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Godinton Primary School
Lockholt Close,
Ashford,
Kent.
TN23 3JR
Tel: 01233 621616
www.godinton.kent.sch.uk
office@godinton.kent.sch.uk
headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk



Message from Miss Talbot

Getting to know you

It has been an absolute pleasure to get to know our new starters and their families since the start of the year. Our new reception children are all settling in very well and should be immensely proud of all their achievements so far. They have come into school with confidence and are enjoying taking part in a wide range of activities both inside and out. It feels that they have been part of our school for a lot longer than just a couple of weeks.

The start of the year always brings new adjustment for the children as they settle into their new classes and start to build relationships with the new staff teams. The year has started with a lovely positive feeling within the classrooms and with the children working hard. Don't forget you can get in touch with the teaching teams via email (details of which are in your year group welcome letter). As they will be busy teaching, the emails aren't checked during the school day so for urgent enquiries please contact the school office.

I wish all the children a very happy and successful school year.



Opal Play

A lot of preparation for Opal Play has taken place since we returned to school in September as outlined in Mrs Carr's Opal Newsletter. One of the biggest challenges has been getting welly storage ready so that the children can safely stow their wellies, enabling them to play out on the field all year round. Mr Rowson has been very busy making these and now has just one more rack to go. They look fantastic and have been beautifully crafted—there seems to be no end to his talents! We will shortly be notifying you of the need for your child to bring their wellies into school along with a waterproof coat, spare clothes etc. Look out for a ParentMail from Mrs Partridge to let you know when to bring these in.



So far we have opened up two Opal play areas—fairground games and strategy games. We are keen to open up an art area and small world play before half term. We are in need of any small world toys to fill this area (farm animals, dinosaurs, small toy cars, Happyland, Playmobil type figures). If you are having a declutter at home, any unwanted small world toys can be put into the donation boxes at the front of school.



Once we return from Half Term, our 'Festival Corner' should be open as a chill out area, now that the turf has had a proper chance to bed in. Thank you so much to Miles' nanny for her beautiful crocheted circles which will decorate the trees. We will also be opening our first digging area and hope to introduce some water play and den building onto the playground too.



Our Opal Play

will evolve over the coming year—we can't possibly do everything all at once. Whilst we have allocated some school budget and PTFA funds to this project any donations of equipment and resources will enable us to offer even more to the children. I seem to be scouring bins and skips wherever I go at the moment and only last week, Mrs Partridge and I could be found rescuing two large cable reels out of a skip (we did ask permission first)!

Thank you to everyone who has helped out so far. We have had some great items donated which will really help to create fantastic play opportunities for our children. If you can help in any way please just get in touch with Mrs Carr.



WOW—walk to school initiative



Our WOW Walk to school initiative has got off to an amazing start and the children have been very keen to tell me how they have travelled into school

each day. Thank you so much for supporting this initiative and helping your child to take part.

If your child manages to walk, cycle, scooter or park and stride to school at least once a week over the course of a month, they will be able to collect WOW badges. With our challenge starting mid way through September, lots of children have had the opportunity to gain their first badge. These will be awarded in the coming days.

I hope that one of the benefits of the WOW project will be easing congestion on roads around the school. This project has been fully funded by KCC and positive engagement with this may lead to other traffic calming measures on the Godinton Estate.

This project will last all year, so there are plenty of opportunities for your child to take part.



Little Wandle Reading and Phonics



I hope that those of you with children in Year 1 have enjoyed sharing the beautiful Little Wandle reading books that the children have been bringing home to read with you. The books give the children the opportunity to share with you the books that they have been practising in their reading sessions in school. The books allow the children to practise their fluency, decoding, prosody (reading with expression) and comprehension skills.

Our phonics sessions have now also started in Year R and the children are engaging really well with this. Year R parents are invited to attend an information session to explain more about how Little Wandle Phonics works and to go through with you how to help support your child's reading at home. These will take place on **Tuesday 8th October at 9.00 a.m. and Wednesday 9th October at 9.00 a.m.** Both sessions are the same so you only need to attend one. Please come along and meet Miss Kirk-Smith our Phonics Lead who will host the sessions.

