

Dear Parent / Carer,

How are you all? Hopefully you're looking forward to a relaxing weekend. I know that for some families this is a difficult time and the thoughts of everyone in our team are with you.

I hope to send out a communication every Friday with a full update which you can read in your own time.

We are delighted to say that we have managed to set up individual logins for all our Pr1 – Pr7 pupils. Generic logins would have been a quick fix but individual logins mean that teachers can see who is posting comments / asking questions and pitch their responses appropriately.

In relation to home learning, we know that we aren't going to please everyone and that some parents will struggle with the amount of work already sent out whilst others would like more. Please don't put yourself under pressure to ensure your child completes all the tasks. It's important to remember that the reason we are doing this is to keep everyone safe, that the wellbeing of all our families, staff included, comes first. For those parents who wish more work, further activities can be found in the digital hub which was set up by Highland Council for this purpose.

<https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home>

On Monday of this week, we received guidance from Nicky Grant, Head of Education, around the amount of work we should be providing for home learning. I will be including some of the information around this in a survey we will be issuing at the start of the week. This online survey is to gather both your and your child's thoughts and feelings around the provision of home learning provided by Balloch Primary and how we move forward. It should take no longer than two minutes to complete and I would suggest you sit with your child / children and complete it together so that all opinions can be gathered. I thought you might find it useful to see some of the advice given by Nicky below.

Primary

- The expectation is that there are opportunities for learning in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing daily. Suggested timings for early level - 20 minutes for literacy, 20 minutes for numeracy and limitless time for art, music and PE type activities. Proposals for 1st level timings increase to 20-25 minutes for each curriculum area. For 2nd level this could extend to 25-30 minutes for reading, 25-30 minutes for writing and 25-30 minutes for numeracy and again limitless time for creative activities.
- To support colleagues with development and workload, you might consider grouping staff across the ASG into levels, for example early, first and second.

The grid for this week looks similar to last week with a minor change in format. In the literacy and numeracy column you will see that there is a task specific to your child's class, which can be found in the virtual classroom. These tasks have been set by your child's class teacher. Please don't worry if your child is not able to do this task. Children should get into the habit of planning their daily / weekly timetable based on their family's needs for that week. We fully understand that not everyone can do everything and there is no compulsion to do any of this.

Please ensure your child checks in **daily with us**. If your child has a place in a hub, please let us know which days so that we won't be looking for a check in. We are keeping a daily register and will need to contact parents whose children are not checking in. If your child is unwell and would usually be absent that day, please let us know by emailing balloch.primary@highland.gov.uk All correspondence from parents to teaching staff should come through the Balloch inbox and not through any other platform.

Finally, last week I shared that we would be giving some advice around skills for reading. We don't want to overburden parents and expect them to be the teacher but we do want to share regular ideas about how your children can continue to develop their skills independently without the need for an adult sitting with them.

The skill we are focusing on this week is **predicting**. When children are reading, they should continually be trying to work out what will happen next and refine these predictions as they read. This skill can be developed using any kind of text, including films and cartoons as well as books. When we are training staff in school we use books with no words and ask them to predict what is going to happen on the next page.

I've included a link to a clip from youtube that we use with staff for training to illustrate how a skill can be developed without actually being able to read. I've also included the sheet we use and the times we pause the video. It's not a long clip and you might enjoy sitting with your child and watching it. If your child is sitting watching television, they can pause it every so often and try to work out what is going to happen next.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1C9zOQpKG4>

Before ✓/X	Statement	After ✓/X	Reflection
	Is this clip about deer?		13 seconds
	How does the clip end?		26 seconds
	Is it the Northern Lights?		35 seconds
	Is a storm coming?		1 minute 14 seconds
	Has he found a way out?		4 minutes 32 seconds

Hopefully, sending the weekly email on a Friday allows families time to read it. I know we have very many families at home who are trying to work and look after their children. Please look after yourselves and your families.

Kind regards,
Karen Ross