



St. Stephen's C.E. Primary School

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Wednesday 6th September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers,

We hope that you had a really good holiday and it is great to see all the children back at school and ready for their new year.

This week, the children will be:

1. Choosing their new charity for the year.

Each year, we alternately chose a British charity and a world charity. Last year was the British charity 'Reuben's Retreat' which is a holiday home for terminally ill children. **We raised £965.97 for Reuben's Retreat! Well done and thank everyone!** This year, the children will be choosing an international charity and we will let you know which one has been chosen as soon as the voting has taken place.

The charity fund-raising is an important part of the life of the school. All major religions feel that it is very important to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves. At St Stephen's, we choose to do this through donating to a charity each year – supporting children either in Britain or in another country. It is a well-established Christian tradition at the school and we are very proud of our efforts each year. We thank you for all your support with these fund-raising efforts.

2. Voting for their new School Council members.

The School Council will represent the children at St Stephen's and will be deciding upon our fund-raising events, organising some of them and arranging the timetable for the year. They will also be visiting the Mayor and the Mayor's Parlour in the Town Hall. The council will have meetings with me and we will discuss any issues and proposals that they have. They will also be representing the school at any important events which come around.

3. Voting for their Eco Council members.

The Eco Council will be working with Mrs Chow to ensure that we conserve as much energy as possible, re-cycle as much as we can and generally keep the school looking tidy. Their role is a daily responsibility and the council will become adept at spotting things which can improve our environment!

It is great that the children experience the democratic experience of voting and have an insight into how our democracy works.

They will also be getting used to their new classrooms and teachers and will be carrying out activities which will enable the teachers to assess what they have remembered since last year! Teachers will be sending a curriculum letter to you so that you know what is being taught this half-term and also details about PE, homework etc.

I'm afraid that this is a long letter, as the first one of the year tends to be!

Friday sees our first Sunshine Assembly. This will be a short one as we have no certificates as yet to give out. However, we will be announcing Head Boy, Head Girl, captains and prefect jobs for Year 6 etc. All are welcome.

Below are some reminders about school policy – these policies are set by Governors and are there for the Health and Safety and progress of all children.

1. PE Kits

Last year, most of our children had the correct PE kit in school at the right time. However, some children constantly forgot their kit. Please remember that PE is a COMPULSORY subject and the children have to take part unless they

have an injury. If children have forgotten their kit, they will be wearing spare kit from school. Please ensure that your child has their full kit in school at all times. Black/Navy shorts, white tee-shirt, black pumps in a named carrier bag should be left at school on your child's peg. The kit should be taken home each half-term for washing.

If your child has pierced ears, earrings should be removed for PE. If they cannot do this, plasters should be brought FROM HOME to cover their earrings.

2. Jewellery

Children may wear stud earrings ONLY in pierced ears. The only other item of jewellery allowed is a watch. If children are seen to be wearing other jewellery, this will be removed and given back at the end of the day.

3. Snacks

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 should not bring any snacks as they will be given fruit and milk at playtime. Junior children can bring fruit or LOW FAT/SALTcrisps. To avoid littering the playground, crisps should be placed in a small Tupperware box which should be returned home each evening. Children in the juniors can buy milk (see Mrs Bancroft) but will also be provided with water throughout the day. Children are NOT allowed to bring cakes, sweets, biscuits or chocolate for snack. Small quantities of these items may be brought for packed lunch, but they may not be eaten at playtime.

4. Dinner Money and Free School Meals

All dinner monies should be paid to Miss Mason at the office on Mondays or Tuesdays. School meals are £2.15 each - £10.75 per week.

If your child is ENTITLED to Free School Meals but is bringing a packed lunch, PLEASE CLAIM FOR THEM ANYWAY! This is because school receives extra money from the government for every child who is entitled to Free School Meals, as long as they are claimed!

5. Child Information Forms

Tomorrow (Thursday), you will receive some information forms which need to be handed back to school on Monday. These forms will give us the correct information about your child (eg, emergency contact forms, asthma, permission slips etc). Please hand them in to your child's teacher or Mrs Bancroft.

