

# St Athanasius Primary School

Veritatem Persequi



## August 2011

2011/

### Dear Parents/Guardians

Dear Parents and Carers, welcome to our August Newsletter. I hope all of you had a lovely break during the summer holidays.

A Special welcome to our new Primary One children who look fabulous in their uniform. They have settled in very well. Congratulations to all our children who look absolutely splendid in their uniform. Our school certainly stands out in the community. Our children are a credit and I thank all of you for maintaining such a high standard in keeping them in uniform. Long may it continue.

### Vision and values

At the start of each new session it is always important to remind everyone, staff, parents and pupils of the vision for our school. It is important to create, develop and maintain such a vision for the future and I believe that as a school we cannot function unless that vision is shared. A shared vision provides a compass to keep learning on course. A shared vision along with shared values are more important than paper and policies. In order for them to succeed we require teamwork - that is the ability to work together toward a common **vision**.

Our vision for this session is simple:

In St Athanasius' Primary we need all of our children **to be nurtured, safe, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible...to be the best they can be with a can do attitude. To be challenged everyday and have their achievements recognised, valued and celebrated.**

I hope this vision is one which we all share. There is an old proverb which sums this up:

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success!”

### Classes and staffing.

This session we have formed 7 classes allocated as follows.

Primary 1 Mrs Quinn

Primary 2 Mrs Callan/ Miss Smalls

Primary 3 Mrs Smith

Primary 4 Mrs Gallagher

Primary 5 Mrs White

Primary 6 Mrs Redmond

Primary 7 Mr Desport

Miss Smalls will carry out 0.6 (3 days) CCC cover. Her focus will be PE and ICT.

Mrs Laura Gold will cover 0.2 (1 day) CCC on a Thursday.

Mrs Callan as Principal Teacher has 2 days management out of class. This is covered by Miss Smalls.

### Promoting Positive Behaviour/ House System.

As part of auditing practice and in discussion with staff, parent council and pupils, it has been necessary to redraft elements of our Behaviour Policy and some of the approaches used.

All children need continuous, positive reinforcement to thrive.

In order for them to learn to make good decisions, children can benefit from reward-based schemes that also include some form of deterrent for not so good behaviour. Here at St Athanasius' Primary, as in many other schools throughout Scotland and the UK, we use The Circle Time, Golden Rules approach. Golden Time schemes, when implemented effectively, provide teachers with increased positive behaviour in the classroom setting. Less time spent shouting or scrambling to respond to bad behaviour ultimately means more time for learning and positive social and emotional development for children.

By providing even very young children with a clear list of Golden Rules, and clear rewards for good behaviour, along with defined consequences for failing to follow the rules, you can effectively address the social and emotional development needs that lead to poor behaviour. Children respond to positive behaviour incentives. When it comes to social and

emotional learning, using such incentives is an excellent way to achieve results, according to child behaviour specialists. The key to Golden Time is providing a clear structure for penalties as well as rewards. As a behavioural tool, Golden Time works by encouraging children to control their actions by understanding the consequences of their choices. To encourage this step in development, clear signals must be provided as a child progresses toward losing some of their Golden Time. For example in our school the rules are clear..a verbal warning, followed by a yellow card... followed by a red card. This means loss of 5 minutes Golden Time. This can be won back if the child over the course of the week improves. Every week every child starts with 30 minutes Golden Time. Copies of the Golden Rules are available on request. If you have been a regular attendee at our OSCARS Assembly, you will have noticed that one house has been dominating every month. Since its inception 4 years ago, our roll has decreased and there is an imbalance in the houses. I have therefore re allocated children into houses to ensure that each house has the same number of children. All siblings are in the same house. I hope your child is not too disappointed if they have been moved, but I have to be fair to all children. The House Captain elections will take place soon. Mr Desport will use the Democracy Topic as a backdrop.

