



Laxey School, Quarry Road, Laxey, Isle of Man

Department of Education, Sport and Culture
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NEWSLETTER (1) FRIDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2018

Welcome back pupils and parents

I hope that everyone – staff, pupils and parents – have had a fabulous summer break and are feeling refreshed and energized for the school year ahead. It certainly promises to be an exciting and positive one, building on the successes of last year.

It has been lovely to welcome new pupils and new families into the Laxey School community. Our Reception children have settled in **extremely** well over the last couple of days, and our new pupils in other year groups have made a positive start. A warm welcome is extended to all of you who are new. I would also like to welcome Mrs Quayle to our team. Mrs Quayle joins us as a support worker and will be based in Reception class.

There are a number of developments for 2018-19 sitting in the pipeline, which we believe will add to the already rich learning experiences offered by Laxey School. This includes developing the maths curriculum, introducing a new strand to our "Learning: Its Up to You" curriculum which we're calling "Laxey Learners" and enhancing our work on educational inclusion (more on that below!)

Over the summer holidays, we began work on cleaning up the outside grounds, and this ongoing project will continue throughout the year. We'll be appealing for some help in this regard in due course – so watch this space! We also converted one of our classrooms into a "Youth Room" and the local Youth Club which meets at the school on a Friday evening will benefit from this. We've also started on plans to improve the experience for parents and visitors arriving at the school, as well as enhancing the systems we have for ensuring the safety of our pupils. Over the coming weeks, the main entrance area will be updated and converted into a proper "reception" area with a counter. The current main doors will be the "public face" of the school and will be the entrance for parents and other visitors. The entrance over by the car-park will become the official pupil entrance, and there is more on this below.

As ever, if you have any matters which you wish to raise with the school or discuss, please feel free to make an appointment to see me and I will be very happy to meet with you. I wish everyone associated with the school all the very best for the forthcoming school year!

With best wishes,

Important dates

- 11th September – Swimming lessons commence (info below)
- 13th September – MSR Sports Club commences (info below)
- 17th September – Hockey Club commences (info below)
- 18th September - Reception photographs for Isle of Man Newspapers
- 20th September – Simon Murray Workshops book illustrator (info below)
- 21st September – Parent Information Sheets published (info below)
- 29th September - 2018 Junior Fell Running Championship (details to follow)
- 5th October – School photographs day (info below)
- 23rd October – Parents evening

This is just an initial "heads up" for some upcoming key dates. More dates will be published and communicated to you very soon, and on an ongoing basis. Keep your eye on our Facebook page!

New procedures for the start and end of the school day

You may have noticed this week that I have asked teachers to lead their classes out at the end of the day. Reception class come out of their classroom doors onto the bottom playground, and all other classes have been led out of the entrance by the car-park and walked along the front of the school to the usual collection point. It is my belief that having the classes led out at the end of the day will encourage our children to exit the building in a smart and sensible way and will enhance the visibility of our teachers to parents.

As from Monday (10th September) we are introducing a new system for the children to come into school at the beginning of the day. At approximately 8.45am, Mrs Dudley will come outside and ring a hand bell to signal that the children need to line up on the top yard. The children will line up in year groups, and we have already explained to the children exactly where they need to line up. (Reception class will continue to go in via the classroom doors on the bottom playground.) At 8.50am, the class teachers will come outside and will lead their class in through the top doors by the car park. There will be no need for parents to come into school with their children via this door. Any parents who have school business will need to use the current main entrance where they will be able to find Mrs Quane in her office.

In the near future, Mrs Quane will be moving out of her existing office and into a new "reception desk" space which should improve the occasional long queues that form outside her room in the mornings.

As with any changes, I expect there may be some teething issues along the way as we introduce these changes, but I assure you they have been carefully considered and are being introduced for no other reason than to improve things for everybody.

Swimming

Swimming lessons commence for this term on Tuesday 11th September. As last year, lessons will be for children in Years 3 – 6 every week until the Easter holiday.

Children will require the following:

Boys – fitted swimming trunks (not shorts)
Girls – one piece costume (not bikini)
Swimming hat for long hair
Towel

Children will not be allowed to wear any jewellery to the pool. Ear studs should be taken out before the lesson or not worn that day. Children can bring swimming goggles if they wish.

Lunch and milk – September / October 2018

Mrs Quane will be sending out information regarding orders and prices for lunch and milk.

School clubs

"Manx Sport and Recreation" (MSR) will hold a Sports Club (a variety of different sports, games and activities will be offered over the weeks) after school on Thursdays. The club will commence on Thursday 13th September 3.30 – 4.25. This term the club will be for children in Years Five and Six. Places are limited, so if you would like your child to attend please complete the slip at the bottom of the newsletter, and return to the school office by Monday. Please assume your child has been allocated a place – we will contact you directly if a place has not been found for them.

