

# MARCH NEWSLETTER



*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

Firstly, a huge well done to everyone: parents, pupils and staff, we have all made it through a second lockdown and I do not underestimate in any way the amount of work this has taken nor the number and variety of challenges everyone has had to face and overcome. These are indeed unprecedented times but we are getting there and hopefully this return to school is the start of a return to some form of normality.

However, we are not quite there yet! We do still need to be vigilant to keep up this forward momentum out of lockdown and not have to return to stricter measures again. We are doing all we can in school to mitigate against the virus and I would urge you to continue to do the same, particularly around drop off and pick-up times. **Please park outwith the school carpark, wear a face covering and maintain 2m distancing from adults not in your own household.**

## Wellbeing/ALEC

It has been lovely having the P1 - 3 pupils back in school



and they are starting to settle back into our routine. It has been a bit like returning at the start of a new session but without the benefit of a summer break! We are all looking forward to welcoming our P4-7 pupils next week but are aware that they too will need time to readjust to being back into school. As well as the Reconnect and Recover activities I mentioned in my last letter, what teaching staff will be working on with their classes, each class will receive a virtual visit from an ALEC (Aberdeenshire, Life Education, Centre) Educator. Normally in Term 4 we would have a live visit, in previous years you may remember the ALEC Caravan and more recently the ALEC Tent. This year class teachers will deliver introductory lessons before the visit and the ALEC Educator will build on this in a live, interactive virtual visit on **Wednesday 5 May**. These lessons will build on the Reconnect and Recover theme and are as follows:

P1/2 - Feelings

P3/4 - My Healthy Brain and Body

P5-7 - Looking after our Physical and Mental Wellbeing

## Staffing

It is with a great deal of disappointment that I have to inform you that, due to personal circumstances, Mrs McDonald will not be returning to teach in our school. Mrs McDonald has taught the upper stages class since she joined us as a probationer in 2017 having retrained into teaching after a career in the oil industry. Mrs McDonald brought her passion for STEM subjects into the classroom and, as well as engendering this same enthusiasm in her class, she became our staff Digital Leader and go to person for technology advice. This passion for STEM led to the class entering a number of design and engineering competitions further developing the children's skills and enthusiasm. Most notable was Aberdeenshire's Games Con in 2018 which our team won.

As well as teaching her own class, Mrs McDonald has been a valued member of our staff team contributing to whole school developments and collegiate events. Another of her passions is for exercise and in particular running. She set up a lunchtime running club for pupils and was also invaluable in our annual whole school sponsored runs and cycles along the railway line as well as leading weekly whole school morning yoga sessions which benefited all the pupils (and staff!).

Mrs McDonald will be very much missed in our school and I hope you will join with me in thanking her and wishing her all the very best in the future, whatever direction that may take her.

On a positive note, Mr Redpath will remain teaching the P5-7 class for the rest of this session. This will ensure continuity for the class at a time when there has already been a great deal of disruption and uncertainty. I am very grateful to my colleagues in the Mintlaw Cluster Schools who have released Mr Redpath from his substantive post this session to allow him to

cover our P5-7 class, I know this has placed an added burden on other schools.

### Red Nose Day

This year Red Nose Day falls on Friday 19 March - next Friday. Out of necessity this will be a more low-key event this year but we do want to mark the occasion and give a bit of light relief. Pupils are invited to give a small donation to wear something red and will have the opportunity to buy a Red Nose at a cost of £1.50 on the day. Each class will also have activities in their own class. The P5-7 pupils have been busy thinking up ideas which we can safely take part in under the current restrictions.



Please note there are 10 different Red Noses which come in identical sealed boxes. When pupils buy their Red Nose they will be instructed not to share or swap it with anyone else, I would be grateful if you could reinforce this message at home prior to Friday.

### Vodafone/Mailforce Data Sims

In response to the lockdown and remote learning situation Vodafone and the charity Mail Force Computers have joined forces in an initiative to support connectivity for pupils. As a school we have been allocated 10 free data SIMs each with 30GB to use for 90 days. To take advantage of this you will need a device that has a SIM card slot, the SIMs can be used for data only and cannot be used to make phone calls or texts.

I realise this comes at a time when we are returning to school but if you feel this would be of benefit to your child(ren) to support them with their learning please email the school office. We only have 10 of these to distribute so if more than 10 families apply we may need to ask for further information to ensure the most benefit is gained from this initiative.

### Shelters

I am delighted to tell you that, following some further delays, we have finally had our 2 new shelters erected in our playground. They are looking great and the children who have been in school this week were very excited to see them on Monday morning. The shelters will help us to make the most of our outdoor space, something which is even more important than usual at the moment.

### School Menu

For the rest of this term the catering staff will be providing their normal lunch menu which can be found here: [Primary Menus \(aberdeenshire.gov.uk\)](http://PrimaryMenus.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)



After the Easter Holidays there will be a new menu. This will be on the website after the holidays but in the meantime I have attached a copy for you to have a look at in advance.

### COVID19 Symptoms

Pupils **should not come to school** if they or a **member of their household** have developed symptoms (a new persistent cough or increased temperature). Parents should arrange for a test and inform the school. NHS will then give further advice on next steps depending on the result of the test and who in the household is affected. Please again inform the school of the results.

Further advice can be found on the Test and Protect website:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect>

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

### Support/Useful Links:

#### NHS

For all the latest Covid 19 information and advice:  
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

#### Grampian Assistance Hub

[Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Centre - This website is a focal point for information and assistance for anyone affected by coronavirus anywhere in Grampian](https://www.gcah.org.uk)  
[Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Centre \(gcah.org.uk\)](https://www.gcah.org.uk)

#### Family Nurture Leaflets

Educational Psychology Service has developed leaflets on key topics which contain tips and advice for parents and carers.  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/as/aberdeenshireeps/family-nurture-leaflets/>

#### Aberdeenshire Council Employment Support Team

Many people have lost jobs through redundancy or are currently on furlough. Aberdeenshire Council Employment Support Team can offer

practical and financial assistance to support with your return to employment or help you look at retraining for a different sector. They can be contacted as follows:

[employmentsupportteam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:employmentsupportteam@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

or 01467 533058

### Online Safety

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 ONLINE SAFETY AT HOME 21 04 20&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-03f521e658-54385293)

### Diary Dates

Fri 19 Mar	Red Nose Day
Thurs 1 April	End of Term
Mon 19 April	Start of Summer Term
Mon 3 May	May Day Holiday
Wed 5 May	ALEC Virtual Visits
Fri 25 June	End of Session
Mon 16 Aug	Inservice Day 1
Tues 17 Aug	Start of session for P2-7 pupils

Yours sincerely

Jill Thomson  
Head Teacher