

Be the Best You Can Be!



Williamston Primary School Update

Term 3 (Jan - April) 2026

I do hope you all had a lovely Christmas break and found time to recharge. A happy new year to all our families as we enter 2026. With the weather warnings in place, it is best to start the newsletter with a reminder about severe weather arrangements!

Severe Weather Arrangements

With winter already upon us, this a reminder of the severe weather arrangements for our school and ELC.

- Operational Services (Land & NETS/Roads) have three dedicated teams to treat priority areas within school grounds. Priority will be given to access roads then staff car parks/bus bays/turning areas (if applicable). However, this does not include playground areas. Each team consists of 4 operatives (1 x gritter vehicle and a hand gritting crew). Action is taken by these dedicated teams whenever there is a requirement to treat footways where the treatment commences at 5am. It is important to recognise that it is not possible to reach all schools by the start of the school day.
- Given that there is a possibility that the car park may not be cleared before the school day starts, we would strongly advise that parents and carers do NOT use the car park on snowy days. There is an incline to exit the car park where cars have often been stuck. Users enter the car park at their own risk.

Operational Services, Facilities Management (FM Staff)

- In the event of heavy snow, the Facilities Management Assistants (FMA's) on the early shift will clear / salt **one** initial footpath to allow staff and pupils access to the School safely. The other footpaths will be worked on by the FMA's as soon as possible during the daylight hours following completion of the existing essential duties.
- For our school, this will be a pathway to the main office/breakfast club small hall door AND a path to the ELC entrance. In the event of snow, please only enter by these main doors. The gates at the top of the steps will be closed over if there are snowy or very icy conditions making the rear of the school unsafe.

Please note that FMA's or school staff have no responsibility for clearing Access roads, Car parks or playgrounds. The main reasons for these restrictions are listed below:

- The unrealistic workload relating to size of the areas involved.
- The volume and manual handling of bags of road salt
- The operation of manual equipment (shovel) over extended periods.
- The rate of snow re-coverage.
- Extended exposure to weather/temperature.

In the event of a school closure due to severe weather, this will be communicated via Groupcall Text and Email to the main parent details held on our systems. This is also shared on local radio and West Lothian Council

communication channels. Please check your details are current on Parent Portal. All learning will move to being online that day with P1-3 using Seesaw and P4-7 using Teams.

Staffing Update

Mrs Fiona Cameron has been seconded for some time to another school which has meant we have had fixed term staff backfilling this post. Mrs Cameron has accepted a teaching post in another school, which has meant we are now in a position to advertise this permanent post within our school. We wish Mrs Cameron every success in her post. Once interviews have taken place later in January, I will let our school community know about the staffing update.

In the run up to Christmas, we had some staff absence in ELC with limited supply responses. When this happens we have to ensure ratios are covered with staff from within the school. This can impact on support across the school. Ms MacDonald has a career break commencing this month. This post is backfilled already with a class teacher.

Budget

Our lead spend continues to be on essential resources. Budgets are increasingly tight for all schools. All spending is in line with improvement plan priorities and interventions.

A plea from school – where reading books are issued, sometimes these come back to school damaged or not at all. This makes a significant dent into our resources. We would ask that ALL reading books are stored in book bags provided and brought to school daily. New books are in the process of being ordered but these are very expensive (approx. £5.50 - £8.40 per book)

School fund has had a boost through the recent sponsored walk. Along with the parkrun donation from PSA, this was allocated to reading books and literacy resources across the school. Other annual spending includes – whole school pantomime, Christmas parties and gifts from Santa for ELC and P1/2, some in house trips that cost money, additional residential payments over and above Pupil Equity Funding allowances (School is funding far more than covered by Pupil Equity Funding). Money is already set aside for P7 leavers gifts and for the show they have chosen. The recent fundraising has temporarily increased school funds to allow this to continue this session. However, this is becoming unsustainable longer term.

Cost of the School Day (COSD)

We continue to promote COSD plans and messages. We have a pupil leadership group working on COSD alongside cluster schools. 2 of these pupils attended a budget meeting at ICHS and supported school in an assembly for P5-7 before reviewing the current budget consultation.

We continue to do the following to support COSD -

- Fund residential for identified families
- Support clothing provision for new families and those requesting uniform and through Winted
- Fund extra-curricular school clubs. All providers school organise are now free.
- Recommend and promote non branded school uniform
- Donation only events, or participation only events
- Provision of classroom resources for all learners
- Consider the purpose of trips and the cost of these linked to learning at every stage of planning. A barrier to trips is parent volunteers to meet ratios. We have been at the point of cancelling trips due to this. See section of newsletter on PVG changes.

Uniform

Williamston Primary runs our Winted uniform where we can reuse and recycle nearly new uniform. This is free. All we ask is that you complete a Form so we can allocate the correct size for your child. This can be accessed at any time during the academic session. The link to the form and a QR code to take you there are below.

