Dear Parents/Carers

We hope you all enjoyed the mid-term break…and perhaps you even managed to come in to the playground for a game of hopscotch or a race on our running track!  We are delighted with our new playground markings!

As previously shared, **Literacy** is a focus on our **School Improvement Plan** and anything we can do to support our pupils with developing their reading skills and to encourage reading for enjoyment is invaluable.  A wee reminder about the invitation to all parents/carers to join us for a **Portlethen Reading Blether** on the **24th February from 6pm until 7pm.** We aim to share information about how you can support your child’s reading at home and the benefits of sharing stories through discussion. We hope to answer any questions you may have and provide some support within these areas of reading. We look forward to virtually seeing you there.  A link will be sent out today separately to this communication.

**School age childcare - meeting seeking parents views!**

Caerus are working hard to better understand what school-age childcare is currently available to parents in their local communities. When they talk about school-age childcare, they are not just talking about your traditional **out-of-school and breakfast clubs**; they are also interested in the informal options available, **sports clubs, dance studios, family members** etc.

They would love to learn a little more about why you do or do not currently use school-age childcare. For example.

* **There is a lack of options in your area**
* **There are options but none are suitable**
* **There is no requirement as you are a full-time carer**
* **Something else?**

They are hosting a virtual meeting next week (date to be confirmed). Their aim is to get a clearer picture of the landscape in local areas. By participating in this, you will have the opportunity to deliver much needed change in how childcare is accessed across Scotland.  If you are interested in attending, please contact Alison Findlater alison.findlater@fcss.org.uk who will arrange for you to be added to the delegates list.

**Free bus travel for young people (under 22s) in Scotland**

The free bus travel for young people (under 22s) in Scotland initiative has been launched and schools are being asked to encourage parents to make their applications for this initiative via parentsportal for all children aged 5 to 10 years as this will help alleviate the pressure on the getyournec.scot site.  Please note that the online parentsportal application process is the most effective method and will take parents only a few minutes to complete and it will also provide a swifter response and delivery of the new card.  Once the application has been processed the NEC will be delivered to the child’s home address.

The main benefits of applying through parentsportal is that as parents are already linked to the child the data is already verified.  All parents need to do is check that the data is up to date.  When you log into parentsportal on the ‘Available Services’ tab you will see ‘Young Persons Free Bus Travel’ and you should click on ‘Access Service’.  You then select your child and are then taken through the process.  Only the main contact on parentsportal can apply and they will have to go through this process for each child.

**Parentsportal…… If you have not already signed up for parentsportal.scot can you please do so as soon as possible.  Instructions are attached.  If you have any problems linking to your child please contact the school office Tel 01224 472875 for help.**

**As always……**If your child is unwell but they are not displaying symptoms of coronavirus, please keep them at home until they are back in good health. Please do not send unwell children to school to see how they cope.  Do keep them at home until you are sure they are fit and well. Please continue to err on the side of caution. **We really appreciate all you are doing here!**

**Face coverings should be worn by parents and other visitors to the school site,** whether entering the building or otherwise, **including parents at drop-off and pick-up.**

For vomiting and/or diarrhoea, as per normal circumstances, pupils should remain at home for at least 48 hours after symptoms have passed. This now also relates to a fever or high temperature (alongside a negative coronavirus result) and they should not return to school for at least 48 hours after symptoms have passed.

As previously shared, please see attached **NHS Self-Isolation Flowchart** which many of us are finding useful.  Thank you for regularly testing your children to detect asymptomatic cases and for keeping a close eye on any changes in your child’s health and testing accordingly. Please remember for symptomatic cases please arrange a PCR and isolate pending results.  LFD is for asymptomatic testing.

Finally, we have arranged for the **School Photographer** to cometo do **class photographs** on **Wednesday 9th March!** The last time we had a photographer at school was February 2020 and it was sibling group photographs, or individual photographs where no sibling.  Whilst we are still required to have only essential visitors, schools have been given special dispensation to choose to consider if the attendance of a photographer can safely work within the context of their own establishment. I have double checked!  Given it is class photographs this year, this sits well within our Risk Assessment.  Big smiles all round!

Wishing you all a lovely weekend!

Take care.

Kindest regards

**Margaret M. Ferguson**

**Head Teacher**

Fishermoss School

Berrymuir Road

Portlethen

Aberdeenshire

AB12 4UF

Tel:  01224 472875

Aberdeenshire Council Education and Children’s Services



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