### **OSCARS**

Feedback from parents regarding the OSCARS is favourable but many cannot manage to attend I have decided to keep the OSCARS but it is not necessary to have them on a Friday afternoon. The OSCARS

Assembly dates will vary. Parents will be invited to some but not all. I will publish the times and dates of assemblies to which parents are invited. Celebrating success both in and out of school is vitally important. Recently a school in Glasgow won the Prestigious Education Awards for their innovative assemblies...called the OSCARS.. They only started it one year ago!!!!

### **Behaviour contract**

You will receive a copy of our behaviour contract. Please read it over with your child(ren). This contract is to support the school's teaching and learning and behaviour management policy. These rules are here to support our learning together. Our school rules are fair and help everyone here to reach their potential. I have discussed these rules as a staff and with the Parent and Pupils Council. All children and parents to sign and return this. It sets out the school's expectations in language that all children can understand. By signing it, children will show their commitment to good behaviour within school. Children who consistently misbehave or don't follow the class or school rules will be excluded from excursions etc...

### **School Improvement Plan**

Our school Improvement Plan has been approved by SLC. Priorities for this session are :  
Priority 1 To continue to improve achievement and attainment.  
Priority 2 Take forward key aspects of the CfE in Numeracy, Literacy, Health and Well Being.  
Priority 3 Implement aspects of GIRFEC Programme.  
Priority 4

Implement key aspects of legislative duties for GIRFEC, ASL Bill, Race, Disability and Gender Bills.

Priority 5 Increase involvement in Lifelong Learning  
Priority 6 Progress the key themes of self evaluation and leadership

### **St Athanasius' Charities**

Last year, we raised in excess of £5500 for our charities. In discussion with staff, Pupil Council and Parent Council, we will continue to support the following charities: SCIAF, MISSIO, St Andrew's Hospice and Let the Children Live. The possibility of some work with Mary's Meals is being planned. Obviously, the current disaster in East Africa is on everyone's minds, and therefore, some form of fund raising will happen to support this. Each of the above cover International, National and local charities.

### **Annual Data Check**

Please ensure that you complete the annual data check and the permission forms. This ensures we have the correct information if we need to contact you. It also gives us permission to take them on excursions etc...

### **Anniversary Papal Visit**

It almost a year now that His Holiness Pope Benedict visited Scotland. To mark this, a Mass has been arranged for ALL Primary 7 children in Scotland. This will take place at Carfin Grotto on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 11am Pupils may bring Papal Flags and banners. They will also require a packed lunch. Please return the tear off slip giving your permission.

### **Enquiries**

Last session was a busy one regarding interviews or

discussions with parents. I was operating an open door policy for parents. This is becoming difficult to manage. There is now an appointment system in place if you require to speak to me. In the first instance all enquiries should be through the office. Matters regarding children should initially be dealt with via their class teacher as part of our behaviour policy. My intervention should be at stage 3.

However, I do realise that there are times when you do need to see me. Please call or even e mail [headteacher@st-athanasius-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@st-athanasius-pri.s-lanark.sch.uk)

I can then arrange a suitable time or give you a call.

### **PTA/ Parent Council**

The AGM of the PTA takes place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September. Here in St Athanasius' School, we have always had a very active and hard working PTA. They work hard to raise funds to support our children. The PTA are looking for new members. Please come along. Meetings are held every first Tuesday of each month. Please read the attached flyer from Mrs Lebeda of the PTA. We hope to see you there.

On the same evening, the Parent Council have their AGM. The Parent Council also work extremely hard. They meet every 2 months. The function of the Parent Council is to deal with policy and management matters of the school. They were instrumental in the planning for our new school.

### **Parking**

Once again I have to raise the issue of parking in the school car park. A risk assessment was carried out recently and I have to say many parents have ignored my previous requests.

The unmarked areas of the car park are there to allow emergency vehicles to turn. Unfortunately, we have the same exit and

entrance to the school. I have to point out that if you have an accident in the car park, you are not covered by insurance. On the whole aspect of Health and Safety I have to ensure that all our children are safe. The car park is for school or visiting staff or visitors to the school.

