

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The new session has got off to a good start with everyone feeling refreshed in spite of the dreadful summer weather! We extend a warm welcome to all new pupils and parents who have joined us this term.

STAFFING

We start the term with several staff changes. Miss Baird, Miss Campbell and Miss Taylor will teach in P4, P6 and P7T respectively. Mrs. Campbell will be working as part time Support for Learning Teacher. Mrs. Reid will be teaching 1 day per week in P1 for Mrs. Barbour and Mrs. Black will be working part time in P4, P7T and P7W.

CLASSES

List of classes for this session is as follows:

Nursery - Mrs. Flynn	P4/5 - Miss Mann
P1 - Mrs. Barbour and Mrs Reid	P5 - Mrs. Robertson and Mrs. Morton
P2 - Mrs. Patience	P5/6 - Miss Craigie
P2/3 - Mrs. Thompson	P6 - Miss Campbell
P3 - Miss Fordyce	P7T - Miss Taylor
P4 - Miss Baird	P7W - Mrs. Watson

Teachers will continue to be assisted by our valuable team of Support for Learning Auxiliaries and Classroom Assistants.

CLASS ORGANISATION

I would like to remind you again about how classes were organised.

- ❖ Due to the number of children in the school it is necessary to have composite classes.
- ❖ The maximum size for a composite class is 25. The maximum size for a straight class is 33. (25 in P1 and 30 in P2 + P3)
- ❖ Your child's education will not be disadvantaged by being in a composite class.
- ❖ Classes are organised by age not ability or for any other reason (see exceptions for individuals) e.g. older P3 pupils would go into P3 and younger into P2/3. Or older pupils may go into P3/4 and younger into P3.

- ❖ We try to disrupt classes as little as possible and hope that to maintain continuity we may be able to keep your child in the same group for more than one session. However, due to changes in roll it may sometimes be necessary to re-organise class groups in consecutive years. Unfortunately this is unavoidable.
- ❖ Throughout their years in P1-7 it is likely that your child will spend 3 to 4 years in a straight class and 3 to 4 years in a composite class.
- ❖ When classes do change the next oldest or youngest group move into the composite class as appropriate. Therefore composite classes are organised according to age.
- ❖ The only exceptions to this are the following:
 - i. To establish gender balance in class groups
 - ii. Because of educational needs of an individual
 - iii. Because of behavioural needs

The school staff will decide when these needs arise and how they are to be dealt with for the benefit of all.

Our policy follows the guidelines laid down by the Education Department and supported by the School Board. Please be assured that if there were any changes to this policy you would be informed.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Many thanks to Mrs. Crawshaw of the PTA who has worked hard to ensure that all orders for uniform have been delivered for the start of term.

Black or grey trousers of most types are suitable as school uniform but not jeans or tracksuit trousers (apart from school type) or football tops.

All pupils are wearing their uniforms and are a credit to you, looking very smart indeed. Please continue to encourage the wearing of school uniform throughout the session.

I would remind parents that although we do not object to pupils wearing simple pieces of jewellery, children should not wear large or dangling earrings for health and safety reasons.

We also feel that it is inappropriate for primary age pupils to wear makeup to school and would appreciate it if you could encourage your child to keep this for after school or weekends.

DONATIONS

For many years it has been a custom for parents to make a small donation towards school funds at the beginning of each session - currently £2.00 per child. This support is much appreciated and helps to fund 'extras' for the children during the year. If you wish to make this voluntary contribution please send the money to class teachers as soon as possible.

We also ask that you send along a box of tissues per child. This ensures that each classroom has an ample supply for all when colds are prevalent.

TEACHERS REDUCED CLASS CONTACT TIME

All class teachers are now entitled to 2.5 hours non class contact time per week in which to prepare and mark work and undertake other professional duties.

P1-3 teachers already have this time from 9.00 - 9.15am and 2.30 - 3.00pm. You find that if you have a child in P4-7 they will have some subjects taught by another teacher e.g. PE, Drama, Music. Please note that these arrangements do not mean that your child has any reduction in teaching time. The teachers of these subjects from P4-7 will be Mrs. Scott, Mrs. Walker and Mrs. Pearson.

There will be no Art specialist for any classes this session. As a result of reduced class contact time arrangements, P1-3 will not have input from specialist teachers in any area. However, some will attend sessions with Youth Music Initiative Instructors.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

I would like to remind all parents that if your child is absent from school, we need you to let us know the reason for this by 10.00am on the first day of absence. This measure is put in place for the safety of your child and we appreciate your co-operation in this.

HIGHLAND COUNCIL ABSENCE POLICY

A reminder about this Highland Council Policy. Please note that most family holidays taken within term time will be classified as 'unauthorised'. However, there will still be exceptional circumstances whereby I am permitted to grant 'authorised absence'. Please continue to inform us of any planned absence by letter.

Unauthorised absences will appear in published annual statistics for Balloch School.

PRIMARY 1 INFORMATION MEETING

A meeting for P1 parents will be held in Mrs. Barbour's classroom on September 3rd at 1.15pm. We look forward to meeting you again then.

P1 SCHOOL LUNCHES

P1 pupils will be in school full time from September 10th. Many of them will choose to have a traditional and healthy school lunch whilst some may opt to take a packed lunch. Parents of primary one pupils are invited to join their children for lunch in the dining room on Thursday October 4th. Further information for P1 parents will follow.

