

GATEHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Information for your child starting school in our P1 on Tuesday 21st August 2007

Introduction:

First of all, I take this opportunity of extending a very warm welcome to you, as parents, as your son/daughter enters the first formal stage of schooling at P1 (Primary 1) stage.

P1 is important in two respects. On the one hand it is a continuation of the experiences previously enjoyed while in nursery, building on the importance of learning through play, while on the other, it offers the opportunity to step into the more structured curriculum environment, and routine of school as a whole.

You are quite naturally anxious that your child will settle quickly into day-to-day routines. Most of all, you, like ourselves at the school, hope he/she will be **happy** - because it is normally only through **enjoyment** of school that effective learning takes place.



Your child will, of course, need a period of settling-in and adjustment, and that is natural. S/he has recently been undertaking a series of visits to the P1 classroom in order to become familiar with the surroundings, materials and equipment which s/he will be using in August.

You may have already met our P1 teacher, Mrs. J Paterson. She will be sharing the class with myself each week, but she will be with the pupils most of the time. She is there to provide an all-round experience for your son/daughter and to provide a warm, safe and secure learning environment for

him/her. If, at any time, you have any queries or questions, please don't hesitate to contact either Mrs Paterson or myself.

GENERAL:

Before 21 August:

Please, please, please ensure your son/daughter can manage to dress and undress for PE. The children change several times during the course of each week, for dance and drama, as well as

PE, and it is very time-consuming. If the teacher is doing this for many of the children, it then impacts on the time available for all of the children.

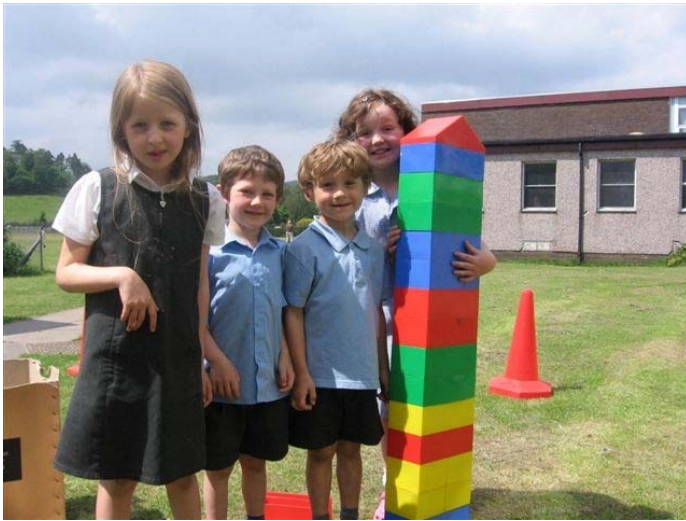
Please also ensure all clothing is named. It never ceases to amaze us how many items of clothing are left around the school unclaimed, and when we can identify a home for items it makes everything so much easier for us all.

On the first morning (Tuesday 21 August):

Please bring hankies, a 'painting apron' (e.g. old shirt/t-shirt) and PE kit (gym shoes, shorts and t-shirt). These items should stay in school.

At 9.00 am, you will naturally wish to accompany your child into the classroom. Do, therefore, take the opportunity to walk into school (via the playground door*) and come into the room. Mrs Paterson will have allocated:

- coat pegs in the cloakroom,
- initial seats for all the children in the classroom, and
- a name tag for your son / daughter on the table to help you locate your child's place.



Please put any lunch/snack money in a sealed named envelope on the pupil's desk – on the name card so it can be identified. On the first morning, you will be invited to accompany your son/daughter to pay this money to the catering manageress (who normally deals with it) in the dining room.

When your child has settled, please say good-bye and leave the room. If you feel your child is taking a little longer to settle, then please find a seat and sit with him/her until he/she has. We do find from experience, however, that often a child will *only*

settle when his/her parents have left the room.

** In the interests of safety, parents and visitors should not normally enter and leave the building by the playground door. However, for the first 3 weeks of the session, when the school day for P1 children is in the mornings only (see below), we appreciate it would be impractical to expect you to use the main entrance, making use of the security measures there, during this period.*

Food, drinks and money:

The options for lunch are:

- **'Mini meal'** (£1.50 per day): It is easiest for us if you can pay this on a Monday morning. Easiest of all is a weekly cheque (payable to 'D & G Commercial Services'). If your family is in receipt of Income Support, you can apply for free meals. Please ask Mrs Allison in the school office for an application form.
- Alternatively, the pupils can opt to choose lunch from the **'Take 4 Health'** daily selection, at which a variety of healthier items is available each day for the same price.
- **Packed lunch:** Children may bring a packed lunch from home. Lunch boxes (with names, please) are placed in the dining room first thing each morning, until lunchtime, and then eaten there. Please do not provide drinks in glass bottles. Please also ensure bottle / flask tops are *securely fastened* (teachers will always be on hand to help the children open these). For added security, we find that when drinks are placed within sealed polythene bags, it helps to prevent spillages on books in the school bag on the way to and from school.

