

Newsletter 3 – January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy new year. I trust you all had a lovely Christmas and are looking forward to the year ahead. As always, St. Andrew's Primary School, has a lot of exciting new things happening in school and 2020 is no different.

### **Dental Day**

We had a fabulous first day back learning about keeping our teeth healthy. We had an overwhelming amount of support from parents who have embraced the change of giving their child water for lunch and a number of children have told me that they themselves, have said no to sugary drinks and opted for sugar free alternatives instead – so that's really good to hear. Children have also shared with me that they are brushing their teeth correctly now too.

### **School Dog**

You may have seen on Class Dojo our announcement that, St Andrew's Primary School is introducing a School Dog to its team. Sammy, the Sprocker Spaniel, is being trained to be a calming influence on children and will be listening to some children read in school too. Along with our Dog Obedience after-school club, which has been a huge success, we are becoming a dog friendly school. Look out for an article in the Northern Echo, about the project, coming soon!

### **Parking**

Without sounding like a stuck record, parking remains a problem outside of school. To try and remedy the situation, I am organising a meeting with parents and the local PCSO's to see if we can work together to resolve the situation. Following this meeting, we will also have a meeting with local residents to see if they have any ideas or solutions to help the problem. Please see attached diary dates for these meetings.

The meeting for parents will be held in the school hall on **Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February** from 9am. Please come along and air your frustrations and share your suggestions to resolve the problem.

We also have a Bike Marking event on that morning, starting at 8.30am, so bring along your bikes and scooters to be marked in case of theft.

### **Homework**

At the beginning of the year we introduced a new style of homework whereby parents could design their child's homework time around their family life. Unfortunately, we are finding that some families have just not bothered. I can see on TT Rockstars and Letterjoin who is trying at home and who is not. Can I ask parents to make a special effort to encourage their child to practise these basic skills at home as well as spellings, as we don't want to go back to more formal types of homework. Thank you

### **Facebook**

Our Facebook is up and running now, so please follow us and share any good news stories so other members of the community can see the good work we do.

## Phonics

We have been awarded a grant from the English Hub to improve phonics teaching and learning. The grant has been used to train ALL staff in early years and key stage 1 in read Write Inc delivery and to buy some much-needed new resources. This means that children can be grouped with peers of similar abilities so that they can learn together. We currently have ten different RWInc groups and we are already seeing the benefits of this.

## Class Dojo Portfolios

We have purchased 15 Fire 7 tablets, with money raised by the PTA, for children to use in class to document and record their class work digitally. The children will be able to take photos, write text or make short videos in a range of lessons and, once approved by the teacher, you at home will be able to see their work too. So, keep an eye out for notifications from class dojo. If you don't have Class Dojo – you are missing out. So get logged on!

## Dojo Points

I just wanted to provide parents with some clarification on Dojo Points. Children are rewarded for a range of things such as good behaviour, good work, being polite or demonstrating our core values. Pupils sometimes have points deducted from them for minor things such as, not putting their hand up, talking when they should be listening, not underlining their title etc. This facility is to help teachers manage basic or low-level disruption and ensure the lessons flow and run smoothly. It also gives teachers a tool to use when the negative behaviour isn't bad enough to warrant moving up the triangle onto yellow but does need a short reminder that their behaviour or attitude to learning isn't in line with the teacher's expectations.

## Behaviour Treat

This term we have a booked an inflatable assault course for those lucky, well behaved, well attending pupils to play on, for the day, at the end of term. Remember this is for children who demonstrate outstanding behaviour and excellent attendance. Any unauthorised attendances will be deducted from the total amount of green days.

## World Book Day

This year we are having a focus on Dog Stories, as we are welcoming Sammy, our school reading dog, into our family. We would like children to dress up as a dog for the day. We ask parents to be creative and not go out and buy costumes but perhaps make something from clothes you already have. If your child would prefer not to dress as a dog, then please just wear another character costume, it's absolutely fine. Although World Book Day is on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March, we always have our dressing up day on the following **Friday (6<sup>th</sup>)**, to limit disruption to the school week. Children will also receive a £1 book token that they can use to purchase special World Book Day books.

### **Staffing Update**

Unfortunately, we still have two members of staff on long term sick leave. Firstly, can I thank parents for their understanding and the staff team, who have all pulled together to ensure consistency for those children effected. It is unknown, at this stage, how long Mrs Foggin will be absent, and so we have made the decision to keep Miss Hewson in Class 3 until the end of the academic year, so as to reduce any further disruption to that class, especially as they had a very turbulent Autumn term. Similarly, Mrs Castledine is still poorly, and we hope Mrs Jones can stay with us until she returns. Miss Booth will be leaving us, to start her maternity leave at February half term, we are still looking to recruit a suitable replacement for her. I am sure you will all join me in wishing her the very best for her new bundle of joy.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the forthcoming events.

Mrs N James

Headteacher