

Information for Primary 1 Parents

June 2020

NEWTONGRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
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EDUCATION DIVISION

Head Teacher
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Midlothian



Our Ref:



Dear Parents and Carers

We are delighted to have your child joining us in August 2020. Starting school is a very exciting time for every child and at Newtongrange School we try to make this experience as easy as possible for both you and your child. We hope this will be the beginning of a long, happy partnership between the school, your child and yourselves. We aim to provide a positive, stimulating experience for your child during their time at Newtongrange.

In this booklet, we have tried to answer some of the recurring questions parents have asked in the past. We hope that the information we have included helps you understand what to expect when your child first starts school. More information is available in our main handbook and it can be found on our website at <http://newtongrange.mqfl.net/>

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any concerns about your child or feel a problem is potentially developing. For a close partnership to work well, communication requires to be relaxed and easily facilitated. We would actively encourage you to contact us at an early stage should you have any concerns, however minor they may seem. Where possible, we would appreciate if an appointment could be made – but if you need to speak to someone urgently, this will be organised.

We know this is a very worrying time for everyone, particularly if you have a child who is due to start school in August. Like you, we are waiting for national guidance around the reopening of schools. At this stage, we cannot tell you exactly when your child will start, but we will ensure that their classroom is a safe environment and that they will be warmly welcomed. We will update you with any further information as soon as it is available.

Vicky Morgan
Head Teacher



Will my child start school on the first day of term?

The new school year is expected to start on Wednesday 19th August 2020

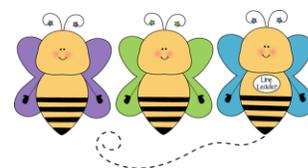
Normally, for the first week of school, the children in Primary 1 attend the morning only from 8:45am – 12.00pm.

Normally on **Monday 31st August**, your child would begin to attend school for whole days.

This year, schools are currently closed due to the pandemic, and we are waiting for national guidance around the arrangements for reopening schools. We will communicate with you as soon as we can regarding the starting arrangements for P1 children.

Why have half-day schooling?

Starting school means a whole lot of new experiences for a young child. Even children who have attended nursery still find school exhausting. To ease them in gently to school life, the children attend on mornings only for the first two weeks. Don't be surprised if your child falls asleep after lunch!



How long does the school day last for Primary 1?

P1-3		
Monday – Thursday	8:45am – 10:30am	
	10:30am – 10:45am	Interval
	10:45am – 12:15pm	
	12:15pm – 13:00pm	Lunch
	13:00pm – 15:10pm	
Friday	8:45am – 10:30am	
	10:30am – 10:45am	Interval
	10:45am – 12:20pm	



Arriving at school

For reasons of safety children should not arrive at school too early. Children should come directly to school and arrive in the playground approximately at 8.40 am. Children are discouraged from playing in the park on their way to school, for their safety and to encourage good time-keeping. There is no school supervision of the park area in the event of an accident or a fight. A Breakfast Club operates on site. We will provide details for parents who wish to make use of it.

What does my child need to wear?

At Newtongrange School, we try to take a sensible attitude to dress and children are encouraged to wear school uniform as it promotes a sense of pride and identity with the school.

All clothing must be labeled clearly with your child's name. Uniforms are available through the school.

- Grey/Black/ Navy skirt, trousers or shorts (**no jeans**)
- Royal Blue Sweatshirt
- White Polo Shirt

During the school year, there may be special days when we have a "Dress as You Please" day. Parents will be informed of these, in writing, in advance of these days.

The Authority operates a scheme of **clothing grants** to assist parents in ensuring that a pupil is sufficiently and suitably clad to take full advantage of the education provided. Families in receipt of Income-based Job Seekers allowance, on Income Support, Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit (subject to a maximum annual income), both maximum Child Tax Credit and maximum Working Tax Credit (subject to a maximum annual income) or support under Part VI or the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 will automatically qualify for such a scheme. Other cases will be determined according to the personal circumstances of the family. Parents who wish to apply for the scheme should complete an application form which is available from this school or the Education and Children's Services Division, Fairfield House, 8 Lothian Road, Dalkeith EH22 3ZG.

Will my child have gym?

The children will have gym sessions every week so they need a pair of shorts, a pair of gym shoes (slip-ons or Velcro are easier for them) and a t-shirt.

PLEASE put your child's name on his/her gym kit too. It can be difficult to tell whose gym shoe is whose – especially when you have a pile of mixed up black gym shoes that all look alike. For health and safety reasons, your child will be asked to remove all jewellery during PE and children with long hair should wear it tied back.

At times PE takes place outside so children are advised to bring suitable clothing. PE is an important part of the curriculum and all children are expected to have PE kit in school every day.

Is there anything else my child needs to bring to school?

Your child will need to carry items to and from school. A **reasonably sized** school bag, (**clearly marked with your child's name**) which can accommodate and protect an A4 homework pocket, a reading book, gym kit, etc, is essential. It is important that drinks do not come into contact with reading books. We ask for your support in caring for books, as they are expensive to replace, and regret that we may have to ask parents to pay for damaged or lost books.



