

Giffard Park Primary School

‘Success Starts Here’



January 2020

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Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to a new term at Giffard Park Primary School and Happy New Year!

Welcome to new children and staff

We are delighted to welcome all the new children and parents to our wonderful school. We also have new additions to our staff team. Due to the increasing numbers of children joining our Smart Steps Pre School, we are delighted to welcome Miss Partridge, who joined us just before Christmas. We also welcome our new teaching assistants Mrs Godogama and Mrs Ronquillo. At the end of last term, we said goodbye to Mrs Humphries and Mrs MacNair and we would like to thank them for all their hard work and wish them all the very best for the future.

Our values – ‘The Giffard Park Way’

We expect the highest possible standards of behaviour from all pupils and in order to achieve this follow our SMART Charter. The SMART Charter is used across the school with all pupils from Foundation to Year 6 and sets out the attitudes and values that we believe underpin the ethos of our school:

SMART learners are

Sensitive	Kind, gentle and helpful to others. We don't hurt people or their feelings.
Motivated	Hard workers who have a go. We don't waste time or give up.
Attentive	Good listeners who concentrate. We listen to instructions and don't interrupt.
Responsible	Careful with property and nature. We don't damage or waste things.
Truthful	Honest. We always tell the truth.

(Please see our website for a copy of our behaviour policy.) Our **Celebration Assembly** will continue to take place every **Friday** where we hold our Remarkable Readers raffle and celebrate the children's achievements both inside and outside of school. It will also include awarding the class trophy for best attendance and the Headteacher award for the best-behaved class. We also have our weekly Student of the Week awards which we invite parents in to celebrate with us.

House Points

From this week, we are launching a house points system. All of the children and staff in the school have been allocated a house as follows: **Kingfisher (purple)**, **Dragonfly (yellow)**, **Phoenix (orange)** and **Willow (green)**. All staff can award House Points to children for a variety of reasons. For example:

- Polite, well-mannered behaviour
- Demonstrating a caring attitude towards peers
- Working to the best of their ability
- Good attendance
- Putting special effort into a piece of work
- Neatly presented work
- Positive attitude towards work
- Sporting achievement

- Taking part in competitions and events
- Helpful approaches to different situations

Every week, the class sets of house points are added to the main tubes and a weekly winner is announced during our Celebration Assembly. House points are then counted over the course of a term, a winner is announced, and the children in that house are rewarded with a special event or treat. At the end of the year, once all house points are tallied, the House Champions will be announced. The winning house will be awarded their ribbons on the House Cup.

This system aims to encourage a real sense of pride and achievement for the children. It fosters community spirit and gives the children an opportunity to contribute to something bigger, which involves children from all year groups. The older children are positive role models and take on a pastoral role for the younger children.

House points will run alongside our Smart point system which enables children to demonstrate our school values and they will continue to achieve SMART awards for this.

Growth mindset

As you will already know at Giffard Park we have created a positive learning culture based on children and adults having a ‘growth mindset’. Through this children develop an understanding of how they learn best and also a positive ‘can do’ attitude when approaching new challenges. Our children are learning how to grow into independent learners who are willing to strive, even when learning is not easy. At Giffard Park when children are faced with new challenges, they will keep persevering and say: “I can’t do it **yet**.”

How can parents help support?

To help us embed a growth mindset culture, you should praise your children for **effort** and **achievement** rather than ability, using the language of being brave, learning, challenge and valuing mistakes.

Avoid using the word ‘clever’. Praise to young children reinforcing ‘cleverness’ or intelligence gives the message – to get approval you need to master new things quickly, with little effort both of which will earn you the clever label. It creates a fear of failure and the unwillingness to take risks.

People with a fixed mindset avoid challenging tasks for fear of failure and therefore miss many valuable learning opportunities.

Our language tells children what we believe and value.

Growth mindset praise:

‘Good it’s making you think – that’s how your brain is growing.’

‘Every time you practice, you’re making connections in your brain stronger.’

‘You’re good at things because you like them and you work hard at them.’

‘You can use this mistake. Think about why it didn’t work and learn from it.’

‘You can’t do it **yet!**’

Successful Learning means using the learning powers.

The learning powers

Concentrate	Manage distractions, do one thing at a time, plan and think it through, get lost in the task
Don’t give up	Work hard, practice lots, keep going, try new strategies, ask for help
Be cooperative	Listen to others, say when you understand, explain things to help others, be tolerant
Be curious	Ask questions, notice things, ask ‘What if?…’
Have a go	Have a growth mindset, don’t worry if it’s wrong, learn from mistakes, be excited to try new things
Use your imagination	Be creative, let your imagination go
Keep improving	Try to be better than last time, keep reviewing your work, improve one thing at a time
Enjoy learning	Feel proud of your achievements, imagine your intelligence growing, know you can do it if you have input and practice.

Christmas Jumper Day 2019

Thank you to all those parents who support this special event. Over the course of the day, we raised £205.41 to spend on well-being resources for our children.

Friends of Giffard Park

A really big thank you to all of the Friends of Giffard Park and school staff who worked extremely hard to make the Christmas Fayre and disco a success. In total we raised just over £1600. Thank you all for supporting these events. All the children had a fantastic experience watching the pantomime 'Cinderella' yesterday which was funded by the Friends, for some of our children it was the first time they had ever seen a pantomime and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Winter Weather - Be prepared!

As a school,

Fortunately, as yet, we have not had any heavy snow this winter. However, it is essential that you sign up for alerts just in case at:

Simply log on to: -

<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/closures> and enter your email address and mobile phone number to receive the alerts if we have to close.

While we make every effort to keep the school open, there may be occasions when it is not safe for pupils and staff to be at school, for example in extreme weather conditions. When the decision is made to close, we will use the web-based system to send the text and email alerts to you. The system will also continue to send information about the closures to local radio stations who will read out the information on air and display on their websites.

We will also display details of any closure on the school website at: -

<http://www.giffardpark.milton-keynes.sch.uk/website/home/40167>

We will also notify you via Parentmail, so if you have not already done so please make sure you have signed up. Any queries relating to this, then please speak to the School Office.

Please ensure that your child is suitably dressed for the winter weather. A warm coat, appropriate footwear, gloves and a hat will enable them to keep warm as we experience the cold weather.

WANTED: Old board games/Lego

During lunch times, the children have the opportunity to play board games and Lego, encouraging them with their social skills and team work. We would be extremely grateful if you could have a look at home and if you are planning on clearing out any old, unwanted board games that are still in good condition (preferably with all the pieces!) then please donate them to our school. The children also enjoy working with Lego and we would be grateful for any donations that you may have.

This term we have re-zoned our playground at break and lunchtimes so that the children can experience lots of different play activities led by adults, these include: Craze of the week, skipping, singing and dancing, make believe, clapping games, quiet zone as well as football, basketball and netball and a chasing games zone.

London Marathon 2020

Miss Donoghue and Mrs Wiles are both running the London Marathon this year and are raising money for Epilepsy Action. There will be some fundraising activities happening in the next couple of weeks that we will be asking for support from the children for.