<https://forms.office.com/e/FbEfnXjzev>



School Improvement Plan Update

Current improvement plan highlights include –

- Whole staff emergency aid training renewal
- Review of our vision, values and aims alongside our positive relationship policy; equality and diversity statement; antibullying statement following consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Look out for this refresh launching later this term!
- Audit of Health and Wellbeing curriculum and introduction of Tree of Knowledge to support this; ongoing mindfulness; ongoing building resilience; ongoing Emotionworks.
- Building racial literacy approaches have been embedded and informed a review of our interdisciplinary planning (topics the children may be learning about)
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- Very well received parent info session on trauma informed practice and how we support regulation in school. Although this was not as well attended as we would have hoped, those who did attend found it very useful.
- Undertaken 3 technology in schools parent sessions to gather views and inform our new guidance and agreements. This was shared with the whole school community just before Christmas.
- Building thinking classrooms – 2 lead teachers continue to develop this.
- New GIRFEC processes introduced across WLC, meaning changes to child planning meetings. These changes were communicated in the last newsletter.
- We are now using a new profiling tool in P4-7 through My World of Work. Look out for a sharing our learning session where you can see these in action in classrooms.
- ELC vision event offered to all parents/carers.
- Prospective parent evening for families considering applying for P1 Aug 2026. This was very well attended and our P7s were praised for their confidence and helpfulness through the tours.
- We were nominated for a Bikeability award with the presentation taking place recently. This is a national award which we were very proud and surprised to receive.

Sharing Our Learning Update

We had a very successful nativity as well as a music event in December, where our pupils were able to share their learning, performing in front of family and friends. It is always an exciting time of year with the run up to Christmas for our youngest learners to perform the Christmas story accompanied by P2 singing. It is also extra special to have our musicians and choir bring some Christmas spirit. However, the coughs, colds, flu and bugs meant that everyone had to be adaptable to scripts and performances! A huge thank you to everyone who made the run up to Christmas so special.

Termly descriptors outlining learning in each class/stage will be sent out WB 12 January.

A whole school sharing learning event is planned for Wednesday 4th February from 9-945am around digital profiling. Further details will follow.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

Mrs Howard is in the process of agreeing extra-curricular clubs for the term ahead with further information to follow once providers have been confirmed.

Getting It Right For Every Child

As we are due the next cycle of meetings to ensure we work with our families and possibly other agencies to get it right for every child, this is a reminder of previous communication sent out about Child Planning Meetings and the changes to the process –

All teachers have trained on new approaches to Getting It Right For Every Child processes. The new guidance means that the current format and frequency for Child Planning Meetings will change. Instead, there may be education meetings (parents/carers and school) or Assessment of Needs meetings (parents/carers and school) that may happen as and when an individual child requires these. At these meetings, the planning process is recorded by all involved in supporting the child at the time. A child planning meeting is a multiagency meeting and may be convened by any one of the agencies supporting the child and/or the family. There is no change to the process of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Health and Safety

We have a few reminders we would really appreciate your support with at home with, either talking with your child or for the use of the car park.

- When using bikes or scooters on Bankton Lane, they should be very mindful of pedestrians and consider speed. We have had a few injuries and near misses with bikes and scooters.
- Upon entering the grounds by any gate, all children should come off their bike/scooter and push this to the bike/scooter racks. The playgrounds are far to busy for any child to be scooting or cycling.
- All cars using the car park should park in an allocated parent space around the outside of the car park where the parent/child can safely reach the pavement to walk to school. No child should be crossing the car park.
- Children should not be dropped off in the queue of cars and walking across moving traffic. If late, the car should still be safely parked and the child use the pavement to access the main office.
- We have 2 blue badge spaces within the school car park and one out with the car park. We do have school children who require these spaces at both the beginning and end of day with support staff and families supporting this. If the adult collecting your child holds a blue badge, we would ask that they utilise the blue badge space outwith the school car park where possible.
- Once the school bus enters the car park at the end of the day, no other vehicles should enter the car park until the bus leaves. Queuing cars blocking the bus has meant the bus has been unable to leave at the end of the day.
- The car park line is used for drop off and pick up only using the gate beside the drop off area. This is manned by support staff from 0830-0850 and 1515 to 1530, however the end of the school day is 1515 and every effort should be made to collect your child at this time. We only provide staffing beyond the school day because of the length of the car line. If you wish to collect your child from the classroom door, for example the P1 door, we ask that you park outwith the school car park and walk in. The drop off area should not be used to park and walk around the rear of the school.
- Dogs may not enter the school grounds. This is across all West Lothian schools with signage at each gate. If bringing your dog, it can be tied a little away from the top of the steps please as we have a number of children who are scared of dogs or have severe allergies. It is also a very busy area with a lot of footfall for your dog to be close to! We would also ask that dog owners be mindful of fouling, although we appreciate this is a wider community issue.
- Should your child arrive after the bell has rung, they should go to the main office. All support staff are timetabled in classes from 850am and enter the school promptly. The main office records late arrivals as part of the attendance procedures and also ensure the child has a lunch ordered. The ordering of lunches happens first thing in class and it can be unsettling for children arriving late to then send orders to the kitchen.
- If there is a school event on such as an assembly for parents or nativity, the drop off zone should NOT be used for parking as this inhibits the use for other parents and carers.

Thank you for your support.

