

Newsletter 1

Friday 13th September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a wonderful start we have had to the year. Our new reception and nursery starters have had an excellent first few weeks, with barely any tears! We have welcomed some new children from outside the county, who have been made to feel very welcome, and we have welcomed some new staff too.

Communication with parents

Following feedback from some parents that sometimes letters sent home via pupils, doesn't actually get home. There seems to be an unexplained blackhole between giving letters to children and them passing them to parents! To attempt to remedy this, we have started to send a text home to parents when a letter is coming home, so at least parents know whether to expect one. Ideally, we would like to go paperless and send letters out via email or the school website and I will be consulting with you about this later in the term.

Top Tip: All children should have a school bag, so that letters and reading books can be carried safely to and from school without getting lost in between.

Class Dojo

At the start of the year we always have some teething problems getting Dojo set up but it seems like all problems have been remedied now. If you are having problems, it is a good idea to regularly update the app.

I would like to ask parents to use the dojo messaging facility as it was intended. It is not a forum for parents to complain or offload their frustrations to teachers or indeed myself. Any messages such as this will not be responded to and all other messages will be replied to within the normal school hours. If parents are not satisfied or happy about something, then the correct procedure should be followed. Make an appointment to meet the class teacher or Learning Mentor in the first instance and then the headteacher, if still unhappy. If your complaint is about me as Headteacher then there is a complaints form to complete, available on our website. This will be passed to our Chair of Governors.

I would also ask that parents consider the times of day, night, weekends or holidays that they send messages and be mindful that teachers have families and home lives too. As part of our staff workload policy staff will not respond to communications outside school hours.

So that you know who to direct your messages to;

Class teacher	Learning Mentor	School office staff	Headteacher
Homework Child's worries or concerns Timetables eg when is PE, swimming etc Good news you want to share Extra help with learning at home	Attendance Behaviour in school and at home Wellbeing Bullying Friendship issues	After school clubs Uniform Parent pay Dinner menus School Trips Breakfast club Dates eg holidays, INSET days etc	Responses to questionnaires or requests for feedback

Remember there is a lot of information on our website, so always go there first before getting in touch.

Parent conduct

In addition to parents using Class Dojo responsibly and respectfully, may I remind you also that we have a parent code of conduct which we enforce. We expect that parents speak to staff calmly and with respect, and this in turn will be reciprocated. Any repeat incidents of parents not following the Parent Code of Conduct (which can be found on our website) may result in a parent being banned from the school premises.

Behaviour and Attendance Treat

This term our behaviour and attendance treat will be a trip to Bamboozles for those children who achieve 62 out of 68 green days. We expect the highest standards of behaviour and excellent attendance from our pupils and will reward only those who meet these criteria. I hope you took the time to read the letter I sent regarding authorised and unauthorised absences and that only unauthorised absences will be deducted from the green day total.

Curriculum Changes This Year

We have made some exciting changes and enhancements to our curriculum offer this year.

Local Links and School Visitors

This year the staff have been working hard to make improvements to the whole school curriculum and how we teach our foundation subjects. This year you will see that we have tailored our topics around local links, such as; museums, galleries, places of interest, so that we can tap into the expertise of the people that work there and engage the pupils fully in the subject. We will be trying our very best to heavily subsidise these trips but may ask for a small contribution towards the cost if needed because, as you know, funding in schools is at an all-time low and schools across the nation are struggling to fund the basic needs of our children. We are applying for grants to help with this and we have had a generous offer from King James 1 Academy to use their minibuses for a much smaller fee than coach companies charge. Every little helps!

Outdoor Learning

As part of our curriculum enhancements, we are also introducing Forest Schools to our timetable. Each class will have one morning a week, for a whole half term, learning survival skills, fire safety, making shelters, learning about wildlife etc

In addition, we are holding a Camping Evening for Year's 4,5 and 6 on May 18th. Completely organised by "The Outdoor People," who bring the tents for the school field, campfires, games and survival activity equipment, the event will teach children resilience, determination, teamwork and that it's ok to be away from parents and carers for the night! Check out their website for more information.

Curriculum Collapse Days

We are also introducing new Curriculum Collapse days, where KS1 and KS2 collapse their regular timetables in order to immerse themselves into a themed day. These days are aimed at developing

pupils' knowledge, wellbeing and aspirations: our three main curriculum drivers, chosen by you! We start the year off with a Healthy Heart Day and a Guy Fawkes day.

Learning Through Play

Following some quality staff training, we have decided to extend opportunities to learn through play from Early Years into KS1. There is strong research that shows that children learn best this way until they are around 7 years old. Children will still have some adult directed lessons but these will be accompanied by play or "continuous provision" opportunities through the week.

I hope the children are coming home talking enthusiastically about the new experiences they are having in school.

Uniform

As many pupils, parents and carers know, I think that children dressed in full school uniform is very important. It helps children have a sense of belonging, prevents bullying for wearing different things and gives children a sense of pride in their appearance. The start of the year always fills me with a sense of delight when I see every child wearing the full school uniform. I want to say a huge thank you to parents for making sure the policy is followed; in particular, where full black shoes are concerned.

As a parent myself, I know how expensive school uniform can be. I have been able to access a number of grants to help families with school uniforms that include shoes and winter coats. The Warrens Group PLC, who sponsor our breakfast club, are also doing a sponsored walk to raise money to help families buy winter shoes and coats too. If you would like to find out more about accessing these grants please speak to Miss Booth in the office.

We are also planning to organise a uniform recycling event, so parents can access unwanted uniform for free and do their bit for the environment too. If you have any unwanted uniform items, please send them into school.

Jewellery

We have a strict school policy on jewellery. Children are not allowed to wear jewellery due to health and safety reasons and risk of loss or damage. Children who come to school with any jewellery on, will be asked to take it off and take it to the school office, where it can be collected by an adult at the end of the day.

We do allow small stud earrings; however, these must be either removed for PE, swimming and physical after-school clubs or covered with plasters. If your child cannot remove their own earrings, then parents must supply the child with plasters to cover the earrings.

Safeguarding

We are a safeguarding school and take disclosures from pupils seriously. We have a duty to report any type of disclosure to First Contact.

Please can I ask that parents do not enter the school yard for safeguarding reasons. We cannot have adults walking around the yard unattended. Please say goodbye to your child at the school gate and

Early Years parents may go through the first gate to handover to staff if needed but not through the second gate. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Pantomime

We will be contacting parents soon regarding the Christmas Pantomime event. For new parents' information, all children receive a free ticket to the pantomime paid for by donations to the PTA fund and family members may also come along for £10. Nursery children may go if accompanied by a parent or carer. More information to follow – oh yes it will!

I have attached a list of diary dates that we can confirm so far this year. Please keep them safe for your reference. I know some parents and carers take a photo of the dates on their phone so they can look at them at any time, which I thought was a great tip!

I look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming dates.

Mrs N James

Head teacher