Your child is provided with pencils etc in class – however, we do understand that some children may wish to bring their own pencil case which they can use at certain times. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their personal belongings

Healthy Snacks

Children may like to bring a snack to eat at break. However, the time is limited and a small amount is all that is required. It is unfortunate if children have so much to eat that there is no time left to play. We would encourage healthy snacks that are good for your child and their teeth. It would be helpful if snacks for morning break were brought to school in your child's school bag rather than their lunch box.

Water Bottles

We actively encourage children to drink water throughout the school day. A drinking bottle (not glass) clearly marked with their name or a mark which your child will recognise is recommended. Children may refill their bottles from the classroom taps in school and children will take it home daily for washing.

Home Learning

Home Learning provides a 'learning bridge' between home and school. We reviewed our home learning approach in consultation with families last session. Information regarding our new approach will be shared at the start of the new school session.

How is information shared between school and home?

We use 'school bag mail' and our School App as our main methods of communication. We encourage families to **check school bags daily** and return any slips as soon as possible.

If you have any general queries please contact the school office on 0131 271 4645 or use our school website which has lots of useful information including our most recent newsletter <http://newtongrange.mgfl.net/>.

If you have any concerns about your child please contact the class teacher by note or ask for an appointment. You can also contact any member of the Senior Leadership Team by phoning the school office and leaving a message or arranging an appointment. We try to get back to you as soon as possible.

What happens at interval time?

Interval is from 10.30 - 10.45 a.m. All children go outside to play at this time. The Catering Services operate a Tuck shop. Children can buy a variety of snacks from the Tuck Shop during break time in the Dining Hall. Items for sale include bagels, toast, biscuits and vegetable crisps. Prices range from 10p – 50p. During playtime your child's Primary 7 buddies will support them in the playground. Please ensure your child has suitable outdoor clothing as unless it is very wet we go outside. During the morning interval and lunchtimes, the playground is supervised by our Learning Assistants.

What happens during a wet interval?

Your child will stay in their classrooms during very wet weather. Our Learning Assistants and P7 Buddies will supervise them. We advise against bringing toys to school, particularly electronic handheld games or other valuable toys, as we cannot be responsible for their safekeeping.



What will my child do at lunch-time?

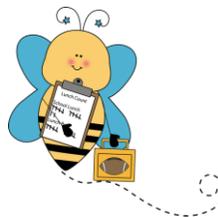
Children in P1-3 are entitled to free school meals. Your child will receive a packed lunch whilst they are attending half days to bring home.

Before your child starts attending full days, you will be invited along for a school lunch. You will receive more information about this closer to the time.

Each day the children who are going for a school lunch will be able to pick from a variety of meal options. You can access the school meal menu from our website or app. Please use this to discuss what your child would like to eat. Lunch-time is currently from 12.15 p.m. - 1.10 p.m.

The children can choose:

- To return home for lunch.
- To have a school meal.
- Bring a packed lunch.



School lunches are served in the dining room. Learning Assistants are on duty at this time. As we are a Health Promoting School, we ask that you provide a healthy packed lunch for your child.

At Newtongrange Primary we operate ParentPay whereby you can pay for lunches (and school trips) online. You will be issued with a ParentPay username shortly after your child begins. **However, please note that as P1 children are entitled to free school meals you do not need to send any money for your child's lunch.**

Why is attendance important?

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow your child to fulfill their potential and for them to have the best possible start in life. Midlothian Council has an expectation that all children at primary school should have an attendance of at least 96%. Schools have the responsibility to work in partnership with families to ensure children attend school regularly.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. It is important that pupils are punctual and parents and carers must ensure that their child is at school by 8.45am each morning.

In cases of unsatisfactory attendance or persistent lateness the school follows guidance from Midlothian Council. When a child's attendance falls below 96% the school will seek cooperation with parents and carers to work in partnership to improve attendance.

Our school expectation is for all children to arrive on time and enter the school via their class line each morning. Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness, co-operation of the parents and carers will be sought by the school to work together to improve punctuality.

What if my child is unable to attend school or is going to be late to school?

If your child is unable to attend school or is going to be late to school parents should telephone the school (0131 271 4645) by 09:30 a.m. We have to follow



Midlothian Council policy and contact parents of any absent children if they have not notified the school.

If your child has sickness or diarrhoea please keep them at home for 48hrs after their last incident. That way he/she is less likely to pass on any germs to the rest of the class – or the teacher!

If there is anything that we can do as a school to support you with your child's attendance please do not hesitate to contact our Home School Practitioner.

What happens if my child becomes unwell at school?

If your child becomes unwell at school and needs to go home we will phone you or your emergency contact to ask you to come and collect them. Please keep us informed of any change of your contact details, especially mobile phone numbers.

What if my child has got to go to the dentist or doctor in school time?

