



St Peter's Church of England (VC) Primary School

Mount Pleasant, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7BE

Newsletter—January 2018

I hope you all enjoyed a relaxing and pleasurable Christmas and New Year. QPR did pick up a few points although Wasps were knocked out of Europe, so mine was mixed. I love this term, as the mornings start to get lighter and the afternoons a little longer. Thanks to Mrs Donlon and the hard work of her Eco Club members we are having a great many bulbs planted around the site, so hopefully the school grounds will be a riot of colour as Spring arrives in earnest. We thank them all for their efforts!

Inset Days

Quiet a few parents have asked me when next year's inset days are. I was a little confused by this, but after talking to the governors I now understand that it has been the established practice here to group the inset days together at the beginning or end of one of the holidays and to deliver staff training at other times. I have always used the inset days differently. It is more usual for staff to attend school on the inset days for specialist training in whatever areas are needed. Hence I have always waited until term 5, when a large part of the school year has been completed and I have been informed of any changes to the curriculum or assessment which the government are introducing, before identifying exactly what our training needs are for the coming year. I then book specialist trainers to deliver what we need, and the inset days are set according to their availability.

However, I am already aware of some training needs we have, so I will speak to the staff over the coming weeks and hopefully we will be able to inform you of the inset days, or at least most of them, early in term 4. If I can place them around the October half term, I will do so. I can already tell you that we will take the first day of the new academic year as an inset day, and that will be the case every academic year, as I deliver all of the required safeguarding training on that day. I will let you know the other dates as soon as I set them. Children will start the new academic year on Tuesday 4th September 2018.

Citizen's Tea Parties

I really enjoy having the children visit on a Friday afternoon for the tea parties. I apologise for not always being able to hold them when I am supposed to, but unfortunately there are times when I can't get free from other commitments. If that happens, I will always reschedule the party, so the children won't ever miss out. It's great chatting to the children and celebrating all of the good things they have done. The conversations are very wide ranging and I have learnt a lot about Paw Patrol. Although being told I must be well over 60 came as a shock this week.

School Closures

I hope we can get through the winter without any major snowfall. However, having looked at our particular circumstances with so many staff living outside this area, it is likely that if there is a major snowfall, we would have to close the school. If snowfall is forecast we will use the teachers2parent text communication system to keep you informed of the situation.

Headlice

Head lice are a constant problem in primary schools. We have had an ongoing issue with head lice in one of our classes in particular and I am aware that it has also been a problem in other year groups. I know that despite parents treating their children promptly and thoroughly, head lice can continue to be a problem for some days and weeks. Accompanying this newsletter is an information sheet which outlines how best to treat head lice should your child become afflicted.

Separately, can I please outline what my actions will be if we find that your child has live head lice on them during the course of the school day. My policy will be to call you and ask you to take your child home to treat them immediately. If it is possible for you to do so, please come and get your child. I appreciate that it may be difficult for those of you who are at work, and if you aren't able to do so, then so be it. The normal policy for schools is that we shouldn't ask you to come and get your child. However, if a child has live head lice crawling on their head, it is uncomfortable for the child, it increases the chance of them spreading to others and there is also the possible stigma which a child might subsequently suffer if their classmates see the lice on them.

So, whilst the widely accepted policy in primary schools is not to telephone parents and ask them to take their child home if they have head lice, we will be doing so. If you are unable to collect them, we quite understand—it is different to our telephoning when your child is actually unwell. But if you are in a position where you can collect them and treat them immediately, please do so.

No matter what the circumstances, could I ask you to check your child's head regularly and to treat them as per the accompanying instructions should you find lice or eggs.

School Uniform

Thank you to the number of parents who have provided their child with a school coat and bag since my last newsletter. There are very few children not in the correct school uniform. I really appreciate you supporting the school's policy and I have to say that the children look extremely smart when they are walking in with their matching coats—thank you.

Coronation Gardens

We have received the required permission to reinstate the path which winds through the undergrowth beside the stone steps. Doing so will provide the younger children with a safe way of accessing Coronation Gardens. The path still exists to some extent but it is going to need a fair bit of work to make it useable.

Rather than pay for this work, I wondered whether there are any parents who would join me one Saturday or Sunday in March to clear it properly. We may need to purchase and reinstate some sleepers to make sure that the path is sufficiently solid. If anyone has particular skills in this area, or if you are just willing to lend a hand in getting it done, please let me know and we can set a date to do it once the weather has improved.

Thought for the Week

Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have a right to be treated by adults with tenderness and respect, as equals. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be. The unknown person inside each of them is the hope for the future. Janusz Korczak