

Newsletter 3rd January 2018

Dear parents and carers,

Happy New Year and welcome back.

It has been the saddest start to a new year that I can ever remember, when returning back to school after the Christmas break. Losing little Indiana-Rose and Mr Horan as we did this Christmas, has struck a chord with everyone involved within the school community.

What has been most striking is the way in which the community have pulled together during the darkest of times. Parents coming to sign books of condolences, raising money, donating cash, children drawing pictures, local Headteachers sending flowers and cards to school and sending their own staff to help keep the school open so that staff can pay their respect at funerals. All of these gestures, no matter how small or large, have all shown what a fantastic community we are part of and for that I am truly grateful.

We acknowledge that we need to continue to support one another and especially the families involved and in doing so, we plan to organise a fitting, lasting memorial for Indiana –Rose. We want something that will be beautiful and innocent as she was but that also symbolises life and growth. We have already had some suggestions from parents and staff but we are open to more ideas if possible. We will involve the Maddison family of course.

The recent flood in school, that saw the school closed for two days, caused disruption to teaching and learning. But as ever, everyone supported us and we managed to get the school reopened by the end of the week.

School life needs to be as vibrant and interesting than it has ever been before, to help us all move on and lift our spirits and so we have many exciting things planned for the coming year ahead.

2018- The Year of Reading!

This year we are having a huge focus on embedding a love of reading across the school. We don't just want our children to be "good" at reading – we want them to LOVE reading.

Miss Hez, (Literacy Co-ordinator) has organised a whole host of exciting initiatives to get children gripped with reading books. Here's a flavour of what's to come...

Reading Cloud

We have invested in a new electronic library system which enables pupils to scan books in and out of the library, digitally. The reading cloud also enables pupils to write reviews about books and talk to classmates and other pupils from other schools about books they are reading. We have also spent £450 on new non-fiction books for our library to cover topics such as sport, coding and the world. We are also looking for volunteers to give up some of their time to help add the special bar codes to our library books.

Fiction Express

We have also invested in a new Reading Software package called Fiction Express to be used with selected pupils during an after school club session with Miss Hez and Mrs Attle. The group will read an extract of a story and decide on what THEY think should happen next. The best part is that they get to communicate with real authors and give them ideas for the next part of the story! Selected children from KS2 will be invited to join in.

Reading 4 boys

Some boys from KS2 have been selected to join in a BOYS 4 READING group at King James II Academy. This group aims at getting boys interested and intrigued about books.

Lexia

We have continued our licence with Lexia and this will continue throughout the year. If your child has a password please encourage them to use the programme at home.

World Book Day

As always we will be celebrating world book day on Friday 2nd March and would love the children to dress as their favourite book character – more information about activities for the day to follow.

Book Club

We will be holding more book clubs each half term to raise money for school funds. See calendar for details.

Author Study

Each class has chosen a class author to study this term and will be reading one of their books as a class text. Ask your child which author they are learning about.

Parent Power

We are organising Read with Mum morning for Mother's day and a Blokes, Books and Breakfast for Father's Day events where we will be inviting parents to come and read with their child. Information to follow.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is an excellent tool which enables parents, pupils and staff to communicate effectively with each other about school life. To help parents use the system more effectively, I thought it would be a good idea to give an overview of who to contact for various issues so that parents know who best to send their query to.

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Headteacher Mrs James | Your Child's class teacher | Learning Mentor Mr. Orwin | Office Staff Miss Booth (call school office) |
| Important/Urgent requests Matters such as bullying, bereavement or personal/private family matters Responses to questionnaires or posts specifically asking parents to comment | Day to day class matters Homework Help with curriculum work Appointments to speak in person | Child's behaviour in school and at home Friendship issues Health and wellbeing issues Medical issues Attendance issues | Dinner money Dinner menus After school clubs Breakfast clubs School trips Parentpay School admissions Event times and dates |

I would also ask parents to consider the time of day they are sending messages. Although our staff are happy to go above and beyond for our parents and children, there are times during holidays, weekends and evenings that I think staff need to have a break from school life, so please consider if your query is urgent or could it wait until working hours. Of course, if your message is urgent then please do not hesitate to contact us, just bear in mind that teachers have family life too!

PS The St. Andrew's staff do a fantastic job educating, nurturing and caring for your children and when parents take the time to send a message on Class Dojo to say thank you or to praise us – it literally makes our day.

Social Media

Unfortunately, over the Christmas Holidays, it was brought to my attention that a parent had posted something unpleasant about a member of staff on Facebook. We are constantly teaching our pupils about the effects of Cyberbullying via social media but this becomes difficult when parents themselves don't set a good example. Fortunately, this is an isolated incident, carried out by one parent and further action has been taken to ensure it does not continue. I would urge parents to alert myself if they discover any further comments about the school or staff on social media. If parents are unhappy with school or a member of staff, then the correct procedure would be to raise your concerns with the Headteacher in the first instance.

Parentpay

Soon we will be launching our new Parentpay digital payment system, which will enable parents and carers to pay for dinner money, trips and school uniform online from the comfort of your home using a mobile phone or other device. We would like as many parents as possible to use this method of payment to reduce cash handling in the office and to make paying school bills much easier for you. Look out for information soon.

Savings

One of the reasons we decided to use Parentpay was that parents can set up a monthly direct debit to save money to be used on school trips and uniforms. Following the questionnaire regarding paying for school trips, parents said that they would welcome this facility. We hope that parents consider setting up a small direct debit of perhaps £1 or £2 to help towards paying for such things.

Breakfast Club Drop offs

It has been brought to my attention from staff, that some children are being left at the school entrance unattended, before breakfast club starts. Some of these mornings have been dark, wet and very cold. Breakfast club does not start until **8am**, for safety reasons, please do not leave your child unattended until they are collected at the door by a member of staff.

Roof update

You can't help but notice that the ongoing work to the roof has continued into the new year and will do so for some weeks to come. I'd like to thank parents for being more considerate when parking and dropping off children, however there are still some parents who continue to park across resident's driveways or on the yellow zigzag lines. Can I ask again for parents to be more considerate?

As part of the roof work, we will be facing disruption in the school kitchen. This will involve safely removing asbestos from the ceiling which will mean the kitchen will be out of order from 1st February until 5th March. Part of the hall will be used to house some of the kitchen equipment and so most PE lessons will need to be taken outdoors, so please make sure your child has an outdoor PE kit in school – this should be a black hoody or jumper and black tracksuit bottoms and trainers. Whilst the kitchen is out of order, school meals will be cooked at another school and brought to school, then served from mobile serving trolleys.

Welcomes and Farewells.

This term we have welcomed Mrs Cheesmond and Mrs Attle, who have both joined the Early Years team and have already had a fantastic start to the year. We have also welcomed Mrs McGrath, a new lunchtime supervisor, who is getting to know the children quickly.

Sadly, we say goodbye to Mrs Dickinson, who has decided to take on a new role as a special needs teacher at the local Evergreen Special Needs School. Mrs Dickinson has been with us for over 6 years and we wish her the very best of luck in her new venture – she will be a big miss! I will be informing Class 1 parents of her replacement in due course.

Lifesaving assembly

On **Monday 5th February at 9am**, we are hosting a "Choking" assembly for parents and children.

Would you know what to do if your child was choking? If not, why don't you come along and learn what to do from a trained First Aider.

Diary dates

Please see attached diary dates calendar and remember, if you lose your dates, use the website – we always add events to that on a regular basis.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs N James Acting Headteacher