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Message from Miss Talbot

Dear Parents,

One of the best parts of my new job as Headteacher is celebrating the children's success. I am always delighted when a child comes down to my office with a 'gold card' and I have the chance to see the excellent achievements they have been working on in class. So many of our children work so hard and are immensely proud when their efforts are recognised by their teachers. What thrills them most is the thought of telling you when they get home and knowing that you will share their pride.

During a week I see about 15 'gold card' children from across the school— often they are sent because they have worked hard at something they previously found challenging or because they have excelled all expectations. Achievements at all ability levels are recognised and celebrated. If your child comes home having received a gold card, this is something to be celebrated.

Our new Godinton Star Awards also began a few weeks ago with children being rewarded for upholding our new school values. I know that each week the teachers always have difficulty in deciding who to choose as we have so many children who represent these qualities. Those children who are chosen join me for tea party on a Friday afternoon. It's a lovely opportunity to have a chat with the children about their interest outside of school and what they enjoy in school.

Congratulations go to our first Star Award winners of the year:

Year 5 / 6: Joshua C, Maddie W, Troy D, Ruby A, Lola H, Mia C, Hugh P, Oliver B

Year 3 / 4: Matthew D, Tyler C, Lily-Rose O'B, Zachary P, Charlie L, Phoebe S

Year 1 / 2: Finlay P, Jacob C, Adam S, Sophie B

I hope that all our children will have a good half term break and come back to school next term ready for another exciting term at Godinton, keen to work just as hard.



Attendance

It's hard to believe that we are drawing to the end of the first term of this academic year. It is evident that the children are settling very well into their new year groups and that any initial wobbles have been overcome as they get used to new classroom routines and expectations. I am grateful for all the support that parents give to the school in ensuring that children attend school regularly, especially on those days when they would rather stay at home.

The Government's attendance expectations have been revised over the past 6 months and these are reflected in our recently reviewed school attendance policy. The aim is that all children should be achieving 100% attendance. We understand that sometimes illness results in a day's absence from school and of course children should stay at home if they are too unwell to attend. The new government guidelines reiterate that absence from school will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances and that holiday leave will not be granted. Revisions also stipulate that penalty notices will now be issued for any period of unauthorised absence of 5 days or more. Penalty notices are issued by Kent County Council and any fines incurred will be levied by them; the school does not benefit in any capacity from the issuing of penalty notices. A full copy of the school's attendance policy can be viewed on the school website.

The school has set an attendance target of 97% for this academic year, which would see a 1% improvement on last year. To encourage good attendance we will be presenting attendance awards to the children who have good attendance at the end of the year. We know that good attendance at school is important to parents too and that you understand how poor attendance can be detrimental to the children's progress at school. By working together I hope that we will be able to meet our attendance target, ensuring positive outcomes for the children.

Year Group attendance figures for this term so far are as follows:

Year R attendance Term 1: 96.5%

Year 1 attendance Term 1: 98.5%

Year 2 attendance Term 1: 95.9%

Year 3 attendance Term 1: 95.8%

Year 4 attendance Term 1: 98.1%

Year 5 attendance Term 1: 96.3%

Year 6 attendance Term 1: 97.6%

Godinton Mini Management Team



Next term will see the launch of our new School Council which will be known as the **Godinton Mini Management Team**. The Team will be made up of pupil representatives from each class in Years 1 to 6 who will meet with me every two weeks to discuss ways in which we can improve our school, representing the ideas of children in their class. It is important to me to listen to the views of children at our school – they often see things in very different ways and have lots of good suggestions to make. Your child will bring home a letter this week explaining how the elections for the Mini Management Team will work. They will need to let their class teacher know by Thursday this week if they are interested in taking part and elections will take place in our special 'polling station' on the Monday after the half term break. I am very much looking forward to working with our mini managers to bring about positive changes for the children at school.

School Dinners

Last week I had a meeting with Independent Catering to discuss our school meals provision. The company has always been very keen to work with the school to provide an excellent meal service and has always been very accommodating in implementing any suggestions that they have received from us. I have been eating in the hall with the children to experience first-hand the service our children receive and have enjoyed the quality of the meals provided.

I have fed back to Independent a few queries that were raised recently regarding food being cold. Please be assured that service is quick enough to ensure that food is served hot to the children – how long it takes some of the children to eat their food is a different matter. The new heated serving counter is assisting in keeping the food hotter for longer however it would appear that when our new cook took over, the kitchen changed back to heating roast meat using gravy as is the case in many of the kitchens run by Independent Catering. I have asked Independent to revert back to ensuring that the meat itself is served hot as I know that many of our children do not like gravy; they will be addressing this immediately.

