



Newsletter January 2019

Dear all,

Apologies for the delay in getting this out to you – the New Year is a busy period implementing new changes and school has been a hive of activity – many of which I plan to update you on here!

As always, please be in touch with the office, staff or Leadership Team should you wish to discuss anything 😊

Mrs Emily Gore-Rowe

Dates for your diary:

Year 5/6 Trip to Ely Museum – Thurs 31st Jan

SOLOS:

Weds 6th Feb – Y5/6 – 9.05am

Weds 6th Feb – YR/1 – 2pm

Fri 8th March – Y2 – 2pm

Mon 11th Feb – Y3/4 – 2.45pm

Parent Forum – Behaviour and Welfare – Weds 6th Feb 9.55-9.30

School Meals Open Afternoon – come and have a taster

Weds 13th February 3pm in the hall

Parent Consultations –

Wednesday 27 February – 3:40 – 6:30

Tuesday 5 March – 4:30 – 7:30

Parent Forum – Our School Improvement Journey – Weds 27th Feb & Tues 5th March – alongside Parent Consultation

Tues 5th March is also the **E-Safety Workshop** 2:15 – 3:15pm

Senior Leadership Team Drop In – A member of the SLT will be available in the library to have an informal chat with parents on the following dates:

Weds 13th Feb 3pm

Tues 5th March – 8.45am

They can answer any questions, hear your concerns and any ideas you may have about how we can better work with parents in the future.

We do try to vary the times, and we are looking into evening sessions however please be aware that this has not been practical in the past due to extremely low turn-out.

Spotlight on: Attendance

Our current attendance is 95.06% This is a marginal improvement, however we are still below the DfE's expected level of 96%.

Please be aware that as a school we are legally obliged to inform parents when their child's attendance dips below, or approaches the 90% mark. We are required to monitor this regularly and provided with model letters to send to parents regardless of the circumstances. Of course we understand that children get ill and therefore require time to rest and get well, however we are also obliged to help children to develop resilience and to encourage them to come in if they are feeling slightly under par with a bit of a cold, as opposed to really not themselves and in need of rest and recovery. Of course this is on a case by case basis and as parents it is down to you how ill is 'off school ill'? Just talk to us and we can help talk this through.

The standard procedure when a child is sick or has diarrhoea is to have 24 or 48 hours clear of school/work – however this is in the case of spreading infection/illness. As parents we can usually tell if they have been sick due to coughing/jumping around after orange juice or other reasons. If you feel confident that your child has now 'bounced back' and that it was not due to a bug then please talk to us – we may feel it is best to stay off as a precaution but they may be able to come back to school.

Please be aware that aside from exceptional circumstances we are unable to authorise requests for leave of absence. This is usually standard practice in all schools and there is clear guidance about this available from the school office and will soon be on our website.

Un-helpfully the guidance states that discretion can be applied by the Headteacher which implies that I can allow things that I seem reasonable, however the guidance I get from the LA is actually a very narrow set of criteria, please don't be offended if your request is not authorised and feel free to contact us to discuss it if you would like further clarification.

First day response: We are required to call to follow up any unexplained absences on the first day, if there is no response from all contacts, we are obliged to visit the home and call the police if there is still no response. This is a safeguarding requirement.

Feedback from parent survey:

Many thanks to those of you who shared your questionnaire – we really appreciate it and it was really helpful in shaping our plans for the future and hearing your views.

We will be sharing the data from responses soon – if you would still like to return a survey please do so – it's not too late.

It was great to hear how many of you are pleased that your child is happy and well looked after and that you are happy with the work of the school overall, also acknowledging that the school has entered a period of significant change, many of which take time to address. It was good to hear that many of you feel that staff work hard to do all they can to support and care for the children and we continue to urge anyone to get in touch wherever anyone feels that this is not as good as it could be, so that we can continue to improve, so that more parents can feel confident to tick the 'strongly agree' option in the future.