Hockey Club will take place after school on Mondays. The club will commence on Monday 17th September 3.30 – 4.25. This term the club will be for children in Years Three and Four. Again, places are limited, so if you would like your child to attend please complete the slip at the bottom of the newsletter, and return to the school office by Monday. Please assume your child has been allocated a place – we will contact you directly if a place has not been found for them.

Sports Lessons

In recent years we have used "Manx Sport and Recreation" (MSR) to provide sports lessons for our classes. We are pleased to confirm that we have once again funded this provision so that every class can benefit from their expertise over the coming year. We're beginning with MSR sessions being offered to Years Five

and Six and these have been timetabled for Thursdays so please ensure that an appropriate PE kit is in school on this day.

As a general point, PE kits should be in school for all children in all classes - and left in school for the entire half-term. PE kits should be in appropriately sized bags and children should be encouraged to take extremely good care of them.

Parent Information Sheets

Having listened to the views of parents, it is clear that many of you would like to know more about what your children are learning each term so that you can offer support and encourage wider learning in the home, augmenting that which goes on in school.

To that end, Laxey School is introducing a Parent Information Sheet which will detail the topic / theme being studied in each class as well as a flavour of the key objectives covered in each of the subjects. Parent Information Sheets will be published towards the beginning of each term, and you can expect to receive your first one on Friday 21st September.

Parents evening

Laxey School is pleased to inform you that on Tuesday 23rd October we shall be holding our first Parents' Evening of the year. In keeping with the format introduced last year, this first Parents' Evening is an informal "open" evening for you to visit your children's classrooms and, if you wish, to have a chat with the teachers about how your children are getting along and see some of the work they have been doing. No appointment is necessary, and you are encouraged to bring your children along so that they can show you their learning and talk to you about school. As I'm sure you can appreciate, after all afternoon in the classroom, the teachers will require a short break and an opportunity to prepare for the Parents' Evening; as such, once the children have been dismissed at the end of the school day, the doors for the school will be closed, re-opening for the Parents' Evening at 4pm. Doors will be locked again from 6.30pm onwards, with the parents evening closing at 7pm.

It seems a little way off – but I thought you'd appreciate knowing this date in advance!

School opening time

There has to be clear understanding between parents and school as to who is responsible for the children and when. Our understanding is that as school begins at 8.50am, this is when we will assume responsibility for the children. We have noticed some children arriving very early at school, unsupervised, and we wouldn't want any parents to be under the false impression that the school is providing supervision.

There is a misconception that the weather affects the school's responsibility to provide supervision. School is not open prior to 8.50am, regardless of weather, and pupils will not be given access. This is not a new policy, but several children are dropped off earlier than this on wet days and are upset to find school closed to them. We have to have a starting time, when teachers and parents explicitly know who is responsible for the children.

Staff Car-Park

A timely reminder for everyone and an important message for parents and families new to our school concerns car parking. I appreciate that parking can be difficult at the start and end of each school day. This is a common issue across many schools. Unfortunately, I will have to ask that parents /carers /relatives **do not** make use of the staff car park. There are very real safety reasons for this: reducing traffic congestion in this area is part of how the school manages the risk of on site traffic.

Please do not be surprised or offended if you are challenged by a member of staff if you are seen in the school car-park – you will be asked to leave.

I really appreciate your co-operation in this matter.

Simon Murray Workshops – Thursday 20th September

On Thursday 20th September, Laxey School will be visited by a published book illustrator from the UK. Simon Murray will begin the day by presenting an assembly to the whole school. Following the presentation, Simon will then visit each class throughout the day and carry out a workshop. The workshop

involves showing the children how he illustrates his books and encouraging them to create some fantastic illustrations and storyboards.

We are sure the children will enjoy this special day and will learn a lot from the experience of working with a visiting illustrator.

Parental consent and medical information form

At the end of this letter you will find the annual Parental Consent and Medical Information Form. I'd really appreciate it if you could take the time to complete this form and return it to the school office. There is also a data collection sheet which shows all of the information we currently hold in relation to addresses and emergency contact details. I urge you to check this, and mark any amendments clearly so that we have the most up-to-date information you can provide. We would like all sheets returned and signed (though there is no "official" place to sign, there is plenty of blank space at the end of the page to put a signature and date) – even those where no amendments have been necessary.

Should there be a change in your contact details, or if at anytime you wish to revoke the permissions granted on this form, it is crucial that you inform the school immediately so that we can adjust our records accordingly.

Please do take the time to complete these forms and return them to the school office as soon as you can, and no later than Monday 24th September 2018.