Office Update

Should you phone the office and the answerphone clicks on, please leave a message. There are occasions where staff may be away from their desks. The answerphone is checked at key points during the day.

If there is a change of end of day arrangements for your child, please give as much notice as possible for us to get that information to your child and their teacher, ideally at least one hour.

Where a child is on the register for Simply Play, the child leaves with their staff. We cannot go by the child telling an adult they think there is a different arrangement.

Parent Body News

Our PSA organised a wreath making event in December that was a great success! The success of these events means that not only are we building our school community with both staff and parents working together, but also fundraising for the school. Our PSA and the CHAS walk raised enough money for us to top up our Bug Club books and buy some more novels. With budget cuts hitting hard, never has the support from our PSA been more important.

Parent Council/PTA meetings will be held on the following dates from 7pm –

Monday 19th January

Tuesday 17th March

Monday 11th May

PVG Update and Plea for Helpers!

We welcome parent helpers to support classes with practical activities in school and trips outwith school. Please note that all parents and carers involved in either the Parent Council, PSA or both are now all required to hold PVGs as part of the changes to the guidance. There are changes within Disclosure Scotland relating to Parent Councils. Parent Councils need to be registered with Volunteer Scotland. Please contact the school office where Mary Shaw can assist anyone who wishes to be involved in the Parent Council, PTA or volunteer as a parent helper in school or for trips. Where we do not have enough parents/carers with PVG checks in place, we may need to cancel planned trips outside of school. There are strict ratios to be maintained for adults to children depending on the age of the children in the class. We offer a range of 'in house' trips wherever we can.

Diary dates – Sporting Events

We have a number of sporting events coming up for our netball, football and basketball teams. Look out for further updates on how our teams get on in their matches!

Primary Netball Events (Mrs Jempson/Mrs Howard)

Area Based Netball League

Tuesday 24 February - WCHS (P7 team)

Tuesday 28 April - WCHS (P6 Team)

Wednesday 20 May - West Lothian Primary Netball Champs at West Lothian College (P7Team)

Primary Football Events (Mr Wickstead)

Area Based Football League (P7 Team)

Tuesday 10 March - JYHS

Tuesday 12 May - JYHS

Primary Basketball Events (Mrs Howard/Mrs Hamilton)

West Lothian Wolves Junior NBA (P6 & 7 team)

Friday 16 January - WCHS

Friday 20 February - WCHS

Friday 13 March - WCHS

Friday 17 April - WCHS

Silver League Friday 8 May - Armadale Academy

Gold League Friday 15 May - WCHS

Diary Dates

Please find below a list of upcoming events in school, including key dates for the following term for your diary.

PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE OF DATE FOR THE P3 ASSEMBLY TO 3RD JUNE

5 January	All return
14 January	Building Resilience Assembly
19 January	GIRFEC meetings week begins – arrangements already made with families for these
	Parent Council and PSA 7pm
21 January	Building Resilience Assembly
22 January	P6 trip to Hopetoun House
27 January	Rag Bag collection day – bring any old clothes to the small hall first thing.
28 January	P5 assembly - parents welcome
4 February	Whole school digital profiling event
6 February	Break for February week
16 February	In Service day – staff only
17 February	Pupils return
18 February	P7 visit – in house trip (one class session 1)
24 February	P7 visit – in house trip (other class session 1)
	P7 visit – in house trip (one class session 2)
25 February	CAMP MEETING 6pm – for families attending camp April 2026, including children
3 March	P7 visit – in house trip (other class session 2)
4 March	P7 visit – in house trip (one class session 3)
10 March	P4 assembly – parents welcome
11 March	P7 visit – in house trip (other class session 3)
17 March	P7 visit – in house trip (one class session 4)
18 March	Parent Council/PSA meeting 7pm
19 March	P7 visit – in house trip (other class session 4)
24 March	P2 assembly – parents welcome
25 March	Euroquiz event for identified P6 pupils
27 March	Parent consultations 1630-1930
	Building Resilience assembly
13 April	Parent consultations 1630-1930
14 April	All break for Easter
	ELCs open, but not schools
27 April	Pupils in school return
	Camp week for P7 pupils going
4 May	Holiday
6 May	Sports day 1 (weather dependent)
7 May	In service day – note change of date due to election
11 May	Class photos for P1 and P7 pupils
	Parent Council/PSA 7pm
12 May	New intake meeting for P1 pupils granted a place
13 May	Sports day 2 (in case of bad weather from 1)
15 May	P7 JYHS visit
18 May	Holiday
19 May	P7 JYHS visit
27 May	In house drama performance for whole school, followed by workshops for P5-7
	PLEASE NOTE THIS MEANS A CHANGE OF DATE FOR P3 ASSEMBLY
3 June	P3 assembly – parents welcome. Please note change of date from original one shared Aug 25
10 June	P7 JYHS visit
11 June	P7 JYHS visit
17 June	Building resilience assembly

23 June P1 intake visit and shared lunch
24 June P7 graduation 1330
26 June P7 leavers reward day
End of term for summer break

Thank you for your continued support.



Jane Livingston and Williamston Staff Team

