

16 September 2019

Dear Parents

Welcome back! I hope you have had a restful summer break. It has been lovely to talk to the children about their summer experiences; many children have been keen to share experiences of trips to the beach, camping and family days out! It has been wonderful, too, to see the children arriving so enthusiastically, ready to start the new term. As we embark on our journey this year, I thought I would also take the opportunity to share key information.

Parentpay

As you are aware, we strive to be a cashless school. This is partly in an attempt to be more efficient but also to ensure no cash is kept in school. It reduces the risk of break-ins and diminishes staff vulnerability. Please do use Parentpay to make all payments (trips, lunches, clubs, etc.). This year we are going to try harder to give you more notice about trips and events; this should hopefully make it easier to budget for trips. Please be aware that school budgets are incredibly tight. What you hear in the media about massive financial issues in schools is very, very real, and certainly the case at Horsley. Please help us by paying for trips and school dinners promptly. Chasing payments also takes up valuable office time.

Data Collection Sheets/Home-School Agreements

New data collection sheets have now been issued for the 2019/20 academic year. Please return completed forms as soon as possible. These are vital if we need to contact you in an emergency. Alas, it has in some instances taken up to 3 months to chase these sheets. Please help us to help you and your child by ensuring the information we hold is accurate.

Medical Update

As we go into the new term, please ensure that, where possible, medical and dental appointments take place outside of the normal school day. From time to time there are issues regarding headlice. We kindly ask that children (boys and girls) wear long hair up. We will send text alerts out as soon as we hear of an infestation. Please keep headbands simple; no spiky, antenna style, or unicorn head bands as these can genuinely cause eyes injuries. If your child experiences a fractured bone, bruising, or other similar injury, please contact me directly so that a risk assessment can be put in place before your child returns to school. For sickness/ diarrhoea, please ensure your children remains off school for **48 hours after the last bout**. We are happy to administer basic medicines (e.g. Calpol), in line with school policy; however, the correct paperwork must be completed prior to administration.

Attendance/Punctuality and Holidays in term time

Children are expected to be in school from 8:45 - 8:55am. We warmly encourage children to arrive at 8:45am so they have time to settle. Late arrival can be terribly upsetting for the child; it disrupts classroom learning and can make it stressful for the office staff. Note that arrival after 9:00am constitutes a late mark (or U code). There is increased pressure from the LA and OFSTED for schools to monitor and act upon absence and poor punctuality. School governors are held to account on the school's punctuality and attendance data. In line with the new Attendance Policy, persistent absence or poor punctuality will, from September, result in a fixed penalty of up to £120 per family. Fines will be handled by the LA and not the school. None of the revenue collected from fining will go to the school. Please be aware that schools cannot authorise term-time holidays. Under the new policy, a 5-day holiday (10 sessions) in school time will incur a fixed penalty. Please note, however, if your child is ill, it is imperative they have sufficient time off school to recover.

Collection Arrangements

We are seeing an increase in variable and bespoke pick-up arrangements, which may change on a weekly or daily basis. Please, where possible, establish a pattern from the new term onwards and share this with your child so



he/she is aware of the arrangements for the term. The office staff are happy to relay changes to class teachers when there is an emergency. Ad hoc and informal changes can be distressing for pupils, but also teachers, whose priority is keeping children safe. For pupils in Y5/6 who walk home independently, a parental permission letter needs to be provided in advance. Pupils will not be allowed to walk home alone unless we have prior formal notification. Last year we also had a number of children not picked by as late as 3:45pm. We kindly ask that children are collected promptly at 3:15pm. In cases of genuine emergency (e.g. wheel puncture, family crisis, etc.) do contact the office so that we can support you as best we can.

Communication

This year we are going to try and improve our communication with parents/carers. Please check the website regularly, including the school newsletter (issued every other week). Key dates are published on the newsletter and website. Whilst we try not to change dates of events, this does periodically happen; the website and newsletter will provide the most up-to-date info. Texting is now a key means for us to communicate and many parents are saying they value it. Responding to feedback, we are now going to upgrade our texting service so that we can send texts to more than one family member. Please let the office staff know if you wish to add an additional family member to the service. Whilst this will come at an additional cost to the school, we think this will be much appreciated and useful. All letters will also be uploaded to the school website for you to download if needed.

School Uniform and PE Kit

This week it has been lovely to see children arriving to school in school uniform. Just to clarify - if there is any confusion - the school uniform comprises: grey shorts/trousers, yellow shirt, green cardigan/jumper with the school logo, plain black/grey/white socks and stout shoes (not trainers, sandals or cros). Please note that **coloured, patterned or odd socks are not part of the Horsley School uniform**, neither are **Jean style trousers**. Children across the school are increasingly keen to present as is expected so your support in this regard is really appreciated. There is, alas, no longer a supply of PE equipment in the school office to borrow (space is at a premium!) so children will need to have a full PE kit in school. As you are no doubt aware, this will need to comprise: green shorts, yellow school T-shirt, daps (for Foxes and Badgers) and trainers (for Otters and Owls). Dark tracksuit trousers and a school hoody may be worn during the colder months. PE kits need to remain in school each week. If washed at the weekend, please return on the Monday. They should also always be taken home at the end of each term. We are trying desperately to sort out a stash of sew-on school logos (which will ultimately be bought from the office directly). But this has been more problematic than we had expected. We will keep you posted.

Lost Property

Please be aware that we no longer have a central pot of 'lost' property. All 'lost' items are now returned to the class in question. It is therefore essential that every item is clearly marked with your child's name. We kindly ask for your support in helping your children to manage their belongings whilst in school.

Music Tuition

If you would like your child to take up a musical instrument, please make contact with the peripatetic instrumental/vocal tutor concerned. We currently offer: violin, viola, flute, recorder, clarinet, voice, keyboard and piano. (We are actively trying to source an experienced drum kit and guitar teacher). The office staff can provide you with contact details of teachers upon request. All peripatetic staff are DBS checked. Lessons typically take place in the afternoon within the school day. Please note that instrumental/vocal tutors work on a free-lance basis and the cost varies from teacher to teacher. The contract is between the parent/guardian concerned and the instrumental teacher. We want to keep our team of tutors (there really is a genuine national shortage of qualified instrumental tutors - they are like gold) and thus we do ask that parents settle invoices promptly.

Celebration Assemblies

Children's achievements are celebrated every Friday morning in the church. All parents are very welcome to attend – come straight after drop-off – refreshments provided!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to make contact.

Yours faithfully

Gary Price
Headteacher