Inclusion Quality Mark at Laxey School

A major part of the academic year at Laxey will see the school work towards the 'Inclusion Quality Mark' – a significant and UK nationally recognised award which is given to those schools which demonstrate the highest regard for ensuring equal opportunities of learning to all pupils. The pursuit of the award is rigorous and assessors from the UK will make several visits, advising and making recommendations for our practice before carrying out a full assessment of our eligibility to be awarded the quality mark.

The huge appeal of the quality mark is not the gaining of the award, but rather the support and advice from the assessors who will guide Laxey School on a journey towards bettering and improving our already highly inclusive practice.

We are one of several schools working with the assessors from the Inclusion Quality Mark on the Island, and this will lend significant opportunity to develop strengthened partnerships with other schools across the Isle of Man, which can only be a good thing.

We will, of course, keep you updated with news of our progress towards the Inclusion Quality Mark over the course of the school year.

Social Media

Laxey School can be found on social media – we have a Facebook Page and Twitter feed. Please remember to "like" us on Facebook and "follow" us on Twitter to ensure that you are kept up to date with photographs, snippets of information, reminders and useful dates which are all communicated through these channels. If you don't use social media, don't worry – there won't be any vitally important information broadcast across our Facebook and Twitter pages that isn't available to see in newsletters or on our official school website. The social media pages will augment our efforts to communicate effectively with everyone involved with the school. Google searches will lead you to all of our social media pages and feeds.

As with newspaper photos, please let school know on the accompanying "Permissions Form" if you do not wish your child to appear on our website and social media pages. Engagement with our social media pages is entirely optional. Feedback from parents at other schools in the Isle of Man has been extremely positive on the whole, and as we take e-safety extremely seriously, we will not use photographs of your child without your consent. The page is intended to be used by parents, families, friends of the school – but not by pupils.

On a final note, if, at any time, you have any concerns about your child at school, then please do not hesitate to contact us to arrange to meet with the relevant staff member. We would ask that parents and carers please support the school in its constant drive to raise standards by discussing any concerns or issues directly with us, rather than on social media sites, which could be potentially damaging for the school

and its pupils. We would also encourage parents and carers to monitor their children's use of social networking sites encouraging them to be respectful in this arena.

School photographs

Laxey School is pleased to confirm that Steve Woodley Photography will be visiting school this term, on the morning of Friday 5th October to take our annual school photographs.

Steve will be available in the sports hall from 8.30am for any parents who wish to have their children photographed with younger siblings not presently attending Laxey School. If you make your own way into the hall with your children, Steve will organize you and make sure that the photographs are taken in the groupings that you would like. After morning registration, each class will be taken to the hall, where Steve will take individual shots as well as sibling shots. Proofs of the photographs will be made available to parents a couple of weeks later, and it is at that point that you can decide whether or not you would like to make any purchases. There is obviously no obligation to buy.

An additional letter with all relevant information will be issued in due course.

Music provision

In response to parent feedback about the range of music opportunities available to students at Laxey School, we are pleased to announce that talented musician Matt Creer will be offering drum lessons to children in Y4 upwards. Matt is visiting school on Monday morning to lead an assembly and fire up the children's enthusiasm. Matt will be sending home letters with all the information on about how to sign up for the lessons for anyone who is interested.

It is also important to bear in mind that, in a similar way to the Music Service's violin lessons, the drumming lessons will take place during the school day and so will be at the expense of 30 minutes of the normal curriculum offered by Laxey School. Keep an eye out for all the information on Monday.

Reception photographs

Isle of Man Newspapers produces a supplement every year with pictures of the new Reception classes across all the schools in the Isle of Man. The photographer is visiting Laxey School on the morning of Tuesday 18th September, and the supplement will be published and available to buy in shops within the next couple of weeks.

Vacancies

We will shortly be advertising for Lunchtime Assistants. This role is to help supervise children throughout the lunch hour. For more details, please speak to Mr Kelly.

End of year reports

If you have not yet returned a signed copy of the end-of-year report issued in July, please could you do so as soon as possible.

Reply slips > -----

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I would like my child to attend MSR Sports club on Thursdays 3.30pm – 4.25pm. My child is in Year 5 / Year 6. **THIS CLUB COMMENCES ON THURSDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 2018**

At 4.25pm my child is: being collected / walking home / catching a bus home / other_____

Signed.....

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I would like my child to attend Hockey club on Mondays 3.30pm – 4.25pm. My child is in Year 3 / Year 4. **THIS CLUB COMMENCES ON MONDAY 17th SEPTEMBER 2018**

At 4.25pm my child is: being collected / walking home / catching a bus home / other_____

Signed.....

****** ENDS ******
