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Message from Miss Talbot

Dear Parents,

Welcome back everyone. I hope that you all had a wonderful summer break and managed to get some time together as a family. We were blessed with great weather for most of the summer, which for me meant many lovely walks down on the beach at the end of my road. It has been great to catch up with the children about their summer holiday and lovely to know that most of them were very much looking forward to coming back to school.

Our staff have been working hard over the summer to set up their classrooms and plan exciting activities for the children. I think they were all looking forward to the start of term too!

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our new children and their parents. I hope that your child has enjoyed their first few days at school. I have seen many big smiles as our new reception children have left school, which is a lovely way to start the year. If anyone has any queries or questions, please ask a member of staff – we are here to help.

I am looking forward to working with you all again this year and to all the exciting things that we have planned for the year.



40th Anniversary

Celebrations



We hope that the children have enjoyed our anniversary celebrations this week and in particular, the activities on the field on Friday afternoon. Throughout last week, I saw the children exploring 1970s fashion and t.v and dancing to Night Fever. Their dressing up costumes on Friday were fantastic – we had Freddie Mercurys and a 1970s Elvis as well as lots of flower power and tie-dye. Thank you for the effort that went into creating such amazing costumes. We have set up a gallery of photos in the children's section of the school website, which I hope you will enjoy. Please also look out for a feature on the school's anniversary celebrations in the local paper. If you are interested in the history of the school, please have a look at the display in our school foyer.

I hope that the children will want to join in with our sponsored 40th anniversary challenge. These challenges can be completed at home and all money raised will go towards classroom iPads – a modern essential teaching tool and a huge step forward from the blackboard and chalk used in 1978! We thank you for your support with this event and would ask that any money raised is returned to school with your sponsor form by **Friday 19th October**. All children who take part will receive a special 40th anniversary souvenir.



PESE

I was very proud of how well those Year 6 children who took the PESE (11+) tests, tackled them last week. It can be a daunting way to start the year but they all took the process in their stride. Results will be available after 4pm on Thursday 11th October.

On Tuesday this week (11th September), I will be holding an information meeting for Year 6 parents about applying for a place at secondary school. This meeting is for all Year 6 parents, not just those whose children took the 11+ tests. The meeting starts at 6.30 pm.

Attendance

Good attendance at school is essential. We know that children will get coughs and colds during the course of the year and that this will result in perhaps a few days off school but other than that children should be in school regularly and arrive on time (registers are taken at 9.00 am).

Children should aim for 100% attendance. Attendance below 95% is deemed to be low and below 90% poor. If illness or personal circumstances arise which may impact on your child's attendance, please let us know so that we can support you with this. Parents will be asked to see Miss Talbot where attendance causes a concern.

Holiday absence will not be authorised. Whilst we understand the importance of families having holiday time together, we are not in a position to authorise absence of this nature.

Pupil attendance is particularly important during the month April and May for Year 2 and 6 as this is when statutory testing and preparatory work takes place. It is immensely unsettling for the children to be absent from school during this time. For Year 6 pupils, SATs test information is shared with their new schools and therefore it is important that children are in school for all parts of the process. Likewise, the statutory national phonics screening takes place in June for all Year 1 pupils and some pupils in Year 2. Children must be in school during this time.

Learning Adventures

This year, we have made some exciting changes to our Year 1–6 curriculum, which we hope, will enthuse the children with their learning. Three times a year (6 for Year 1), the children will be embarking on their ‘Learning Adventure’ – a stimulating topic which will integrate English skills, very firmly into other curriculum areas such as science, history or geography.

Each Learning Adventure will have a spectacular start and a sensational end with many highlights along the way. The development of core writing skills will be an essential part of each unit and will be taught through texts, experiments or investigations within a curriculum, which we hope, will become more relevant and exciting to the children.



Built into their Learning Adventure will be opportunities to develop personal learning skills such as problem solving, analytical skills or working as part of a group and personal development skills such as resilience and perseverance. We want to ensure that our children have a good bank of skills to make the most of the curriculum they will be exploring.

The children will be bringing their Learning Adventure overviews home this week so you can see some of the anticipated coverage for each topic. These will also go up on the school website in the curriculum section. Over the course of the year, we will also make available further details of curriculum coverage and objectives.

Each term we will also be holding a **STAR** (showing tolerance and respect) Week when the whole school focus will be on the **RE** and **PSHE** (personal, social and health education). This will enable classes to explore world religions and areas such as online safety, current affairs and helping our community.

Last year we held very successful whole school curriculum days focusing on science and geography. This year our whole school curriculum days will concentrate on art and music. Our school year will also include special event days such as celebrations for World Book Day and fundraising for Comic Relief in March.

We hope that these will be positive changes, which will help us to continue to raise standards and to give the children a wide range of opportunities at school. I look forward to seeing where their Learning Adventures will take them and to sharing their achievements with you.

Year Group Welcome Letters

This week we will be sending out via Parentmail, Year Group welcome letters. These letters will provide you with lots of useful information about the year ahead including day-to-day classroom routines and expectations, homework arrangements and PE timetables. We hope that you will find these useful. Copies of all the welcome letters can also be found on the school website, on the ‘How Can I Help My Child at Home?’ page.

For general information about our school procedures please see the Parent Handbook on the school website.

Staffing News

We are very sorry to be losing Mrs Smith from our school office. Mrs Smith is taking up the position of Office Manager at Harrietsham Primary School at the end of next week. Mrs Smith currently manages all our admissions and attendance procedures. Her position is currently being advertised on Kent Teach. Mrs Smith has provided valuable support to our office in the last three years and we wish her the very best of luck in her new position.

