

Highworth Combined School

MAY 2018 NEWSLETTER

Dear Parent,

I am writing this just after the glorious Bank Holiday weekend and hope very much that you and your families were able to enjoy some time together in the sunshine. There have been lots of outdoor lessons here of late so let's hope that we're able to continue to take advantage of Highworth's wonderful grounds. Although this is a quieter Half Term in terms of events, we are very busy focusing upon learning and ensuring that children make as much progress as possible in the last term within their current year group.

Staffing Update

A warm welcome is extended to 3 new members of staff: Karen Brown and Bethany Medhurst, who have joined us as Communicators within the Hearing Impaired Department, and to Rebecca King who will work as a Learning Support Assistant, primarily within Year 4. Stephen Goldsmith, who has been employed as 'Core Communicator' within the Hearing Impaired Department, will join us after half term.

Sadly, Emma Smith, who has worked in our Reception classes for 6 years, will be leaving us to dedicate more time to a business venture. We wish her every success at this exciting time, but will miss her very much; she has been such an important part of our Early Years team and has a wealth of knowledge and experience. I will write soon with news of her successor.

Absence

Like all schools in the country, we are held accountable for our attendance rate, and for very good reason; there is significant evidence that children with good attendance make better progress than those with poor attendance. For this reason, the Governing Body reviewed all our systems and procedures and wrote an attendance policy that supports good attendance and makes clear what will happen in the event of prolonged absence. As a Buckinghamshire County Council Community School our policy also incorporates the requirements of that authority. One of the ways in which good attendance is encouraged is through the issuing of

fines for some episodes of absence. In a drive to improve attendance, we have recently issued a number of these fines.

In order to avoid this happening to your family, please read the Attendance Policy which is available on the website. If you would like any more information, please let Mrs Bennett know.

Car Parking

Many thanks to the 7 parents who attended the recent meeting to discuss the difficulties with car parking. It was disappointing to see so few parents there, especially as I know the majority of you support the need to show respect and consideration to local residents. I am pleased to say that the meeting was useful in identifying some actions that could be taken and I will be working through the list in the forthcoming weeks. You will no doubt have noticed the increased presence of the Police Community Support Officers who are helping by advising of safe parking practices and issuing fines where appropriate. They will continue to support the drive to improve safety for your children. With the better weather, I am hopeful that more of you will use the lovely walking routes to school and avoid the perils of car parking altogether!

Staying safe in the sun

Now that summer has returned can I encourage parents to apply sunscreen to their children before they leave home on sunny days? It is also essential that you send children into school with a sun hat. These are available from our front office, in a choice of designs, for only £3.00.

If your child is a hay fever sufferer, you will know that pollen levels are very high currently. In order to minimise discomfort and the inconvenience of having to come to school during the day, please could you ensure that the appropriate medication is given to your child each morning before school?

Y5 Parents Meeting about Secondary Selection

There will be a meeting for parents of pupils in the current Year 5 at **6.30pm on Wednesday 20th June**. At this meeting I will explain the selection process which decides whether pupils transfer to Grammar or Upper schools when they leave us at the end of next year. This is an important meeting which I hope all parents of pupils in Year 5 will attend. At the meeting I will not only explain the process, but I will also explain how both home and school can support pupils during this important time. Please note though that **this is a meeting for parents only** and is **NOT** one which pupils should attend.

Hot Lunches

Can I remind parents that ALL hot lunches HAVE to be booked. This includes meals for pupils who are entitled to a free lunch. Unless a menu selection is made for each child on each day on which a meal is required, then our cook cannot cook the correct number of meals. It is important that parents check the menu option for each day. It is not possible to make substitutions once a meal has been ordered. Meals ordered in error can be re-funded, but unless this is done at least a week in advance, then the child will need to bring a packed lunch into school on the day in question.

Can I also remind parents that hot meals **ALWAYS** need to be ordered no later than 8pm on the **Thursday of the week BEFORE** the meals are to be eaten. This still applies during school holidays or closures.

Diary dates

As usual, the final half of the Summer Term will be a busy one! Please see the website for dates of all the events, including Sports Day, Upper School Production, Music Concert, leavers' events, etc. You will also find term dates along with INSET days shown on our live and up to date calendar.