



Friday, 2 March 2018

Head Teacher's Remarks

Learners of the Week

Next Week's Reminders

Parent Survey 2018

Last week proved to be somewhat challenging with sub-zero temperatures for much of the week and a truly evil wind-chill across the playground. The children even commented that it was cold! We then ended with most un-Spring like weather as the two storms collided over southern Britain. It was lovely to meet with some of you on Tuesday; and the children did enjoy sharing their favourite books on Thursday morning as part of World Book Day.

I would like to explain in some detail what happens when I have to make the difficult and considered decision regarding closing the school. I have to consider the conditions both at the time and in the weather forecast. This is usually in discussion with the SLT, and I then discuss the situation with the Chair of Governors who agrees, or otherwise, to close the school. I also usually liaise with other Head Teachers in the area. All decisions are made to protect the children, the staff and the parents who will be collecting, and to ensure we fulfil our legal requirements under Health and Safety law and comply with the requirements of our liability insurances. It is important to remember that some children live outside of the village and need to travel to and from school; and that the majority of the teaching staff, and some of the support staff, live considerably further away and have to travel through rural roads to get to and from work. The legal situation is that we cannot remain open if we are not able to offer a meaningful education to all our children.

Decisions have to be made in advance, usually at least two hours before a closure, although for full day closures we do try and make the call the night before to allow parents additional time to arrange childcare if necessary. The difficulty with this is that the decision must be made on the basis of a range of weather forecasts, which can sometimes be inaccurate.

On Thursday last week the decision was made around midday to close at 2pm on the basis of three concerns that were showing in the weather forecast: snow was predicted to get heavier during the afternoon and evening; high winds were expected leading to a yellow weather warning covering Buckinghamshire; and temperatures were expected to drop to well below freezing by 3:00pm with an increased risk of ice on roads.

Parents Evening was also cancelled due to the weather at the time and the forecast. Whilst I do understand that most parents could possibly have walked to the meetings (though the pavements were not particularly safe), teachers returning home in the conditions at 8:30pm onwards would not be demonstrating an appropriate duty of care as an employer. I did look very carefully to see if it was possible to reschedule the parents evening, but this was not possible as the school diary is already very full, and both teachers and – I am sure - parents have commitments already in their diaries. I therefore asked the teachers to produce a short profile for each child who was due to attend, and parents who have concerns are welcome to contact the school to arrange a 1:1 meeting with the teacher at a mutually convenient time. A partial Parents Evening was not possible due to rules on lone working, and the fact that staff would have to travel home in conditions against the advice of the Police.

For Friday, the decision was made on Thursday evening on the basis of the weather forecasts and the large number of schools closed across the County. The Council had announced there would be no school transport for Friday, and hence children from Slapton and Horton would not be able to attend. This would have had an impact on the learning for all children as lessons would have had to be repeated. As Cottesloe was to be closed there would have been no hot lunches for our children. Thames Valley Police were advising that roads in Aylesbury Vale were treacherous and travel was not advised unless in an emergency.

I would like to thank those parents who showed understanding – sadly the school cannot control the weather!

Please note later in the newsletter a link to the Governor Parent Survey. Please do take the time to complete this as it helps to inform the development of the school moving forward.

A rather belated but nonetheless heartfelt thank you to the PTA. They have been waiting for a final donation, which brings the total raised at the Christmas Market to a fantastic £1106.99. An amazing amount, which will go towards renovating the pond for use by the children for science and other learning. Thank you to everyone for your support.

Mrs K. Tamlyn
Head Teacher

Congratulations to our special learners this week who are:

- from YR: - Ronan Concanon and Finley Ornbo
- from Y1: - Alice Hart and Daisy Redding
- from Y2: - Rylee Caudery and James Heggarty
- from Y3: - Tia Stinson and Seth Taylor
- from Y4: - George Fletcher, Sidney Jones and Alex Wood
- from Y5: - Lauren McIntosh and Molly O'Sullivan
- from Y6: - Molly Buckland and Ryan Lewis

We are celebrating our Special Learners this year by each child having a gold star badge to wear during the following week. These badges should be worn with pride, and returned to their class teacher on the Friday morning ready to be given to the next child. Thank you for your help and support with this.

Next Week's Reminders

Book Fair

Just a reminder that the Book Fair will be on in the hall today and tomorrow after school.



The Governing Body Parent Survey 2018

Every year in the Spring we, the Governing Body, ask the parents of Cheddington Combined School for their views on various aspects of the school and their children's learning.

The 2018 survey will go live in conjunction with the parent consultation meetings and can be found at:

bit.ly/ccsparentsurvey2018

We would encourage you to take a couple of minutes to complete the survey. There is the opportunity to leave comments at the end to explain your answers in more detail if you wish.

Your reply is anonymous and the answers and your comments come direct to the Governing Body. We welcome your thoughts on areas of improvement as well as those areas that warrant good praise and identifying both are valuable to us.

The survey results will help us to assist the School in developing strategies and focus areas of work for the rest of this, and for future academic years. By sharing your views with us you will be helping the school to improve as your answers have a direct effect on your children's learning.

A direct link to the survey will also be included in the School newsletter.

With thanks

Dr Simon Aulton

Chair of Governors