Crisps are on sale (currently 30p per packet) on Mondays and Fridays at interval time (10.30am). Please ensure all money is placed in a named purse or sealed envelope. Fresh fruit is on sale to pupils every weekday and on these mornings a selection of prepared (and washed) fruit (i.e. no crisps) is on sale at our fruit barrow in the cloakroom.

Free fruit – a more limited selection - is also available for all P1, 2 & 3 children on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in the dining room. This is provided through the Council's Commercial Services unit.



Clothing:

Please name everything! You would be amazed how many discarded clothing items – including sweatshirts – we accumulate. Sweatshirts can be ordered through the school office. We usually issue an order form to all parents once every term for this purpose, but Mrs Allison in the school office usually maintains a small stock. School ties are available to purchase, also from Mrs Allison, price £2 each. Most sensible clothing for the children is polo shirts or short-sleeved shirts, elastic-waisted trousers,

and button-fastening pinafores. Shoes with Velcro fasteners are easy and convenient in the early stages. Shoes with laces – especially over thick sports socks – are difficult for the children to handle. Wellies are advisable for days when it is wet underfoot.

Toileting:

By the time s/he starts school, your child should be independent in toileting and hand-washing. All P1 and P2 children get the chance to go to the toilet before the children from the other classes at morning interval and at lunchtime.

The children can go to the toilet at any time when in class – *but it is important the teacher knows they are out of the room*, and they will be told to tell her before leaving. We operate a 'toilet token' system in the classroom – i.e. the children must take the 'token' when making a toilet visit. This means only one boy and/or girl is out of the room at any one time, and use of the toilet can be monitored more effectively.

Please tell the teacher if your child is having any problems in this respect.

Safety:

The safety of your child while at school is crucial to us. We ask for your assistance in this by letting us know who will be collecting him/her at the end of each school session. Once a routine is established, this is not so much of a problem – but if there are changes to that routine – if, for example, someone who does not normally collect your son/daughter will be doing so - then please let us know beforehand. Please ensure the contact details (telephone numbers especially) we have about you are up-to-date at all times and please keep Mrs Allison, school secretary, informed of any changes. There may be occasions when we need to contact you urgently (usually in the case of illness), so it is important you keep your contact details with us up to date.

Additionally, for those children travelling by school bus, please keep your child's driver informed about any changes to usual arrangements.



For the first three weeks of the term (Tuesday 21 August to Friday 7 September inclusive):

For the first 3 weeks, the children will be in school for the morning session only. This has, for many years, proved to be a tried and tested method of gradually introducing the idea of the full school day. Initially, the children really are exhausted by the excitement of the new routines, and a full day is too much for many of them.

School starts at 9.00am and, normally, children line up in the playground at this time. Interval is between 10.30 and 10.45am.

Lunch interval commences at **12.15pm** (and finishes at 1.00pm).

During the first 3 weeks:

If your child is going home for lunch, please collect him/her at the cloakroom at **12.15pm**;

If your child will be staying at school for lunch, please collect him/her at the cloakroom **promptly** at **12.30/12.35pm**. **Collection times are important – children become anxious if parents are not ready when expected!**

After the 3-week settling period, the school day ends at 2.30pm. **This commences this year on Monday 10 September**. Those children – and only those children - who shall be travelling to and from school by school bus each day will need to remain until the bus departure time at 3.00pm when school ends for the older (P3 and upwards) pupils.

Conclusion:

We look forward to seeing your son/daughter in August and, thereafter, to seeing him/her quickly settled into a relaxed, happy and enjoyable school life. We do know, however, that you as parents will be anxious as your son/daughter embarks on this step. It would not be natural if you weren't!

More information about the learning routines for your child (the curriculum) will be given early in the new term, and we will have a get-together for this purpose at that time.



If you have any queries, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us (telephone 814262). Once school gets under way in August, please also take the opportunity to speak to Mrs Paterson. She, like myself, will be pleased to help.

Howard T McLean,
Head Teacher.

22 June 2007