There are lots of parking areas available in the community car park and across the road from the school. As of Monday 29<sup>th</sup> August the school gates will be closed prior to 3 O' clock. I ask for your cooperation in this matter.

### **School books etc**

If you have any school reading books or school books at home could you please send them in. This also applies to football strips, tracksuits etc...

If you have any used school uniforms, bags etc you may also send them in to school.

The can be distributed to other children.

### **Lost blazer**

Could you check that your child has the correct blazer. One child has lost her blazer and has one with no name which doesn't fit.

### **Water Bottles**

May I remind you that it is school and SLC Policy that ONLY WATER may be consumed in class.

### **Mobile Phones**

May I remind you that the use of mobile phones in school is prohibited.

### **Missio**

For many years Missio has been very popular in Denominational schools. It used to be the Holy Childhood.

Here in St Athanasius' we have been generous for decades.

Missio is being revamped this session. New packs arrive next week. We want to encourage the

children to give their coppers, 10p and 50p regularly.

### **Lunch Time Clubs**

I have arranged for P2 – 7 to have a taster of lunch time clubs. This will happen each Wednesday over the next few weeks. Each class will have ONE session.

Please ensure that your child has their Gym Kit on that day

P2 Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August

P3/4 Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September

P5/6 Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September

P7 Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September

### **After school Clubs**

As of yet after school clubs have not been arranged. As soon as staff have identified which clubs they may take, I will inform you. The School Choir will not take place after school. I will take the choir during school time ( lunchtime) as required.

### **Support for Learning**

As I indicated earlier, our staffing levels are at the minimum this session. Therefore, I have re arranged the Support for our Learners within the school. Mrs Crawford and Mrs Crockett will in their capacity as Classroom Support Assistants, support the learning of children under the direction of the class teacher.

Mrs Crockett will support P4 – 7 and Mrs Crawford will support P1- 3.

I will support the learning of Primaries 4 – 7. My focus initially will be Literacy.

### **Primary 1 lunch**

The Primary 1 lunch for Parents and children takes place on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September. Please return the tear off slip as soon as possible

### **Golden Time**

The Golden time activities will continue in their present format for P1 – 3. However, we are

considering a new approach for P4 – 7 which may involve an activity afternoon on a Friday. This could be a craft club, a basketball club, music, board games, knitting, ICT or whatever. Each child would sign up for an activity for about 6 – 8 weeks and then rotate. I am looking for parents or grandparents who can use their talents on a weekly basis. You must be able to commit to attending every week. If you are interested please get in touch. For the moment some form of Golden Time for P 4 – 7 will continue.

### **Christmas Concert**

This year our Christmas Concert will be a simple Nativity Production. We have not decided yet what classes will do, but whatever, we will keep rehearsals to an absolute minimum to ensure that the core curriculum is not disrupted. I am aware some parents were bemused at the time taken to rehearse for the Wizard of Oz. Although a high quality production which highlighted a wide variety of talent in our school, the issue of rehearsal time was raised.

The Infant Department will decide the type of Christmas Presentation to perform, whilst P4 – 7 will perform a different one.

Although music and drama is an area of expertise for me, it is time to allow other staff to utilise their talents.

I have pencilled in Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December for our Concert. I have not decided yet whether to have an evening performance. If we don't have one there will be an additional show on Wednesday afternoon of 14<sup>th</sup> December.

### **First Holy Communion**

The dates for the First Holy Communion have now been issued. Primary 4 will receive the

Sacrament on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May with a Thanksgiving Mass on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Mass.

### **Panto**

This year I have booked the Pantomime – Aladdin in the Hamilton Town House on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December. . **The cost is £6 which is NOW DUE.** Please send in monies as quickly as possible. Many thanks to the PTA for subsidising the buses and keeping the cost low.

