

Giffard Park Primary School

‘Success Starts Here’



18 September 2019

Autumn Term 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have had a fantastic start to the term. All of the children look very smart in their uniforms and have settled really well into their new classes.

Welcome to new children and staff

We are very pleased to welcome all the new children and parents to our wonderful school. We also have some new additions to our staff team: Mrs Collins (Carle class) in Foundation, Miss Knight (Donaldson class) and Miss King (Inkpen class) in Year 1, Miss Patel (Pullman class) in Year 3, Mr Smith (Tolkien class) in Year 5. We also welcome Mrs Goyal, Mrs Lees and Mrs Pedzisz who have joined us as teaching assistants. One of the many benefits of being part of the MK Sapphire Federation, is that we are now able to have a new specialist PE team teaching all of our children. Our main coach is Mr Hobley and joining him is the Sports Development Manager for the Federation, Miss Mallett.

I am delighted to let you know that Mrs Ings had her baby over the summer and we welcome Ophelia Belle to the world! Both Mum and baby are doing well.

Foundation Stage

Our Foundation children have already started full time and have coped brilliantly with adjusting to coming to school every day. Thank you to Foundation parents for giving them such a prompt start to the day. It is a lot to take in when your child starts school although a great deal of that will have been covered in the Induction meeting in the summer term and the recent home visits. There is a Phonics evening for parents on Wednesday 25th September at 5.00pm to give you more information and tips about how to support your child's learning in Phonics at home.

Improvements to the school site

Over the summer, as part of our on-going programme of refurbishment the playground, for our Smart Steps Preschool, has been resurfaced and a new canopy has been installed. This refurbishment will allow all of our youngest children to enjoy the outside area and will give them much needed shelter all year round. Many thanks go to our PTA, Friends of Giffard Park (FoGP), who were able to contribute funding towards this project. (Please see the FoGP newsletter for more details about how you can help.)

Finally, a big thank you to our wonderful caretaker, Mr Robinson, for all of his hard work over the summer and also to the cleaning team who worked tirelessly to get the school ready for the children and staff.

Essence Catering Company

We are very pleased with the high standard and quality of the food provided by our catering company, Essence. The children can enjoy a range of delicious hot meals including: roast chicken dinner, jacket potatoes, salad, homemade cheese and tomato pizza and garlic bread, homemade beef Bolognese, roast vegetable bake, fish and chips and a range of vegetarian meals. There is a range of fresh fruit available including pineapple, kiwi fruit, watermelon, grapes, fruit salad and fresh plums. If you would like to find out more please contact the school office. All children in KS1 are entitled to a free school meal – so if you have not signed up yet then please see the school office.

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. At Giffard Park when children are faced with new challenges they will keep persevering and say: "I can't do it...yet."

Behaviour

At Giffard Park we have high expectations of behaviour. We have a SMART charter that runs throughout the school and we emphasise that at our school we are SMART learners. We updated our behaviour policy in the summer term and this is available on our website. In our **Celebration Assembly**, which takes place every **Friday** afternoon, we invite parents in to celebrate the achievement of children both inside and outside of school, Students of the week and attendance awards.

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.

Attendance

We aim for all of our children to have 100% attendance and this is celebrated with them in Celebration Assemblies.

Did you know?

- 95% = 10 days absent a year
- 90% = 20 days absent a year
- 85% = 30 days absent a year
- 80% = 40 days absent a year

'Every minute counts':

If your child is late every day:	In a year your child would lose the following days of education:
5 minutes late	3 days
10 minutes late	6.5 days
15 minutes late	10 days
20 minutes late	13 days
30 minutes late	19.5 days

We are working closely with the Attendance Team at Milton Keynes Council to monitor our attendance. Please ensure your child arrives at school by 8.45am. As you can see from the information above persistent absence or lateness can have a detrimental effect on your child's learning.