We realise that it is not always possible to fit in dentist, doctor and other medical appointments after school. If you have an appointment during the day then you must collect your child from the school office. If the appointment is short then you can bring your child back to class and that means he/she misses as little as possible.

What happens if my child has an accident at school?

Accidents can happen in the playground or in school. You will be informed of minor bumps and scrapes by a note sent home at the end of the day. If the injury is more serious, you or your emergency contact will be informed by telephone.

What are our behaviour expectations?

Our approach to behaviour is both **POSITIVE** and **RESTORATIVE**. In Newtongrange Primary School, we encourage individual responsibility for one's own behaviour and value the importance of nurturing in each learner a growing sense of self worth and a positive self esteem. Our aim is to encourage our learners to exercise choice in their actions and raise awareness that their choices will have resulting consequences. We promote good behaviour and self esteem by actively fostering a positive ethos and by continually aiming to develop positive relationships and provide effective learning and teaching throughout the school

What approach to teaching is used at Newtongrange School?

Our learners will have had a wide range of experiences and a wide range of skills and interests when they join school. We are continuously improving our curriculum and believe a well-planned and resourced curriculum will continue to progress your child's learning.



How can I be involved in the Life of the School?

You can get involved by:

- Attending Sharing the Learning Events throughout the school year.
- Being a parent/carer helper.

- Through our Newtongrange PTA or Parent Council. If you would like to know more ask at the school office where staff will be happy to help you, or come along to the Parent Council or PTA meetings throughout the school year. We will confirm the dates in the new session.

How Can You Help your child?

Do give encouragement and support in all your child is asked to do at school.

Do show an interest in your child's efforts.

Do contact the school if you are concerned in any way about your child.

Do let the school know if your child is unable to return to school after lunch.

Do tell your child what to do if you are delayed and cannot meet him/her.

Do listen to what your child has to say and encourage him/her to speak clearly and confidently.

Do talk about crossing roads safely.

Do tell your child to say "no" to strangers.

Do remember to check her/his school bag for letters and notes.

Most of all – Give your child lots of praise when he/she does something well.

SUPPORTING LEARNING

Below are some suggestions of activities you can encourage at home which will help support your child's learning in school:



- Baking - Maths - Counting and Measuring, Science - Change of stage
- Setting the table - Maths – Counting and Matching
- Helping to tidy up – Maths – Sorting attributes, Social Skills – being a good citizen.
- Sharing a computer game with your child
- Washing Clothes - Maths - Sorting and Ordering , pairing socks
- Numbers in the environment - number recognition, bus numbers, house numbers, counting money for shopping, counting steps, stairs and door colours
- Literacy in the environment – spotting letters, recognising words in street names, shop names, bus adverts
- Imaginative Play - Social Skills, Story Making, Role Play, Turn Taking
- Games - Spatial Awareness, Social Skills, Turn Taking, Fair Play, Maths - Matching, Counting, Literacy – reading cards, following instructions.
- Jigsaws – spatial awareness, matching, perseverance and concentration
- Play Dough or Plasticine - Expressive Arts - Self Expression, Creativity
- Painting and Drawing - Expressive Arts - Self Expression, Creativity, fine motor skills – manipulating pencils, paint brushes
- Physical Play : Balancing, Catching, Jumping, Skipping - Motor control, Co-ordination, Social Skills, Use of Language, Development of Healthy Bodies
- Outings – trips to museums, parks, swimming pools, shops the zoo – all build your child's knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- Sharing books! This is vital to developing language skills as well as being fun. Joining the library is a good idea.
- Encourage independence in all things – a good rule is - don't do anything for your child that they can do for themselves.
- Finally – remember your child will need lots of quality sleep during school terms.

By spending time with your child you will build their confidence. It will give you the chance to share their joy in discovering new things and help make learning fun. We look forward to working with you to continue your child's development.

Holiday Dates 2020 - 2021

Autumn Term Starts	Monday 17 th August 2020 Wednesday 19 th August 2020	Staff return Pupils return
Mid Term	Monday 21 st September 2020 Tuesday 22 nd September 2020	All return
October Holiday All break	Friday 16 th October 2020	
Winter Term Starts	Monday 26 th October 2020 Tuesday 27 th October 2020	Staff return Pupils return
All break	Wednesday 23 rd December 2020	
Spring Term Starts	Wednesday 6 th January 2021	All return
Mid Term All break Resume	Friday 5 th February 2021 Monday 15 th February 2021 Tuesday 16 th February 2021	Staff return Pupils return
Easter Holiday All break <i>Good Friday</i> <i>Easter Monday</i>	Thursday 1 st April 2021 <i>2nd April 2021</i> <i>5th April 2021</i>	
Summer Term Starts	Tuesday 20 th April 2021	All return
Local Holiday	Monday 3 rd May 2021	
Local Holiday	Monday 24 th May 2021	Pupils only
Summer Term All break	Thursday 1 st July 2021	