School Photos

The children will be having individual school photos taken on Thursday 27th September, so come to school dressed extra smartly on this day! This is also the day that Year 3 start their swimming lessons at the Stour Centre. Our Year 3s will have their photos taken before they leave for their swimming session so they won't look bedraggled. In due course, proofs will then be sent home so that photos can be ordered in time for Christmas.

The Kent Messenger will also be coming into school on Monday 17th September to take a photo of our Reception children for their 'First Class' issue of the local paper.

New Website

Our new website is now up and running, We hope that you will find it far easier to navigate to find the information you need. The site also includes a calendar where diary dates can be found. We have a few technical issues to iron out with our site provider, especially with the home page calendar, so please bear with us.

Thank you to Mr Foss for his ideas for the design of the site.

Class Assemblies

Please see the diary dates on our school websites for details of when your child will be performing in their class assembly to parents. The majority of these will take place on a Friday afternoon with the exception of Year 3. Class Assemblies often showcase some of the things that your children have been learning about in class.

School Lunches



May I take the opportunity to remind parents that our school dinner menu is made available online so that you can support your child in making their menu choices.

Don't forget we also have an amazing salad cart, with a wide variety of salad items many of which were selected after feedback from our Mini Management Team.

Under the Government's Universal Free School Meals scheme, parents of children in Years R, 1 and 2 are not charged for school dinners. However when children move to Year 3, charges are payable unless your child is entitled to a free school meal. Please see the school office if you think your child might be eligible. School meals are paid for via Squid accounts. Details of Squid accounts for Year 3 parents have been sent out.

Breaktime Snacks

Please remember that only fruit or vegetables are allowed for breaktime snacks on Monday to Thursday. On a Friday the children are allowed an alternative healthy snack.

GDPR—Updated Privacy Notice

The introduction of GDPR (new data protection measures) required us to make some updates to our current data protection procedures and privacy notice. Since May, we have now made a further amendment to our privacy notice. The privacy notice now includes a statement indicating that within our school community, we will sometimes share first names only for the purpose of activities such as assembly scripts, leavers' assembly programme and t-shirts and sending class lists home for Christmas cards and party invitations. This will mean that we won't have to ask for your specific consent every time the children bring something home from school which may have another child's first name on. The full privacy notice will be made available on the school website next week. If anyone does not want their child's first name shared on written material which may be sent home, please let us know.

House Points

The children are already busy collecting house points for their house teams and the first weekly totals of the year will be announced in assembly on Friday. This year the children in Reception will earn their own special purple house points until they are allocated one of our 4 houses (Rochester – red, Leeds – green, Dover – blue and Walmer – yellow) in the summer.

I am sure that we will continue to see more children earning their gold house point badges this year. 100 house points are needed to enjoy the end of year treat.

Our Year 6 House Captain elections will take place at the end of this term. This will give the Year 6 children time to settle into the Year group and to prove their suitability for the role.

The Godinton Coffee Hub

Come and meet our new FLO Jacqui McGibney.



We'd like to invite you to our new weekly drop-in coffee morning: 'The Godinton Coffee Hub' which will start on Wednesday 12th September, from 9 am – 10am.

This is a great chance for you to mingle with new and old families and get to know others.

We look forward to seeing you.

PTFA News

I hope that many of you will come along to our PTFA Mini Olympics Evening on **Friday 21st September**. This event is always a huge success with lots of different activities for the children to enjoy. The event runs from 4 pm to 6pm.

Our PTFA AGM will take place on Monday 15th October at 6.30 pm. Our committee will be standing down and we are looking for a new enthusiastic bunch of parents to take our PTFA forward. It is often the PTFA events that the children remember the most about their years at primary school and that provide opportunities for families to engage with the school. The PTFA is an essential part of life at Godinton and I really hope we can generate enough support to enable it to continue. We are still looking for a Chair and Vice Chair for our new committee and parents who would be able to support with the arrangements for different events. I have added proposed PTFA events to our school calendar but this will only be able to take place if we have sufficient people to help. Any new recruits will of course be helped and supported by the school. Please come and have a chat with me if you think you might be interested in joining our PTFA team or come along to our AGM.

Other News...

- The school will be submitting a bid to the Department for Education to develop the perimeter fencing around the school site. If successful we anticipate work starting in the latter part of 2019. Planning permission for the project will be submitted shortly. We will share further details with parents later.
- Please can I remind parents that the children should wear plain black shoes or boots to school. With the weather being temperamental at the moment, please can the children bring a waterproof coat to school as they will go out to play in light drizzle. Hair bows should be kept to a suitable size and be in school colours.

Caught on camera this month...



Sports Report

Clubs

We will shortly be circulating our club timetable which will indicate the clubs available to the children in term 1. The school runs a variety of different clubs and activities on a seasonal basis to different year groups.

Cycling

This year we will be helping our Year R and 1 children to learn to ride a bike or to improve their cycling skills. Working with Cycle Circle, we are building some bike riding sessions into our Year R and 1 timetable over the course of this term. Cycle Circle are also offering some after-school sessions for parents and their children to support learning to ride a bike. Places are limited and names will be drawn at random in the event of the sessions being over-subscribed. There is no charge for any of the sessions for Year R and 1.



Year 4 -6 also have the opportunity to take part in Bikeability (the new and improved cycling proficiency course) at the start of October. Details will be sent out shortly.

Cycling is a great way to come to school. We have plenty of spaces where bikes or scooters can be stored during the day. Please can I remind everyone that cyclists should dismount when they arrive on the school site and push their bikes through the grounds.

Premier Sports

We are delighted to be able to offer a range of physical activities to the children at lunchtime which will be run by Premier Sport. The aim of these sessions is to develop the children's physical activity at playtime. Please encourage your children to join in.