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Headteacher's Newsletter Autumn 2 December 2020

Dear parents and carers,

Well, we have made it to the end of 2020 and what a year it has been! The news of leaving the national lockdown and ending the year in Tier 3, may not have been welcome news for many of us but I hope the lifting of restrictions over Christmas brings some hope to some families and you can all have a relatively normal time.

COVID-19 Update

We have done so well, this term, to get this far without a positive case, however it was inevitable that we would have at least one case before Christmas. I want to thank our incredible staff who have managed to keep the school clean and maintain the measures in place for such a long time. Credit also must be given to parents and carers, who have taken immediate action from the onset of symptoms from a member of their household and kept their children away from school until a test results confirms whether they can or cannot return to school. Our thoughts are with the family that are affected in this instance.

It has been inevitable that we have had some staff shielding, self-isolating or poorly during this term, however the team have ensured that the children have not been affected and kept everything as “normal” as possible during this time.

Home Learning

We have had a number of children self-isolating this term, but unfortunately, we have had only a minority of pupils engaging in home learning during the two-week absence, this can be very frustrating for teachers who take time in their day to provide activities for the children to do at home, and ensure they do not fall behind. We understand there may be some barriers to learning at home, for example; not having the correct equipment or parents having to work from home etc but we would much rather parents communicated with us and let us know so that we can attempt to support you.

If, after two days of the class teacher setting work on Dojo, a child does not complete and submit their work, the class teacher will stop posting work for that child, so as not to take up their valuable time unnecessarily.

Attendance

As you know, attendance is very important, especially as the children had so much time off last year. We are still having some children staying off with minor ailments, such as sore throats and headaches. I would urge parents and carers to give their child some Calpol and send them to school and we will contact you if they deteriorate at all. We can also administer Calpol during the day if you wish. These absences will be unauthorised as a child is still able to attend school with such ailments.

Just a note about medicines in school. It is very important that medicines, whether prescribed or not, are handed to an adult from school and a consent form signed. This includes creams and lotions. Thank you.



Sleep Matters

Since returning in September we have noticed an increase in very tired children in class. Interestingly, a large proportion are boys in KS2. We understand that getting children back into bedtime routines may have been difficult after lockdown, when routines may have been more relaxed, but would urge parents and carers to consider the impact of their child's education when coming to school so tired, that they are falling asleep.

Research shows that lack of sleep can:

1. Limit a child's organisation and planning skills
2. Worsen a child's mood or behaviour
3. Reduce their focus and attention
4. Hampers their ability to remember things

We can offer a range of support to parents who would like some help in getting their child into a good bedtime routine, so their children can reach their full potential back in school the next day. Please get in touch with Mr Orwin for further support and information.

The Bread and Butter Thing

I am delighted to announce that our school is going to be the first in county Durham to host an initiative called "The Bread and Butter Thing" (TBBT) which brings affordable, unwanted food to our school for parents, staff and the local community to buy at a reduced rate. TBBT has access to a range of food distributors who pass on unwanted food, such as: end of line, near best before date etc and sells it on at a snip of a price. Typically, you can buy three bags of food for £7.50 which would normally cost between £35 to £45. You will receive a bag of fresh fruit and vegetables, a bag of fridge items and a bag of frozen items. The delivery van will come to school once a week and parents and carers will be able to book their three bags of food in advance to come and collect.

BUT, and it is a big **BUT**, this scheme heavily relies upon parent volunteers, who are willing to give up a couple of hours a week to unload the van and bag up the food items ready to be collected and so I am asking you to let me know if you could do this for our community.

I think the scheme will help out a lot of our families and could be a really positive addition to our community as a whole. I know myself and other staff will be registering and benefiting from it too.

I will be contacting you all with more information, in the new year, about this project.

Dogs On School Premises

Please can I politely ask parents not to bring their dogs onto the school premises, even if being carried. There is a possible £50 fine for repeat offenders and clear signs on the school gates informing you of this. Thank you.

Your Child's Progress

This term we will be doing our normal termly assessments to find out about your child's progress and will be comparing these to the last assessments, that were taken in December 2019. We will send a short report, of your child's achievements, when we return in January.

School Photos

As we can't have our usual photographer in school this year, Mr Orwin has offered to take individual photos for you to buy. The photos will be sent by email for you to print off as many and as big as you wish for a one-off payment of £5, which is much cheaper than what you would pay with Tempest and it gives you the flexibility to print whatever size you want. We will be able to do sibling photos of those who are in school but unfortunately, we cannot invite younger siblings into school this year. We are hoping to get them done next week, so that you can have them before Christmas, as we know many of you like to give them as gifts to family members.

Now that Bubble 1 are isolating, we will do their photos on Thursday 17th December.

Christmas

This Christmas at St. Andrew's will be quite different to previous years; however, we will do our best to ensure the children have a great time regardless. We won't be able to have a traditional Christmas performance, but instead we are planning to make a recording of the children singing, along with some funny festive treats for your entertainment. This will be posted on our school website for you all to enjoy over Christmas.

Children will still be having their Christmas parties within their bubbles and we will still have our traditional Christmas dinner, wearing our Christmas jumpers, on the last day of term.

If any of you have some unwanted Christmas jumpers, that your own children do not wear any longer, please send them to school and we can pass them onto other children. Thank you.

Please see below for important dates, times and messages. These will also be on the school website if you need them at a later date.

All that is left is for me is to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a very, very happy and COVID free New Year!

Yours sincerely

Mrs James

Headteacher

Diary Dates

December

Wednesday 9th - Individual and siblings school photographs for Bubbles 2 and 3

Thursday 10th - Whole school Big Christmas Sing – Children to wear festive hats and accessories eg head bands, tinsel, make your own hat, Santa hats etc

Week beginning 14th December – **No after school clubs**

Tuesday 15th – Bubble 3 Christmas party – Years 5 and 6

Wednesday 16th – Bubble 1 Christmas party – Nursery, reception and Year 1 (**Nursery can attend the whole day**)

Thursday 17th – Bubble 2 Christmas party – Years 2,3 and 4

Thursday 17th - bubble 1 individual school photos

Friday 18th - Christmas dinner and jumper day (**all nursery children can stay for Christmas dinner and be picked up at 12.30pm if they are morning places normally**)

Friday 18th - last day of term – school closes by 2pm

- **Siblings pick up from yard – 1.45pm**
- **Bubble 1 pick up from hall doors – 1.45pm**
- **Bubble 2 pick up from hall doors – 1.50pm**
- **Bubble 3 pick up from hall doors – 1.55pm**

January

Week beginning 4th January – No after school clubs

Monday 4th - Staff INSET day – school closed to children

Tuesday 5th - School reopens for children

February

Friday 12th End of term

Monday 22nd School reopens