



HEADTEACHER NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2020

THANK YOU

I wanted to say thank you to all those parents who are persistently doing the right thing by everyone. Wearing masks, keeping socially distanced and dropping and going. I also wanted to thank the overwhelming majority of Year 4 parents, who despite being in challenging circumstances, have kept their children in self isolation and followed the law in doing so. It's been really lovely to have received, as a school, an increasing number of supportive emails. As a school we are doing everything we can, within our grounds, to keep the children and staff in as much of a covid safe environment as possible. I am very aware that the advice given to people is not going to get everyone on side, doing the right thing, in relation to coronavirus, but the more who do, the safer it is, and the lower the risk of infection. Clearly the national and local picture is not positive at the moment, but as a community, we will keep doing our bit.

YEAR 4 AND ONLINE LEARNING

From this Saturday, the period of Self Isolation for Year 4 children and staff, comes to an end. The children will then be able to return to school on Monday October 5th. With a start time of 8.50 and a collection time of 15.05.

The reaction and support of the way we have provided Online Learning from the very first day of self isolation has been incredibly positive. This support and encouragement is what is currently fuelling the staff to keep going. I have passed these positive comments to other members of staff to show what an impact the online learning can have now, and in the future.

PARENT CONSULTATIONS

Parent consultations (Parents evenings) always take place at Parkwood in the weeks straight after the autumn half term. This will continue this year, but with a slight difference. Parents will be contacted by teachers in the next two weeks in order to set up a TEAMS meeting to discuss children's progress from the comfort of your homes. Different year groups and teachers will also need to work times around their own availability and family arrangements in this odd new world, so times and days will vary, but all meetings will be arranged for a mutually agreeable time in the first three weeks of term 2. Details and arrangements to follow. An option of a written email report on your child will also be an alternative, for any parent who does not feel comfortable using the technology.

Unfortunately, with teachers not able to have face to face meetings with parents as things stand, either in the school or the playground, this is the best way of keeping that essential contact.

As we go forward, even if things do return to complete old normal, then we will be intending to keep the online option open for parents who prefer it.

WEATHER

I fully appreciate parents concerns over how the current guidance is going to play out, as the weather gets worse. I also share them. Schools are being told to continue to keep doors and windows open and allow as much ventilation as possible. This advice, though scientifically helpful, will not always be practical when temperatures drop. As a school we will do what we need to, to allow as much fresh air as we can, whilst keeping the children learning in a reasonable temperature. As with all of this ongoing situation, it means trying to strike a balance, between different types of risk.

We will also continue to review the timings at the start and end of the school day as we approach term two. If everyone is doing the right thing, dropping and going and following the safety advice, then there is the realistic prospect of tightening the times further so that all the children get in quicker.

We've quickened up the staggered start timings once and it seems to be working well for the majority. Once Foundation Stage are in, we can gauge whether there is the prospect of altering this further for the start of Term 2. If this is the case, parents will get at least a week's notice, in order to tweak their arrival times.

ASSEMBLIES

This morning I completed a live 'online' assembly, with a Year 1 class, via TEAMS. It proved to be very different but quite successful. We will continue to build up and explore different ways of bringing the children together for assemblies and events and ways of showing the children's work to parents at home in the weeks and months ahead.

MEDWAY TEST

Good luck to all the Year 6 children who will be sitting the Medway Test on the 13th and 14th October. We are proud of all our Year 6 children, regardless of whether they are taking the test or not and know that all of you will go on to do well in whichever secondary school you go to.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

From Monday October 12th, until Friday October 16th, we will be encouraging children to bring in food items for Harvest time, as we would do each year, in order to donate to 'Caring Hands'. 'Caring Hands' have contacted schools to say there has never been a time when they have been more in need of help and they have listed items which they particularly need to help those in need of food, at what is an impossibly difficult time for many people. We fully support Caring Hands and hope that any donations will help those who need it.

Food items will be collected in boxes as the children come in through the school gate and collected in buckets by members of staff near the path. Thank you in advance for any donations you give.

The items they have requested are as listed below;

TINNED ITEMS

Baked beans
Soups – any flavours
Tuna
Vegetables – any variety Tomatoes
Spaghetti/ravioli
Hot dogs
Potatoes
Fruit – any variety
Rice pudding
Custard – tinned and powdered

DRY ITEMS

Pasta
Ketchup, ground salt & black pepper
Rice
Smash
Tea and Coffee
Sugar
Powdered milk
Noodles
Savoury rice

Various cooking sauces (jar or packet) Pasta sachets (e.g. mug shots)

Please note; Year 6 children may want to bring any items in on the Monday, Thursday or Friday, so that they have less to worry about on the days of the Medway Test.

FOUNDATION STAGE

The best news of all, is that as of Monday our Foundation Stage will be in full time. We very much look forward to seeing you grow, develop and learn and show what fine young people you are. Good luck in all that you do in the year ahead. The timings of the school day are available for all year groups on the school website.

Best wishes to all our families and stay safe and well.

Mr A Moir
Headteacher

DIARY DATES INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOL

5 Oct Foundation Stage Children Full Time
13 Oct Medway Test
14 Oct Medway Test
23 Oct Last Day of Term