Independent will also be making some menu changes for us, including now offering a choice of toppings on jacket potato days and the opportunity to provide a packed lunch option in the summer terms. Independent are also looking to equip us with a large refrigerated salad bar in the future as well.

I have asked Independent to come along to parents evening in November to provide some samples to parents, to give you the opportunity to find out more about the ingredients which go into school dinners and how the food is prepared. They are also in the process of arranging some food workshops for parents and children after Christmas.

We hope that you will see these as positive changes which will enable us to deliver great school dinners to our children.

Maths Mastery



This year we have launched a slightly different approach to maths teaching in Years 1, 3 and 4 known as Maths Mastery. This is a method which has been heavily researched by the Government and is believed to have yielded positive results nationally at raising children's achievement. Teaching moves away from children ploughing through repetitive calculations and instead focuses on developing their ability to manipulate numbers, problem solve and to fully appreciate the maths knowledge behind calculations, making them more confident and successful mathematicians. Specific skills and concepts are still taught but this is done in mixed ability groups where children are still provided with suitable challenge and support at their level. If the programme brings the success we anticipate, we will roll out to further year groups next year. Further details about maths mastery were provided to parents in your year group welcome letters.



My Maths Homework

We hope that our Year 3 to 6 children are enjoying the 'My Maths' online homework. If parents have any technical difficulties, please contact Miss Moss or Miss Collins who will be happy to assist. The children have said that they are enjoying it and that they like the opportunity to try extra questions if they want to challenge themselves further. Please remember to use the Puffin Academy App to enable Flash on apple devices.

House Points

This term the children have all been working hard to accrue house points for their house teams.

Weekly house totals have been close but **Leeds** house have retained the lead most weeks, securing overall victory this term. The children in Leeds House will be rewarded with an extended playtime and squash and biscuits.

We now have our elected Year 6 House Captains in post, who are already doing a fantastic job at encouraging and supporting their houses. I am sure that you will join me in congratulating them on their achievement.

Our new House Captains are:

Walmer House Captains: Liam B and Madison K

Walmer Vice Captains: Tom B and Ellie T

Rochester House Captains: Joshua and Jodie C

Rochester Vice Captains: Oscar F and Ellie NM

Leeds House Captains: George B and Lexie W

Leeds Vice Captains: Jack T and Verity M

Dover House Captains: Joshua C and Lois Mc

Dover Vice Captains: Joshua O'B and Daisy M



House Point Badges

We are delighted that we are able to award our first house point badges of the year before we break for half term. Congratulations go to Claudia, Lilia and Betty in Year 3 who have achieved 25 house points.

Miss Ricketts Memorial

Following the sad death of Miss Ricketts in June, a Just Giving page was set up by parents to raise funds for a way in which the children would be able to remember their much loved teacher. Having discussed what form this should take with staff, children and with Amy's family, we have decided to create a large mosaic depicting Miss Ricketts, the children and images which reflect Miss Rickett's personality and the contribution she made to Godinton. We will be working with mosaic artist Oliver Budd after Christmas to create this piece of artwork which will be installed on the exterior wall at the front of the school. The children from Miss Rickett's classes will assist with its design and construction. It's an exciting project which will enable us to provide a lasting memorial to Miss Ricketts. We are immensely grateful to Mr Budd who is supporting us with this work.

Thank you to all those who made an online donation.

Road Safety

Congratulations to all the children who have taken part in Bikeability. All the children have improved their cycling skills whether they met the requirements for Level 1 and 2 or not. I hope that the experience has given the children greater cycling confidence and has made them safer cyclists. I would like to thank Spencer Morgan and his Cycle Circle team for all their hard work with the children last week.

Our lollipop crossing in Loudon Way is managed by Mrs Keri Humphrey. Mrs Humphrey is there to see children and parents safely across the road from Chimneys car park to the school footpath between 8.30 and 9.00 in the morning and 3.00 and 3.30 in the afternoon. I would urge parents to walk down to cross with our crossing patrol where possible as this provides a safe crossing route for all.

Safeguarding

Just a reminder that the safeguarding leads for the school are Miss Talbot, Mrs Stein and Mrs Jones. Please contact anyone of them if you have any child welfare concerns.

School Trips

School trips provide a very valuable way of bringing topics to life for the children. Our trips are always costed to ensure that they offer good value for money and we always advise at the start of the year the anticipated costs so that parents are able to budget accordingly.

