually takes place around the middle of January. Enrolment will be online again this year:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/school-info/admissions/primary-school-registration/>

Please can you circulate this information to any parents of pupils who will be eligible to start school in August 2021.

COVID19

I have been asked by Laurence Findlay, Director of Education to share these messages from the Scottish Government with you:

- "Just because we are still in level 2, that is not a sign of things levelling off in Aberdeenshire."

- *Public Health experts say we are on a clear path towards level 3 if we don't reduce our cases locally.*
- *Nationally, there have been measures announced around Christmas. But just because we can doesn't mean we have to."*

We continue with our enhanced hygiene measures outlined in the August newsletter and in the most recent Risk Assessment available on the school website.

Once again thank you to everyone who has parked at the Village Hall and walked up to school with their children adhering to social distancing, this has really helped to avoid congestion in our carpark and at the school gates. I know this incurs a slight inconvenience but please do continue to do this unless there is an emergency.

Please note our latest guidance is that: "*Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to all school sites (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop off and pick up.*" I would be grateful for your support in this.

In school the advice remains to ventilate the classrooms where possible, this may mean our classes are slightly cooler than they would normally be, please can you ensure pupils come to school with a jumper or cardigan so they are comfortable. Similarly, the children will be outside as much as possible at break and lunchtime as well as some outdoor learning during class time. Please can you ensure they come to school with appropriate footwear and jacket.

Just a reminder that staff, parents, visitors or children **should not** go to school if they:

- have developed COVID-19 symptoms or have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
- are from the same household as someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or
- have returned from a country not-exempt from self-isolation requirements
- have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

If your child or anyone in the household does develop symptoms, you can seek advice from [NHS Inform](https://www.nhs.uk/infocentre/conditions/long-covid/).

Updates can also be found on the link below:
<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/covid-19/>

If you are affected and need assistance, please visit [Grampian Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Assistance Hub](https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/covid-19/).

Online Safety

As children continue to spend more time online I have again included the ThinkUKnow website which has a wealth of trusted information for parents and pupils which is regularly updated as well as advice on where to go for help.



[https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/?utm_source=Thinkuknow&utm_campaign=03f521e658-TUK ONLINE SAFETY AT HOME 21 04 20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-03f521e658-54385293](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/?utm_source=Thinkuknow&utm_campaign=03f521e658-TUK%20ONLINE%20SAFETY%20AT%20HOME%2021%2004%2020&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-03f521e658-54385293)

Diary Dates

Wed 2 Dec	Flu Vaccine
Mon 14 Dec	Virtual Santa visit am P1/2 party pm
Tues 15 Dec	P3/4 party pm
Wed 16 Dec	P5/7 party pm
Thurs 17 Dec	Christmas lunch 12:00 Christmas jumper day
Fri 18 Dec	End of Term
Tues 5 Jan	Start of Spring Term

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support over these difficult times and wish you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. I look forward to working with you again in 2021 when hopefully life will begin to return to normal.



Yours sincerely

Jill Thomson
Head Teacher