6. Homework Club

Homework Club begins next Tuesday (10th September) and will be run by Miss Peach and Mrs Costin. This club is for Junior children only and runs from 3pm until 3.45pm. If you wish your child to attend the club, please fill out the form which will be sent out tomorrow – places will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis. Please note that all children must be picked up at 3.45pm prompt. If children do not attend regularly, they will, unfortunately, lose their place and the place will be given to a child on the waiting list.

7. Spellings

This year we are having a big focus on spellings. Children will have to learn how to spell 100 given words. They will be given 10 words every 2 weeks and will be tested on them at the end of that period. For the two weeks, the children will be having lessons around those words, their meaning and how to use them in sentences. They will then be expected to use these words in their everyday writing (spelt correctly of course!). Class teachers will also be running 'spelling bees' to introduce an element of competition for some children. All children will be expected to attain AT LEAST 8 out of 10 in their fortnightly spelling tests. This should be easily achievable over 2 weeks. If the children do not achieve 8 out of 10, it will be assumed that they have not taken the time to learn them and they will be sent to me. If a child persistently under-achieves, I will be asking parents to come to school for a chat about homework. It is VITAL that children improve their ability to spell. We have raised standards in all other areas of English, but, for the majority of children, inaccurate spellings have let their work and their levels of achievement down. We ask for your full support in this endeavour.

All Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children will receive phonics lessons. These should be practised at home each day to consolidate the work done in school.

8. Reading

All children should practise their reading skills at home each day.

9. SATS – Year 2 and Year 6 – Phonics Tests – Year 1

Both sets of children will be taking their exams in May of next year and will be working towards them from today. Please ensure that children complete and return all homework. Each piece set will support their learning in school and allow your child to practice what they have learned about.

Year 6 will take their tests during the week beginning Monday 7th May 2018. All children should be in school that week. Holidays will not be allowed. Please stress to the children the importance of these tests and the importance of working their hardest in every lesson they receive.

Year 1 children will be taking their Phonics Tests in June 2018. Please ensure that they learn and practice their phonics daily at home to consolidate the work done at school.

10. Absences and Holidays during term time

If your child is absent from school for ANY reason, please ring the school on the first day of absence BEFORE 9am, so that we can correct the register. School will ring home on each day of absence. If your child is absent from school for more than 5 days, a doctor's note will be required. Any pupil absent from school for more than 5 days without a doctor's note will have to be referred to the Education and Welfare Officer.

Just to remind you that holidays will NOT be allowed during term-time. All parents have been sent a holiday list for this academic year. As Headteacher, I am no longer able to authorise ANY holidays.

Any parent taking their child out of school for a holiday will receive a fine from the Local Authority. (The ruling states that if the child has two parents with responsibility, then BOTH parents will be fined, even if one of the parents does not attend the holiday).

Please be aware that if a child misses 2 weeks of school every year because of holidays and also has an average of 10 days of a year through illness or appointments, this is 20 days per year. From Reception to Year 6, 20 days per year adds up to 28 weeks, which amounts to a child missing nearly a year of education over 7 years and will drastically impair the amount of progress the child makes. It all mounts up!

We understand the reason why parents sometimes choose to go on holiday during term-time, however, the government are no longer allowing it.

11. Independent Learning

This year, we are encouraging the children to become more independent in their learning by choosing the resources they will need, having learning leaders on tables, becoming less dependent on adult support during work-time, being more self-confident in their own abilities, encouraging each other to learn etc. Please ask your child to talk about what they have learned each day, (as well as what they have done!) as talking about their learning consolidates their understanding. Many thanks.

Thank you for reading this long letter! It will also be on the school website. We look forward to another successful year at St Stephen's and, with your help, this can be achieved.

Best Wishes

Cathie Masztalerz

Headteacher

Midday Assistant

A Midday Assistant post has become available – to start as soon as possible. You would be working 1 hour each day from 12noon – 1pm, looking after and playing with the children. If you are interested in the post, please see Mrs Bancroft at the office to get a Job Description and an application form. Your application will be considered and, if shortlisted, you will need to attend a very short interview.

Please note that, because you will be working with children, these posts are subject to a vigorous and enhanced police check.

Applications should be handed into the school office by Friday 15th September.

We hope to hear from you soon!

Mrs Masztalerz