Please help your child to look after the books they bring home and to return them on time so that these can be shared with other children.

PTFA News

Thank you to those parents who attended our P.T.F.A AGM last week. For those of you new to the school, our PTFA (Parent, Teacher and Friends association) is made up of volunteers who run events and activities for children and families in order to raise fund for the school. Each year, the fundraising efforts of our P.T.F.A raise thousands of pounds for the school which goes towards providing those little extras for the children at Godinton. This year's fundraising will help to set up our Opal Play initiative.

At this year's AGM, Lynsay Keech stepped down from her role as Chair of the Committee. Lynsay has brilliantly filled this role for the last few years, and although she will still be helping out with events she has passed the reins on to our new Chair, Mrs Kelly Prior. Kelly has a daughter in Year 4 and is also a TA at Godinton. With her boys having now left Godinton, Nicola Smith has also stood down from her role as treasurer, with Joanne Bailey now undertaking that role. I'd like to take the opportunity to thank Nicola and Lynsay for all they have done for our school and to wish Kelly and Joanne well in their new roles. Mrs Jo Gandon will continue in her role as secretary.

PTFA events for this year to put into your diary:

Friday 8th November—non uniform day in return for donations for the Christmas Fair

Saturday 23rd November—Christmas Fair

Friday 7th March—School Disco

Wednesday 26th March—Mothers' Day Present Shop

Friday 28th March—Bring in an Egg for Easter Bingo

Saturday 29th March—Easter Bingo

Friday 6th June—Bring in something for the Summer Fair

Monday 9th June—Fathers' Day Shop

Saturday 21st June—Summer Fair

Friday 11th July—School Disco

We hope that you and your family will enjoy taking part in these events.

Our next P.T.F.A meeting will take place on Tuesday 15th October at 6.00 p.m. All are welcome to come along.

If you have any enquiries about the PTFA or are able to offer your services in any way, please get in touch with our committee:

ptfa@godinton.kent.sch.uk

Diary Dates 2024–2025

School diary dates for this academic year, can be found on the school website.

Upcoming events include:

Book Viewing 3.30–7.00 on Thursday 14th November

Parents' Evening on Thursday 21st November (3.40 to 5.40) and Tuesday 26th November (3.40 to 7.30)

We are in the process of setting term dates for the academic year 2025–26 and will share these with you in due course.

Spread a Little Kindness throughout October

Every year in October we promote kindness and ask children to extend their thoughtfulness towards others, both at home and at school in different ways. Led by Mrs McGibney and our pastoral team, this year we have set a challenge for the children to complete at home—focusing on the Godinton 5 Ts of Kindness (trust, truthfulness, talk, try your best and thankful). The children all brought home a sheet last week, on which they can record their kind deeds in words or pictures. All those who take part in the challenge will be awarded with a special kindness keyring and a certificate. Please send the completed sheet back into school by Friday 8th November.

We are also pleased to announce that we have new Kindness Ambassadors in place for each class who will help Mrs McGibney in promoting kindness across the school.

This year's ambassadors are:

Eagles: Dipson and Natasza

Falcons: Isla and Ashton

Magpies: Ace and Elif

Cuckoos: Naomi and Ridhwan

Nightingales: Harley and Sophie

Kingfishers: Rafaela and George

Bumblebees: Tiwa and Freddie

Dragonflies: Ella and Oakley

Butterflies: Jacques and Scarlet

Ladybirds: Felix and Josephine

Foxes: Isaac and Edith

Otters: Olivia and Tommy

Moles and Badgers: Amilia and Ezra

Rabbits and Hedgehogs: Kanea and Efren

Congratulations to all the children who have been chosen for this special responsibility.

Be an Attendance Hero

At the start of the academic year, I sent home information about the new National measures which came into force in August. This sees harsher penalties for unauthorised term time absence and higher expectations regarding attendance at school. Our updated attendance pages on the school website and revised policy provides further information.