Trips are only viable if we receive sufficient parent contributions. Last week we were close to cancelling the Year 5 Horton Kirby trip due to a shortfall of £250. It was only a late surge of outstanding contributions which prevented the visit from being cancelled.

We appreciate that times are financially challenging for everyone but the school is no longer in a position to continually supplement shortfalls in the costs of school trips and in the event that a visit is likely to incur a loss, we will have to cancel, which will be disappointing for all. If you are unable to offer the full contribution, a smaller amount can always be discussed with the school office.

We offer some really exciting opportunities for the children which are often far more cost effective than the price of family days out. Please help us to continue to offer these experiences by assisting with contributions to the costs. Thank you.

Two very successful school trips have already taken place this term. Year 5 very much enjoyed their day exploring the river at Horton Kirby and Year 6 explored Ashford town centre as part of their local history project. I know that Year 1 are looking forward to their day at Wildwood in early November.



Garden Project

As autumn starts to set in, we have been preparing our wildlife garden for the winter months ahead. Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who came into school one Saturday morning, late in September, to assist.

In further garden news...

We have been successful in being accepted as part of the Tesco token fundraising in the next few months. If you shop in Tesco and are given a blue token – please put it into the collecting tube for the Godinton Garden project. **Our collection will take place at some point between November 1st and December 31st but the exact Ashford store has not yet been specified.** We are guaranteed to receive £1000 but of course it would be lovely to receive the most tokens which would secure £4000 for our project, enabling us to achieve wonderful things in our outdoor space. Don't forget to ask for your token at checkout (as they don't automatically hand them out) and encourage anyone else you know who shops there, to do the same.

I must thank Mrs McGoldrick and Mrs Paggett for taking a lead with this project and for all their hard work in making it a huge success.

Butterflies' Class Assembly

We all enjoyed Butterflies' class assembly last week in which the children acted out some of Roald Dahl's versions of fairy tales which they have been exploring as part of their traditional tales topic. We were very pleased to welcome parents to watch and hope that you enjoyed the assembly.



Other News...

- Thank you to everyone who made a donation to our Harvest Festival last week. Food boxes have been taken to the Eldercare Day Centre and Vinnie's Diner, with both organisations being immensely grateful for your generosity.
- Watch out for 'Wake Up on Wednesdays' – our new wake up, shake up activity on Wednesday mornings from 8.35 a.m to 8.45 a.m after half term on the playground led by Mrs Ellis.
- We are fortunate to have some great climbing apparatus at the far end of the playground. Please can I kindly asked however that parents do not let their children play on this unsupervised at the end of the day. Children are not allowed on this equipment before school and ball games (other than throwing into the hoops) are also not permitted. Thank you.

Caught on camera this month...



Sports Report

Cross Country Running 2017

On Thursday 21st September 2017, Mrs Crowfoot took some Year 4 boys and girls to the Ashford Schools Cross Country race at Godinton House. There were lots of schools taking part. The Year 4 boys consisted of: Charlie O, Gio, Thomas D and Harrison. They went first, running a 1.2km tough course, with a hill at the start and did fantastically well. First to come in for the boys was Charlie, he finished 7th in a time of 5.35 mins, next was Gio finishing 31st in a time of 6.19, third was Thomas, who finished 45th in a time of 6.37 and Harrison finished 50th in a time of 6.54. The boys did incredibly well.

Next was the team of girls consisting of: Lily-Rose, Thandie, Kyla and Isabelle, again they had a great race. Finishing first overall for the girls was Lily-Rose in a time of 5.22 mins, next for the girls finishing 17th was Thandie with a time of 6.36, next was Kyla who came 23rd in time of 6.49 and Isabelle in 27th place in a time of 7.07. All runners did extremely well. Thank you to Miss Mills for entering the team and training us and Mrs Crowfoot who supported us at the race. **By Lily-Rose O'B (Year 4)**

On Tuesday 19th September Year 5 and 6 competed in a cross country event at Godinton House.

We had two Year 5 boys: Theo S, who completed the course in a time of 5:38 mins and came 6th and Oliver W in a time of 5:58mins and came 14th.

The Year 5 girls: Elizabeth D completed it in a time of 5:59mins and came 1st, then Jessica D 6 minutes and came 2nd and Beth B, 7:15 mins, and came 19th.

Finally the Year 6 boys: Joshua O'B completed the course in a time of 5:03 mins and came 1st, then Rhys T, 5:34 mins and came 6th and finally Liam W, 5:53 mins and came 16th.

Also the Year 5 girls and the Year 6 boys both won the team event and received trophies.

By Joshua O'B, Rhys T & Liam W (Year 6)