

Newsletter September 2015



Our first term of the session has been a busy one with the boys and girls settling into their new classrooms and getting to know their new teachers. We are very pleased to report that the children have been working hard in class and in addition many of the senior pupils are to be commended for going the 'extra mile' to help out around the school in a variety of ways. We were delighted to welcome many new staff and new families to Towerbank this session and are pleased to see them settling in, getting to know the Towerbank school community and making new friends. It was good to hear that the Towerbank Parent Council picnic was such a success with many of our families from P1 to P3 getting together and enjoying this fun event. Thanks to the organisers and those of you who helped on the day. A special mention has to go to our fabulous P1's who have been amazing at learning their new routines and getting to know their way around the building and the playground. Well done Primary One!

Please see below for an update on recent and forthcoming news ...

Staffing



We would like to warmly welcome the following staff who joined us at the beginning of the new session.

Miss Barry – P2D

Mrs Reynolds – P3A

Miss Gow – P3B

Miss Gordon – P4A

Miss Hawkins – P5B

Mr Rand – P6A

Miss Nicholls – P6B

Miss Wylie – P6C

Mrs Gray our Nursery Early Years Officer has left Towerbank to have her baby but also to pursue a new career supporting children with additional needs. Good Luck Mrs Gray! We will be appointing new Pupil Support Assistants this week and we will announce the successful candidates in due course.

Catchment Review



The outcome of the catchment review proposals will shortly be announced. The City Council will publish its recommendations in a few days and we have been given the date of October 22nd 2015 when the final decision will be made public.

Meet the Teacher



As you will be aware from a previous correspondence, we decided to suspend our 'Meet the Teacher' events for all but the P1 classes. After much deliberation and helpful feedback from many parents, carers and staff we felt that we would reach more people if we approached this information sharing event in a completely different way. What we have done is create booklets for each year group which provide an overview of the year ahead for your child across all the 8 curriculum areas. We have also added some helpful tips to help the year go smoothly. These booklets will be issued this week and again we would be delighted to receive your feedback.

Parent
Survey

Homework Survey

In partnership with the Parent Council we are planning to send a ParentMail communication inviting you to take part in a Homework Survey. Please look out for this information. We will post this information on the school website.



Parent Consultations

Our Parent Consultation meetings will be held a little bit earlier this year on:

Friday 23rd October 1.00 – 3.00pm Tuesday 27th October 6.00 – 8.00pm Thursday 29th October 4.00 – 6.00pm

The meetings with the class teachers are organised in 10 minute slots. If your child receives Support for Learning you will be contacted by either Miss Lucas or Mrs Benson to arrange a time close to your meeting with the teacher. Please look out for your confirmed times which will be sent home on Monday 5th October.

If, however, you have any concerns you would like to discuss with any of our school staff before or after the consultation evenings, please get in touch. We are all here to help! Remember, no concern is too small to share!



Rewarding Positive Behaviour

Most of you will be aware of the system we had in place to recognise, reward and celebrate positive behaviour in Towerbank. The merit award system has been in place for many years and we felt that it was time to review it with the children. Feedback has told us that many of the aspects of the system are very popular and worthwhile but there were elements, especially for the older children, which could be improved. We are currently working hard to come up with an exciting new approach and will share it with you as soon as we have finalised the details.



School Lunches

Thanks to everyone who has come on board with the new procedures for ordering and paying for hot lunches. The uptake for hot lunches has increased across the whole school and the administration and organisation for this is significant. Please ensure that you return your child's order form by the deadline dates as detailed on the form. We receive our meals from Portobello High School and they order the food well in advance and are unable to accommodate late requests. If you do not receive an order form for your child, please contact the school office who will be happy to provide you with the necessary form. Your ongoing support with these arrangements is extremely helpful and much appreciated.



Wet Weather Arrangements

We have been recently enjoying some fine weather which has meant the children are making the most of being outside for playtimes and lunch times and for PE activities. However, there are days when it can start pleasant in the morning and be quite different later in the day. Please make sure that your child has a waterproof jacket or coat with them every day despite the weather conditions. We always will try to get the children outside for even a short time if the weather is changeable. This makes a huge difference to their day and having a coat or jacket with them gives them the opportunity to go outside.



Head Lice

We are aware of an increase in the number of families reporting head lice. Please ensure that you regularly check your child's hair for head lice. It is essential that any outbreak is treated immediately and appropriately. Here is the most up to date link from NHS Health Scotland which will provide you with further information should you require it.

<http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/25-Head%20Lice%20-%20Information%20for%20Parents.pdf>

Please note that Towerbank follows the City of Edinburgh Council guidelines which ask us **not** to send letters home regarding class outbreaks of head lice. We would strongly encourage you to continue to alert your child's teacher if you discover your child has head lice. If you require any further help or advice, please contact Mrs Morrison, DHT at the school who can arrange an appointment with the School Nurse for you.



School Streets Project

The Council is proposing to introduce school streets at 11 primary schools across Edinburgh for a period of 18 months. These locations have been experiencing ongoing road safety issues caused by drivers bringing their vehicles too close to the school gates.

