

# Newsletter



## Newsletter 3

October 6<sup>th</sup> 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have had a great couple of weeks in school, with the children (and staff) all working hard. I cannot believe that we are only two weeks away from half term! We are still continuing to make improvements around the school – this week we have been putting up display boards in the new building, for the children's lovely work, and we are reorganising the old Year 6 classroom to create a music room. Yesterday, the children from School Council and I met round the boardroom table in the old IT suite for the first time. They have come up with some great ideas to further develop the school – although the indoor swimming pool could be a project for the future!

Ahead of us, we have Parent Teacher Consultations fast approaching – details will be coming out shortly regarding booking online. The appointments will be held in person.



### Cross Country Running

Congratulations to our fantastic Cross Country Runners who took part in the Stevenage Sporting Futures Cross Country Meet. The children have been training before school with Mrs Mason (thank you, Mrs Mason), and were a fantastic team – encouraging and supporting each other. The children did brilliantly, with the Year 5 girls and boys team, and Year 6 boys team finishing in third position. Special mentions go to Sephora, who finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place, and James R from Year 6 who was first – both out of 120 runners taking part! Thank you to Mrs Mason and Mrs Foster for taking the children to this event.



### Harvest

Thank you very much for your support for our Harvest Service. Thank you for your patience waiting at church – we were slightly delayed due to a delivery vehicle blocking our gate which refused to move! However, we had a wonderful welcome when we arrived, and it was a pleasure to have Catherine and the St. Giles Team with us, to lead the service. The children delighted us all with their singing and range of contributions, including poetry, sign language, presentations and prayers. We are currently counting up the donations we received and admiring the beautifully decorated envelopes (see above) and will let you know how much we have been able to send off for the Bishop's Harvest Appeal.



### Homework Policy

We reviewed our homework policy a few years ago, taking into account, parental feedback. There is always an element of compromise, as some families would like more homework, some less and some different types of homework. Our priorities for any home learning have always been reading practice – children having the opportunity to read to you regularly, and being read to. We know that these two things make a significant

difference to the children's reading development and writing skills. Practice in learning spellings, basic number bonds and times tables, is also invaluable.

As children move through the school, an increasing amount of tasks involving preparation for lessons – and independent research is set. We try to avoid an emphasis on activities requiring IT, as we are aware that not all children have easy access to a computer they can work from, and can always provide alternative ways of completing work. We also have a bank of devices we are able to loan out for projects in Year 6.

The current homework policy is attached to this newsletter, and we would welcome your views and opinions. These can be via notes, by email or comments to teachers. Thank you in advance for your help.



### **Menu Choices**

Thank you to everyone who has been making the children's menu choices online via School Gateway – we would be really grateful if everyone could make their choices in advance. The benefits are: you and your child are able to make the choices together, the right quantity of food can be ordered and it gives back 10 minutes of teaching time each morning if choices don't need to be made on the day. We will always check in with the children if choices haven't been made, but really appreciate your help.



### **Birthday Sweets**

We have always enjoyed celebrating birthdays at school and children have often brought sweets to share with the class. We have now come to the difficult decision this will no longer be allowed in the light of a tragic event at one of our local schools. A child died at home, from anaphylactic shock, having eaten some sweets given out by a classmate. Whilst this is an isolated incident, it makes sense to do all we can to keep everyone safe.

We do want to make sure that Birthdays are still recognised however, so are going to 'up the anti' by including birthdays in assembly and we will give out birthday stickers too. Children are very welcome to come to school wearing badges, sashes and headbands, as many of them do at present.



### **World Mental Health Day**

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October is World Mental Health Day and the charity, Young Minds, is holding a 'Hello Yellow' day. If children would like to wear something yellow – perhaps a badge, hairband, top, sticker, item of clothing – they are welcome to. However, please do not go out and buy anything!

We are not requesting any donations for school – particularly given the recent Harvest Collection. If this is something you would like to support, however, we have set up a payment on School Gateway and any monies collected will be donated to the charity. Here is the link to the Young Minds website should you wish to find out more about the work they do <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>



### **Collection Arrangements**

The arrangements for coming in and out of the new building seem to be running smoothly now, with Years 3 and 4 seen out of their classrooms directly, and Year 5 and 6 leaving independently. However, we are keen to

make sure that everyone is happy with the way things are working. If any Year 5 parents would rather collect their children directly from the classroom, the MUGA (posh word for new playground) has now been completed and parents are welcome to wait here to meet their children. Please let the office, or class teacher, know if you would prefer this. Also, if you have any other feedback, this would be welcomed.



### **Cleaners Needed!**

With the completion of the new building, we now need an additional cleaner. Our cleaning is done through a company called Haywards – please let Mrs Martin or Mrs Bundy in the office know if you are interested and they will provide you with the details.

Please remember that I am always happy to discuss any issues with you. Thank you for reading this very long newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

Liz Pollard  
HEADTEACHER