Many of you shared concerns about the following:

- **School Improvement** – not knowing how the school is improving and what is changing – I will be holding a further Parent Forum (dates further on) to share more on this with you, however more information on that is in a School Improvement Bulletin going out this week, the headlines being
 - Learning environments, learning displays and Book Corners (including a redesigned, more accessible Library that is underway) to promote Reading.
 - Guided Reading improvements are now well underway, with new timetables and systems to re-inforce their learning and practise their skills.
 - Significant changes to the learning environment and timetable organisation in Foundation Stage and Year One to enable better curriculum coverage and improved Quality of Teaching with more adult focus (more on that in a R/1 bulletin coming out separately)
 - A new Nurture Classroom, which is being staffed and resourced to enable Social Emotional and Mental Health support to those that need it.
 - Improved use of hands on and active learning strategies in the classroom which is making learning more engaging and enjoyable.
 - The development of an expanded and more effective Senior Leadership Team that are able to have a much closer eye on the Quality of Teaching and Learning across the school and work in teams to lead on improvements, such as the 'Working Wall' displays and use of hands on learning strategies that are already improving.

Of course there is still plenty to do as we continue on our journey to excellence and I look forward to sharing more about this with you later.

- **Behaviour** (including bullying) – we have revised the Behaviour Policy and have implemented a new behaviour recording system so that we can properly monitor behaviour and how it is managed across the school. We have already rolled out a significant amount of training for staff with more planned this term. The new policy launches on the website this week. I am holding a separate Parent Forum (date below) to discuss this matter.

All behaviour issues are dealt with robustly, as per the policy, with phase leaders and SLT being involved as appropriate – if you have any specific concerns about this please do not hesitate to get in touch – the most appropriate way to do this is to arrange a time to chat with your child’s class teacher so that they can investigate if necessary and talk it through with you.

- **Dojo** – The Dojo Store opens this week for children to ‘spend’ their earned tokens. We have found this to be a really effective way of motivating children and promoting and encouraging good behaviour which is evident by how many times individual children have been recognised! Most children have earned between 80 and 120 Dojo Points last half term alone and they really enjoy being recognised under the specific award categories (rather than generic ‘welldone’s)

The parent function goes live in R/1 and next week and then across the rest of the school after half term. This has taken time to get right and we are looking forward to sharing it with you when you will be able to download the app and share your child’s successes and communicate with teachers more easily.

You can find more information here: <https://www.classdojo.com/en-gb/> and a letter with instructions as to how to sign up will follow soon (this week for R/1 Parents)

- **Communications:** Many would like to know more, many would like to know less – we do endeavour to keep the newsletters short, however every point is in response to a question that has been raised by parents (hence why some are long –we want to ensure that as far as possible everyone receives the same information!) More on emails below.

Parent mail – all letters are sent out via parent mail – please ensure your current email address is up to date so that we can amend our records. Paper copies are only sent out to those without email (as is standard in most schools)

Other comments/issues raised:

- **Emails** – We have recently become aware that some of you have been using the website communication tool, however we did not know that this does not work. We will be suspending this temporarily until we can resolve the issue. Some of you do still make use of direct email addresses to raise concerns – this carries risk of messages being missed – I do endeavour to check as best I can, however receiving over 150 emails per day across three inboxes, occasionally some do slip through my junk filter check as they are not recognised or don’t get seen as they are sitting

waiting for my weekly junk trawl – emailing the office is a safer way of ensuring messages get through and other key staff that need to be aware also get copied in. If for whatever reason you do not get a response please just politely ask the office when someone will be in touch – everyone needs a gentle reminder from time to time – we are human after all!

- **Our website** is a key area we are looking to improve over the next 3 months – we have already expanded and improved our Safeguarding section where there is useful information, particularly about E-Safety and how you can help to keep your children safe online.
- **Age inappropriate materials in school** – I wrote to you all last term to let you know that from January all bags etc. with age-inappropriate material would be banned as per safeguarding advice – having had a month, the Senior Leadership Team will be monitoring this throughout February onwards so please be advised that if your child has a bag etc. featuring something that is not age appropriate it will be sent home with a letter and a log of concern recorded.
- **SOLOS** – following on from the success of last term’s Christmas craft SOLOS (Share Our Learning Open Sessions) we will be running these half termly. This half term is a bit of a squeeze dates wise but it is a short half term – apologies for that – dates for next half term will go out before half term.