### **School Photographer**

The school photographer will be here in the school on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September. He will take individual and family photographs. Please ensure that ALL children are in uniform with blue shirts and blouses.

### **Primary7 swimming**

Primary 7 have started their swimming sessions which last for 12weeks. This will replace one session of PE

### **School Sports Day**

This year I hope to reintroduce the school sports. They will be organised in Houses and the sports Day will take place in the John Cummings stadium in Carluke. They will take place on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June.

### **Crucial Crew**

Primary 7 will take part in the annual Crucial Crew Programme on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September. Advice will follow

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### **Finally**

This is now the beginning of my 5<sup>th</sup> Year as head teacher here in St Athanasius' Primary. It has been a most enjoyable and challenging period of my life. Part of my plan for the school was to raise its profile in the community of Carluke, Clydesdale and beyond. I have tried to engage our pupils in a wide variety of learning experiences, encourage their participation in new and different activities and generally raise their confidence levels. I have also tried to develop young leaders in our school. I 'd like to think we have had some success. It is difficult at times. Some decisions are popular, others not. Be assured, I always try to ensure that my decisions are in the best interests of the school.

Recently someone criticised my commitment to the school. I have to say, since taking up this post, I have given my life to St Athanasius' Primary 24/7. However, sometimes that is not enough! I have always tried to meet with and speak to parents to sort out problems. The opportunity to take up new challenges was presented to me prior to the summer break. Be assured that I have many challenges ahead here at St Athanasius' Primary and look forward to taking our school forward. It is a wonderful school with wonderful staff and pupils. Who could ask for more?  
**Francis Farrell Head teacher**

### **Important Diary dates..**

#### **September**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September PTA/  
Parent Council AGM

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September P7  
Crucial Crew

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September P1 start  
full time.

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September  
School Photographer

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September  
Anniversary Mass of Papal Visit  
at Carfin for P7

**Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> and Monday 26<sup>th</sup>  
September- school closed  
September weekend.**

### **October**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October PTA/ Gala  
Meeting 7pm

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October School  
close 3pm for October Break**

**School re opens on Monday 24<sup>th</sup>  
at 9am**

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October- Parents  
Evening

### **November**

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November PTA/  
Gala/ Parent Council Meeting

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November INSET  
DAY School closed.

### **December**

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December Panto  
Aladdin Town House Hamilton

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December Coffee  
Morning

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December  
Christmas Concert

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December Nursery  
Christmas party

Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December Primary  
1 – 3 Christmas party

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December Primary  
4/5 Party. P6/7 Christmas Party  
7pm

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> School closes  
2.30 Christmas Break.**

### **January**

**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January School  
reopens 9am**

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January PTA/ Gala/  
Parent Council meetings.

### **February**

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February PTA/ gala  
Meeting

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>  
February school closed.

### **March**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March PTA/ Gala/  
Parent Council meetings.

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March Parents'  
Evening

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March school closes  
at 2.30pm for Easter Break**

### **April**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April School  
reopens at 9am.**

### **May**

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> May Feast Day of  
St Athanasius. Mass followed by  
fun day in school.

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May INSET DAY  
School closed.**

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> May School Closed  
Bank Holiday**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> May Induction  
day 1 New P1

**May ( cont)**

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May First  
Communion Group 1- 11am St  
Athanasius' Church.

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> May - Induction  
Day 2 New P1

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May First  
Communion Group 2 St  
Athanasius' Church 11am

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving Mass  
for First Communicants. St  
Athanasius' Church 11.15am

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May PTA Fun Day

### **June**

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> Monday 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup>  
June School closed. May holiday  
and Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June St Aidan's  
Sports Day P7

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup>  
Primary 7 INDUCTION Days at  
St Aidan's.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> June – Reports issued  
to parents.

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> June School sports  
day John Cummings stadium

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> June Primary 7  
Graduation

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June Nursery  
Graduation

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June School Closes  
at 1pm for Summer break.