



Monday 8th June 2020

Dear Families

RE-OPENING

I would love to be able to give you details about school re-opening but at the moment I have no further information I can share. However, there is much work going on at the Council to plan a strategic approach, in line with Scottish Government advice. At school level, we have been measuring all of our classrooms and have sent this information to the Council so as capacity levels can be looked at. The school is being cleaned and we hope that some staff will be able to access the building towards the end of this week. Headteachers are being invited to various update briefings this week. I will share information with you when I can. I realise time is marching on and uncertainty can be frustrating, but I am confident we will get there. Thank you for your ongoing support.

SCIENNES TV

P1 and P2 have been using video for some time in SeeSaw but you may have noticed our new Sciennes TV video channels in P3-P7 Teams. Teachers have been experimenting in using Microsoft Stream and John Armstrong has been training and supporting our staff to use this new technology. (Access has only recently been granted so the SCIE-TV tab has on occasion been out of action at this experimental stage.) John is also training City of Edinburgh teachers this week via a professional learning webinar.

MUSIC TEAM

Thank you to our Instrumental Music Teachers Tess Moran and Rob Ironside who are providing music resources to our P4-P7 instrumentalists in a separate SCIE-IMT (Instrumental Music Tuition) Team. These are located in Private Channels which are only visible to members of each music group. (This is a feature we have recently begun using for Support for Learning and Child Planning Meetings with parents as well.)

PERMANENT APPOINTMENT

I am delighted to let you know that Sophie Mitchell has been appointed as a permanent class teacher at Sciennes. I'm sure you will join me in congratulating Sophie!

LEARNER PARTICIPATION VIRTUAL SPORTS DAY

Thanks to Mrs Berry for organising our very first virtual Sports Day. I hope you enjoyed taking part. It was great to see the photos and videos that you shared, some from several families together in a cul-de- sac and some on the Meadows! There is still time to record your results on the form below by Thursday at 5pm. Winning House announced on Friday!
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=af6sSGo3tUKfacnke7-5xK2RINicoH9OvBk3uRFHfkVUREISTzVBMUzszR0I4R1NIM1VaMjRBSVgxWS4u>

GET CREATIVE

This week is Emma Kirk's last Newsletter of the term from Sciennes School Parent Council and is all about getting creative. We are very grateful to Emma for her weekly efforts to find engaging ideas to keep us all occupied during lockdown! Thank you, Emma.

P1 TRANSITION

P1 Edinburgh Bear Hunt Transition activities for Week Four are available on The City of Edinburgh Council Early Years Team's website. (Find and Follow the Early Years Team on Twitter.) <https://bearhuntedinburgh.wordpress.com>. Information about P1 Transition to Sciennes can be found on our school website www.sciennes.edin.sch.uk Parents>P1 Transition or by clicking on this link: <https://sciennesprimaryschool.com/school-places/p1-induction/>

P7 TRANSITION

P7 Transition also looks very different this year, but we have been working with the high schools to arrange a virtual three day visit next week on 16th, 17th and 18th June, using City of Edinburgh's 'Moving On Up' resource and materials from James Gillespie's High School. Please keep an eye on our website and Twitter [@SciennesPS](https://twitter.com/SciennesPS) for further transition details and updates.

FEEDBACK ON HOME LEARNING

We will send out a survey next week on Home Learning. This was a focus for us in school this year and we are particularly interested in you and your child's feedback on digital home learning. The blended model of learning – with some pupils in school and others at home - is anticipated to continue for some time from August so your views will help us to reflect on, develop and improve our provision of digital learning.

LOVELY SURPRISE GIFT

Last week I received a book in the post called A Valuable Contribution (The Life Story of Bill Sinclair MA MBE).

Bill Sinclair was Depute Head Teacher at Sciennes in December 1960 and stayed for six years before taking up the Headteacher post at Preston Street Primary. He was fondly known as The Colonel at Sciennes on account of his war stories. Bill never quite made it to the rank of colonel, but was instead a major on Eighth Army during the Second World War. The book is mainly based on Bill's time during the Second World War and was written by his grandson Colin Robbie. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it over the weekend. I have sent a card to the author to thank him for sending the book to me.

I hope to be in touch with you very soon with information relating to the procedures for school opening in August. I will also shortly let you know our staffing arrangements for the next school session.

Have a good week.

Andrew

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BELIEVE • ACHIEVE

An excerpt about ‘Colonel’ Bill Sinclair from “[A Dozen Decades at Sciennes](#)”:

“The blow was somewhat softened by the knowledge that we would spend our final year at Sciennes with Mr William Sinclair, who, next to ‘Mathie’ was considered by many pupils to be the second finest teacher in the school. Indeed, he was a fine teacher, who earned the love and respect of the class regardless of our individual ability or aptitude. He, too, left the same time as our class graduated to take up a Headmaster role. It was ‘The Colonel’ (as we affectionately called him due to his war stories and the possibility, he had been a real Colonel) who told me I was cynical. I was nine years old by then. He had been trying to get us to think analytically about geometry and not to just sit like sponges absorbing things. He had told us what a right angle was, and we had figured out what an acute angle was, then he drew a new angle on the board and asked anyone in the class to tell him what such an angle was called. There was no answer. In vain, he directly asked some of our more original thinkers, but they were stumped. Finally, he said, ‘Norma, what would you call this?’ ‘I don’t know sir’, was my reply. So then he said, ‘Well, for example, how would you describe me?’ So after a little deliberation about whether I could really tell him the answer, I replied, ‘Fat Sir’, with almost a straight face. The class erupted in laughter. So did Mr Sinclair, who proceeded to tell me that I was cynical. ‘What’s that Sir?’ He told me. Of course, he was right. It was also the answer he was looking for, as he said, ‘That is, however, correct. The angle I have drawn IS a fat angle, or wide, and is referred to as ‘obtuse’. Thus we learned basic geometry.”

An unknown contributor to our Centenary Booklet in 1992.

FORMER PUPIL MEMOIR 1957-1964 Stuart Reid

“Just came upon the Sciennes website by accident but glad I did. I was at the school for seven years between 1957 and 1964 before going on to Darroch and Boroughmuir. Like most of the boys at that time my head was full of football and because of that and the fact that the girls were separated by the fence, I hardly knew any of the girls by name. I have not been back to Sciennes in 50 years but I can still do a virtual tour in my mind. I can still remember quite a lot of the teachers. Mr Duthie (who played with Hibs I recall!). It was he along with Mr Sinclair that organised the football teams so they were V.I.P.s.”