DINNER TICKETS

Please continue to send lunch money for the week on a Monday. Most parents now do this and it is most helpful to teachers and kitchen staff and helps shorten the length of time pupils have to queue for lunch.

Mrs. Innes (cook in charge) has asked that if you are paying by cheque could you please put name, address and pupil's class on the back.

PARENT HELPERS

Please help us to update our current list of helpers. Even if you have volunteered in the past please return the slip if you are still available. The time and help offered by parents is greatly appreciated especially when we take pupils out of school on trips and extra curricular activities. If you are interested in helping, please return the slip to school by Monday 3rd September.

If you are interested in running a club of any kind for the children please contact me.

We are also looking for 1 or 2 parents who might be free one morning or afternoon per week on a regular basis, to help us with organising/borrowing library books. If you think you might be able to help please contact me as soon as possible.

MEDICINE IN SCHOOL

I attach a further copy of the guidelines regarding administering medicine in school. Please keep for future reference. The Medication

Consent form should be used if you want a member of staff in school to administer medicine or to supervise your child taking medicine.

SCHOOL AIMS

A list of our school aims at Balloch features at the beginning of each School Development Plan. It has been brought to our attention that parents may wish to know about this. Therefore, I have attached the list for your information.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Each session we draw up a plan for future developments in school. I have summarised work for the coming session as follows:

Priority 1 - will be about teachers, reviewing and continuing to develop their assessment strategies in language work and including predictions for attainment in listening and talking when planning and assessing pupils work.

Priority 2 - teachers will continue to develop pupil's independent and collaborative learning skills. Pupils will become more adept at understanding, using and setting targets in their learning across all curricular areas.

Priority 3 - to work with area primaries and Culloden Academy to improve transition from P7 - S1, taking into account the views of pupils and parents. Take steps to facilitate the sharing of knowledge of curriculum content and teaching methodologies across the sectors.

The School Development Plan document also contains audit and review information on all aspects of school operations. Should any parent want a full copy, this can be ordered from the school office.

SUGGESTION BOX

A suggestion box is situated on the table at the school entrance. Both parents and pupils are welcome to 'post' their ideas for changes/improvements for us to consider. During the session I will also be asking for your views/opinions from time to time.

BICYCLES IN SCHOOL

Some pupils, mainly older ones, may wish to cycle to school. Please note that P6 and P7 pupils have priority use of the cycle racks. Where a rack

space is not available, children may leave their bicycles by the ramp outside the P7 classroom. Please note that we cannot take any responsibility for bicycles left in school.

PHOTOGRAPHS IN SCHOOL

During the session it is likely that children and staff will be using digital cameras from time to time in the classroom. Photos taken would only be used in the classroom or school building.

If you have any objection to your child being photographed please inform his/her class teacher in writing.

DIARY DATES

Attached is a list of events planned for this session, plus holiday dates etc. Please retain for future reference.

Finally may I remind all parents that our aim is to provide the best quality education for your child. We always appreciate your support in your child's learning, so if there is any matter that concerns you and you would like to discuss further, please do not hesitate to contact me, Mrs. Petrie or your child's class teacher.

It is best to make an appointment. However, if you need to see a member of staff quickly this can usually be arranged. May I remind all parents that they should contact the school office first on any visit and not go to a classroom without letting us know you are in school.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

PARENT HELPERS

I would like to have my name on the list of parent helpers. I am free on the following days and times.

Name _____

Days _____ am, pm or both _____

Special interests or skills to offer _____

Pupil (s) Name (s) _____

Class(es) _____

HOLIDAY DATES - 2007/2008

	<u>School Opens</u>	<u>School Closes</u>
TERM 1	14 th August	5 th October
TERM 2	22 nd October	20 th December
TERM 3	7 th January	20 th March
TERM 4	8 th April	27 th June

February Holidays	8 th and 11 th February
May Day Holiday	5 th May
In-Service Training Days	26 th + 27 th November; 7 th February; 7 th April

September	3 rd	P1 Information Meeting
	11 th	P7 Trip Meeting
	24 th - 28 th	P7 Trip to Nethybridge
October	1 st	Open Afternoon
	4 th	P1 Parents to Lunch
	5 th	End of Term
	22 nd	Back to School
November	14 th + 15 th	Parents Evenings
	20 th - 27 th	Book Fair
	26 th + 27 th	Teachers In-service Training Days
December	11 th	Concert - Afternoon performance
	12 th and 13 th	Concert - Evening performances
	13 th	Christmas Lunch
	14 th	P1 + P2 Christmas Party
	18 th	P7 Christmas Party (other class parties to be arranged)
	19 th	Nursery Christmas Party - am
	19 th	Pantomime - trip to Eden Court P1-7.
	20 th	Christmas Service
	20 th	End of Term

January	7 th	Back to school
February	7 th 8 th + 11 th	Teachers In-service Training Day Holiday
March	18 th 20 th	Easter Service End of Term
April	7 th 8 th	Teachers In-service Training Day Back to School
May	5 th 28 th 30 th	May Day Holiday Sports Day (provisional) Reports issued
June	4 th + 5 th 10 th 27 th 27 th	Parents Evenings Nursery Parents Information Meeting Closing Service End of Session