The theme this half term is Handwriting and Presentation which is our current Whole School Improvement Focus – come in and see what we are doing to improve this key area with your child and across the school. You will also have the opportunity to see your child’s class, books and have an informal chat with the staff. (Please note, appointments will be needed to discuss sensitive matters)

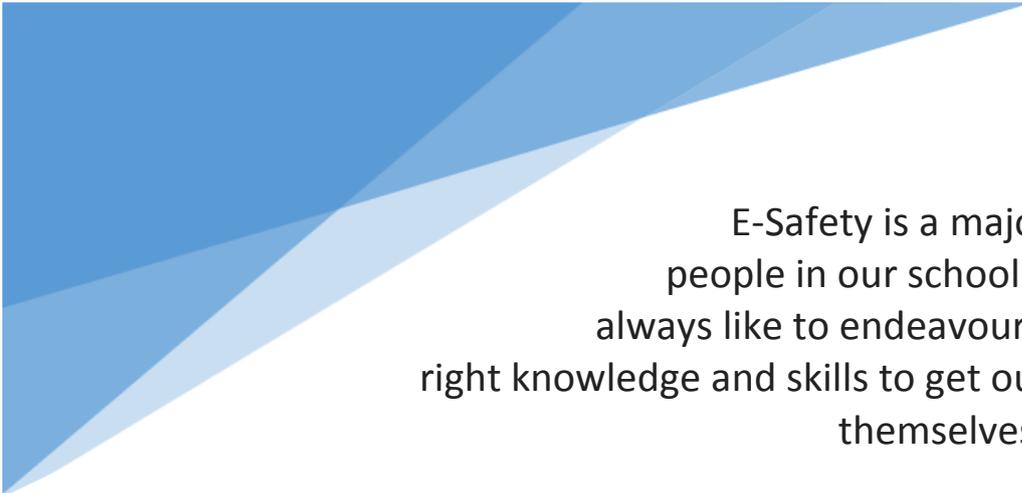


Just a gentle reminder:

Dinner bookings/money: Whether paid or unpaid, there is a growing issue around payment for school meals. We understand that you may not always have cash on you, however you can pay online. Please ensure that payment is in advance rather than in arrears.

Thank you 😊





E-Safety is a major concern with the young people in our school at the minute and we will always like to endeavour to provide them with the right knowledge and skills to get out of any scrapes they find themselves when using the internet.

We, as a school, know the huge benefits of the internet and therefore don't want to discourage children from using the internet – merely giving them the right procedures if they were to find something online that they did not like or upset them.

On the school website there is a specific link to some useful websites and downloads (<http://www.sutton.cambs.sch.uk/website/e-safety/371232>) that you may find useful especially to those children in Year 5/6 who may have their own mobile phone. There is a clear, step by step guide to ensure that the phone is safe for the children to use.

Discussing all things about the digital world is always useful as it provides that open dialogue within the family which would hopefully then mean that when there is a problem, your child is more likely to come to you with it rather than keep it to themselves.

Turning off the wireless also is a very good way of controlling when your child can go online !

A date for the diary on **Tuesday 5th March** in that a member of the The ICT Service is coming to give a talk about E-Safety 2.15-3.15 and offer potential advice.

We can't stress how useful this would be if you were able to attend.

It would be really helpful to know when is convenient and you may be able to attend open events in school. Please tick all that apply.

	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri
8.30-9.10am	N/A				
9.00-10.00					
1.30-2.30					
2.30-3.30					
3.30-4.30					
5pm-6pm					N/A
After 6pm					N/A

Any other comments:

Received this via parent mail? You can return this electronically by pasting into an email or ask the office for a paper copy.

Share Our Learning Open Sessions:

I am looking forward to attending my child _____'s

SOLOS in _____ class on _____.

[You do not need to return the form if you are unable to attend]