The benefits of implementing school streets are:

- increase in walking and cycling and active lifestyles for pupils, parents and carers
- reduction in traffic speed, congestion and pollution around the school gates
- demand from parents and residents

The scheme will prohibit vehicular traffic in the following streets during specified time periods, before and after school. The streets affected for Towerbank will be: Figgate Street, Whin's Place, Aithison's Place, Shrub Mount, Beach Lane, Figgate Bank, Wilson's Park, Maryfield. Towerbank is in Phase 2 of this pilot project and detailed information will be released by the Council prior to pilot commencing in January 2016. Please look out for more information which will follow soon.

Parent Council and PSA Annual General Meeting



The AGM will be held on Tuesday 6th October, 7.00 – 9.00pm. We look forward to welcoming you to this event. There will be an opportunity to become involved in either of these two important groups. Currently both groups are looking to appoint new office bearers. Information about this meeting was sent out via ParentMail.

Camp Fundraising Group



Donald Martin, Chelsea's dad, continues to lead the CFG who raise funds to help towards funding for residential camps for P6 and P7. There will be a Bake Sale in school on Friday 2nd October and we are hoping that the parents and carers from P5 to P7 will be able to donate baking goods for this popular event. All the boys and girls and staff get an opportunity to buy the delicious goodies on offer. Detailed information about this event was sent out via ParentMail.



Harvest

This year's Harvest Thanksgiving Service will be held at Portobello and Joppa Parish Church on Thursday 8th October. We are looking for donations to help out a local food bank. Again, we have sent out information via ParentMail. Space is at a premium in the church and regrettably we cannot open up this event to parents and carers.



Dogs

We have received a number of complaints from parents and carers about dogs being tied to the school gates and left unsupervised. Some of our children are very frightened to walk past the barking dogs and this is not a good start to the beginning and end of the day. Dogs should not be brought into the school grounds. However, as a compromise can we suggest that if you find that you need to leave your dog, could it be left at the East gate which is not used by the children. The pedestrian gate is always open and would provide a safe access.



Bikes in the Playground

Towerbank is very proud of its long standing reputation of children choosing healthy ways to travel to and from school. We have an enormous number of children who cycle and scoot to school every day. We are concerned however, about the number of bikes and scooters that are not secured at the racks provided. We would urge you to make sure your child brings a good quality padlock/chain each day. If they forget then it is an idea that they share with a friend. We are trying to be vigilant as a school and keeping an eye on property but even well secured bikes and scooters have gone missing. We would always encourage you to let us know if this happens to your child's property but also please inform the local police as they take any theft or vandalism at the school seriously. Also, could we remind you that all cyclists should dismount and secure their bikes when they enter the playground. No child should be cycling or scooting in the playground before or after the school bell. We are aware of a number of accidents where children have been knocked over by children cycling and scooting. We have a significant number of toddlers and babies in buggies and we are keen that everyone is safe in our playground.



We will be holding our first Open Day on Wednesday 4th November to which you are all invited.

The times are: 9.15 – 10.15am and 1.30 – 2.30pm.

This will give you an opportunity to visit your child's classroom and see the great work that is going on. You are also welcome to take a guided tour of the school as we have Primary Seven pupils who would be only too happy to take you around the school and explain the wide range of activities that go on in Towerbank.



P1 Enrolment

In line with the City of Edinburgh guidelines we will be holding our Primary One enrolment for children due to start school in August 2016, week commencing Monday 9th November 2015. Please see dates and times below.

Monday 9 th November	9.00 – 10.00am	Tuesday 10 th November	2.15 – 3.15pm
Wednesday 11 th November	9.00 – 10.00am	Thursday 12 th November	2.15 – 3.15pm

Please look out for additional information on the school website and posters which will be displayed locally.



School Website – Sharing Information

We are regularly approached by organisations wishing to advertise clubs and afterschool and weekend activities for children. These organisations may be based locally and be of interest to some of you. We have decided we will post this information on our website rather than send home paper copies of fliers. We feel this is a more efficient and eco-friendly way of communicating with you. Please check regularly to see what's on offer.

<https://towerbankprimary.wordpress.com>



Lost Property

We regularly gather considerable amounts of lost property. We are unable to match the property back with the child as often things are not labelled with the child's name. Please label all items including packed lunch boxes and their lids and water bottles. We collect the lost property outside Mr Henderson's office and you are welcome to come in at any time to check for lost items.

Portobello Book Festival



To celebrate this year's Portobello Book Festival, 2nd - 4th October, a variety of events have been organised for the public to attend. We are delighted to welcome some of the Portobello library staff to Towerbank for some storytelling fun.

Important Dates for your Diary



Term ends	Friday 9 th October
Pupils resume	Wednesday 21 st October
School Photographs	Monday 26 th October

And finally....

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their ongoing help and support. Next week sees us break for the October holiday and on behalf of everyone here at Towerbank we hope you have lots of fun and find a little time to rest and relax.

Best wishes

Mrs J Gilmour
Head Teacher