Curriculum

The teaching staff have all been working extremely hard over the summer to ensure that even more exciting and imaginative learning opportunities have been planned for the children with their new and stimulating topics. You will have had more information about this in the year group newsletters. We have changed our approach to homework this year so children in KS1 and above will be bringing home homework focused on reading comprehension skills and maths. They will also have their spellings, reading, Key Instant Recall Facts (KIRFs) and times tables too!

School Library

Each class has a weekly library session when they are able to choose a book to borrow from our wide selection of library books. Please help your child to remember to bring their library book back to school so that it can be returned and they can choose a new book. Please encourage your child to look after their book while they are borrowing it.

We encourage the children to choose their own book from a range of fiction and non-fiction books and support them to use the computer system to issue and return the books. If the book is not returned they will be reminded during their library session and if necessary given a reminder letter to bring home. If they cannot find their library book please help them to look for it and if a book is lost please send in a note, to let us know – sometimes the book is then found elsewhere in school!

Communication

Communication is extremely important to us in helping to support your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please see the classteacher in the first instance. They are the adults who are working closely on a daily basis with your child and any concerns you may have can be quickly resolved. This can often be done at the end of the day at the classroom door. Should you require more time then please make an appointment via Miss Rambini in Reception. Please note that teachers have meetings straight after school on a Tuesday and Wednesday.

Following your appointment should you need further support then you can make an appointment with the Phase Leader appropriate to your child's year group. Again all appointments should be made via Miss Rambini. Our Phase leaders are:

Foundation: Miss Thompson, Years 1 & 2 Mrs Hand, KS2 Mrs Coster, Assistant Headteacher.

In the unlikely event that your concern has not be resolved by the classteacher, the Phase leader or the Assistant Head, then you may wish to make an appointment with the Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Wiles. In the final instance you may wish to make an appointment with myself, which will need to be done via Miss Rambini.

Parentmail

Parentmail allows us the flexibility of communicating electronically via text and email. We also use Schools Cash Office system for parents to make online payments, should you need more information about how to sign up for this then please contact the School Office.

Parking reminder

Again, please may I remind parents to park considerately at drop off and pick up as we continue to receive concerned emails from residents who are not able to access their own drives or even leave their house as the drive is blocked. This is particularly relevant to the residents of Beckonscot Court, many of whom are elderly and need the use of mobility aids and scooters and paramedics and ambulances frequently need to access the estate. Please avoid parking in this area.

Playground reminders

For health and safety/safeguarding reasons, please may I remind parents of the following:

- *No dogs are allowed on the playground at the start or end of the day*
- *Please do not allow children or young siblings to play on the trim trail or barge area*
- *Remember that use of mobile phones is not allowed on the playground at pick up or drop off*

Milton Keynes Food Bank

Once again, we would like to support The Food Bank Harvest Festival Appeal. The Food Bank's aim is to 'help those in crisis in Milton Keynes'.

The Food Bank rely on the donation of items such as:

- Long life juice
- Long life whole milk
- Tinned rice pudding
- Tinned vegetables
- Tinned meat
- Tinned fruit
- Children's cereals
- Toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, shower gel, shampoo, deodorants)
- Spreads eg: peanut butter, marmite, jam

- Biscuits

Please could you look through your kitchen cupboards and if you have any of these items we would be grateful if you could send them into school as soon as possible. We will have a collection point in the Reception area and a box in each classroom ready for your donations.

We are really looking forward to another exciting and successful year at Giffard Park Primary School and welcome your co-operation and support. At the end of the day the goal of the staff, parents and governors is that our children are successful and happy learners.

Dates for your diary

Friday 20th September – School Council Elections

Wednesday 25th September – 5.00pm Foundation/KS1 Phonics Evening, 5.30pm FoGp AGM

Friday 27th September – Macmillan Coffee Morning

Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th October – Parents’ Evening

Monday 28th October – Friday 1st November - Half term

Monday 4th November – INSET day

Tuesday 5th November – Friday 8th November - Y6 Residential Frontier Centre

Friday 15th November - Children in Need

Thursday 21st November - Non-school uniform day – Bring a bottle Xmas fayre

Friday 6th December - Christmas Fayre