

# Otterham C P School

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23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents

Well here we are at the end of the first half term of the academic year and we have survived and thrived. I hope you have all taken up the valuable opportunity to meet with class teachers and discuss the starting point and way forward for your child(ren) over the rest of the academic year. Overall, the lockdown has had a detrimental impact on attainment but with your support we can ensure that this is not long lasting and does not impact on future life opportunities. Teachers have found it beneficial to have this contact early on and we anticipate Spring Term consultations being during January as opposed to March so that we can keep momentum going and continue to demonstrate progress by working together in the best interests of your child(ren). Our new cohort of 10 Reception children have settled in well and embraced primary school life. It has been a joy to welcome them to Otterham and start to get to know them as individuals.

It is hoped that the staggered starts and finishes to the school day also assist with the parking issues on the road outside. Unfortunately, a Y4 pupil has made a formal complaint about what he considers to be dangerous parking, particularly up and around the staff car park entrance. So a gentle reminder that swift arrivals and departures would benefit the availability of spaces on the roadside and that parking up at the village hall can relieve the stress of trying to find such a valuable space. For those parents new to the school, there is a pathway on the inside of the hedge going to/from the village hall. Please do not use the staff car park as this presents a hazard to families arriving and departing on foot and can cause an obstruction to staff.

On our return after half term we are altering slightly the staggered start to the school day as time is tight in terms of teaching and learning during the morning. The arrival system for Reception children remains the same. However, for children in Y1 – Y6, if your surname starts with letters A – M, please arrive between 8:40am and 8:50am. If your surname starts with letters N – Z, please arrive between 8:50am and 9:00am. Children arriving after 9:00am will be causing disruption for the rest of the class and their own start to the day will be unsettling so can we please ask that all children are on site by 9:00am at the very latest.

Teachers have been discussing a way forward with regards to PE kit for Classes 1 & 2. The advice regarding COVID is that we continue to keep belongings moving between home and school to a minimum but we are conscious of children moving into the winter months and doing PE outside. We have decided to follow what many secondary schools are doing and so from half term we would like to ask children to arrive in their PE kits on PE days. PE kits going through the winter and early Spring months will need to consist of tracksuits/jogging bottoms and sweater with a T shirt underneath or warm leggings, T shirt and a sweater. No hoodies thank you as they are a hazard in PE. We ask that all items of clothing be black, grey or blue with no/limited bright markings. Substantial trainers should also be worn – no plimsolls as they will not provide stability or warmth.

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- Class 1 will have PE on a Tuesday and a Thursday. Even though it is swimming on a Thursday, tracksuits etc can be worn as it will help with changing.
- Class 2 will have PE/Outdoor Learning on a Wednesday and a Thursday. Tracksuits etc can be worn for Outdoor Learning as it will save the uniforms for a Friday.
- The above information is not relevant to Class 3 as they have all their PE sessions in the hall.

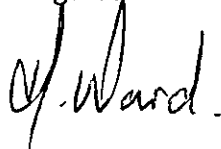
There is some exciting news regarding Mrs Humber that I can now share with the school community. Mr and Mrs Humber are expecting their second child, due to make an appearance in February which will provide little Harriet who has just turned one, a little brother or sister to boss around in later life! We will be advertising for a maternity cover during November and will keep you posted when we appoint a suitable candidate.

As cases of COVID seem to be increasing to the extent that small clusters are appearing closer to home I would just like to remind parents that if someone in the family has a test then the whole family should remain in isolation for 14 days or until a negative result is returned. This is regardless of whether any symptoms are displayed. I would also like to remind parents that the reason we operate a 'bubble' system is that if we do have a positive test situation **within** the school, only the relevant 'bubble' needs to be sent home for 14 days' isolation and to undertake remote learning.

It didn't seem appropriate to create the usual style of newsletter as with current restrictions our opportunity for enrichment are somewhat limited. However, staff have been busy updating their Class pages on the school website to reflect the teaching and learning taking place indoors and outdoors and so please do take a look. Many children have found a new appreciation of school life following such a long period of being away which we hope to maintain.

I do hope you all have a lovely half term break and return refreshed with Christmas within our sights!

Kind regards



Helen Ward