Attendance at Godinton has always been very good for the majority of our children with attendance figures above National averages. However we do have a number of children whose attendance falls into the persistent absent category (below 90%) and a number of children who are regularly late. This year, I'd like to look at what more we can do to support families where attendance raises a concern. We are here to help so if you are worried about your child's attendance, please get in touch.

Our aim is for attendance at Godinton to be at 97% across the school by the end of the academic year. So far attendance stands at 96.8% and attendance figures for each class are as below:

Eagles: 96%

Falcons: 96%

Magpies: 99%

Cuckoos: 96%

Nightingales: 95%

Kingfishers: 96%

Bumblebees: 99%

Dragonflies: 97%

Butterflies: 98%

Ladybirds: 96%

Foxes: 93%

Otters: 97%

Moles and Badgers: 98%

Rabbits and Hedgehogs: 99%

Roof Update

Those of you who have been part of our school for a while, will be aware that over the past 6 years we have been working with (and sometimes battling with) the Department for Education to address the RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) in parts of the school roof. Back in the 1970s, RAAC was seen as a revolutionary building material and was commonly used in public buildings. However it came to light, that its stability was limited and that after 40 years the material could start to deteriorate. RAAC was high profile in the news last year as the full extent of this issue was revealed. We were already ahead of the game, having addressed RAAC in the original 1970s part of the school several years before. Last year, further remedial work took place on the hall roof and since then we have been working with the DfE to find a permanent solution by removing all remaining RAAC from the school.

This has not been an easy task and although funding to address this has been promised, the number of hoops to jump through in order to access this has been considerable. However I hope we are almost there.

Phase 2 of RAAC removal from the school will focus on the school hall and school kitchen. This means that for the duration of the work, these areas of the school will be out of action. They will be replaced by the construction of a temporary hall space and kitchen erected on the school field. I have been insistent that this is more than a marquee, which was used when we were undergoing remedial work last summer. This time the temporary accommodation will be a sturdy, modular structure which

will see us through the winter months. I had hoped that the work would have commenced in October Half Term, but early November is now looking like a more realistic time frame.

I will keep you updated in how things are progressing. In the meantime please be assured that the hall roof is safe and that regular surveys have not detected any concerns.

Policies Reviewed

The following key policies have recently been reviewed and can be found on the Policies page on the school website.

- Safeguarding
- Online Safety
- Attendance
- Behaviour and Discipline

This is where you can also find many other school policies.

The school's accessibility plan has also been reviewed and can be located on the SEN page of the school website.

Black Culture Month

In October we also celebrate Black Culture Month. This year our theme is 'Inspiration' and through assemblies we will celebrate the lives of inspirational black people, past and present and explore their achievements in different fields.

Look out for a special task in the Term 2 Homework Trail linked to Black Culture Month.

Other News and Reminders...

- The children have returned to school looking very smart in their school uniform. I know how expensive uniform can be; please ensure that all items (including coats) are named so in the event that something gets lost, it stands a good chance of being returned to you. After half term, we will be setting up a second hand uniform wardrobe in the school foyer. You will be able to both donate items of uniform and take what you need. Further information will come out in a few weeks time.
- We love celebrating our children's achievements both inside and outside of school. If your child has a fantastic hobby or has done something amazing, please let us know. If you send in a picture, this can be displayed on their proud peg in the classroom so that they can share their success with their classmates. This might be entering a dance competition, passing a music exam, playing in a sports competition or making something brilliant.

Caught on camera this month...



Sports Report

Year 3 Swimming

Congratulations to all our Year 3 children for the fantastic start they have made to their swimming lessons at Ashford School. Swimming forms part of our Year 3 PE curriculum delivered as a block of 8 sessions. Split into small groups of 6-8, from those who are very confident swimmers to those who are just learning to swim, the children work with an instructor to develop their skills in the water. Having been to the pool this week to watch the children swimming, I have seen first hand how brilliant the children have been – they have listened attentively, followed instructions and have been keen to take part. The sessions not only help to develop the children's swimming skills but also help to support their independence and resilience. Well done Year 3, I'm very proud of you!