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Phoenix Community  
Primary School  
Belmont Road  
Ashford  
Kent  
TN24 9LS



*Creating opportunities  
for everyone*

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Monday 16 <sup>h</sup> Nov	Friendship week		
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Odd sock day – wear odd socks to show your support for anti-bullying		
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov			
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> Nov		12.30pm Year 5 swimming	
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> Nov			
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec			
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> Dec			
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> Dec			
Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec			

## School opening times

**Gates open between 8.40am and 8.55am.** Children must be in school by 8.55am; anyone arriving after this will need to enter through the main office and will be recorded as arriving late. If your child is going to be late please call the office and let them know beforehand.

## Sickness and diarrhoea

In order to keep the amount of sickness and diarrhoea in school to a minimum please ensure that your child remains at home for 48 hours after their last bout of sickness and diarrhoea.

## PE Kits

For the foreseeable future can you please ensure your child comes to school in their **P.E kit top, school sweatshirt/cardigan and black or blue joggers** on their designated P.E days. They will remain in their P.E for the whole day.

Year R, 1, 2, 3 and 4 take part in P.E on Fridays. Year 5 and 6 will take part in P.E on Wednesdays.



# Newsletter

Dear Parent/Carer,

## The challenges we face:

As we head into our 10<sup>th</sup> week since a full return to school I wanted to reflect on the successful return but also the challenges ahead. The majority of parents are keen for schools to be open, the government is desperate to keep them open and pupils have been really happy to be back with their friends. I strongly agree that pupils need the routine of school and high-quality teaching for their mental well-being and academic progress; however I am very conscious that things have had to be done very differently to ensure this happens safely.

It may appear that the return, despite large changes, has been smooth and relatively easy. I would use the swan analogy – serene on the surface but as a staff we are paddling furiously under the water. The biggest challenge has been implementing measures to reduce the chance of Covid spread and protect individual class bubbles whilst we cope with significantly increased costs with already stretched finances and huge staffing pressures as a result of contact tracing, symptoms and self-isolation.

We have spent large amounts on sanitiser and cleaning products, extra paper towels for increased handwashing, Perspex screens, specialist fire safety door openers for ventilation amongst many measures and extra staff where needed. This is at a time when all schools budgets are under severe pressure anyway with no additional funds for our Covid safe response and the loss of all revenues from additional lettings.

Keeping children in their own 'bubbles' has meant each class having their own separate play and lunchtimes with their own individual supervision. The result is that support staff having their break or lunch later (or foregoing it) meaning they spend less time supporting academically and have less time to support SEND pupils on their daily support programs. When staff have to self-isolate this makes supervision a huge challenge and all our staff having been going the extra mile to keep things as normal as possible.

The question is what can parents do to help us? I would simply ask for understanding and support given the circumstances we are working under. We have been really proud of our role as a community school throughout the pandemic and have worked incredibly hard as a staff to be there for our pupils and their families consistently from March. We won't get everything correct, we won't be able to provide everything we want to for our pupils; however, we are paddling furiously to do our very best for your children. For everyone who has said a thank you to the school or an individual staff member can I say in return - thank you that means everything to us at the moment.

## Preparation for isolation

Being Covid free as a school so far is as a result of good planning, hard work, new routines and the support of pupils and parents in following the rules. There is also some good fortune in this as well as rates across the country have risen. At least a fifth of Kent schools have suffered class, bubble or whole school closures and I believe we should be prepared as it is likely we will need to take similar action at some point. There are a couple of things that you can do:

- **Seesaw**- make sure you are using Seesaw for home learning. If you need help, please ask over the next few weeks. You can use a smartphone or tablet easily and work can be photographed, videoed, typed or sketched – in the event of isolation work will need to be completed and put on Seesaw for marking.
- **Purple Mash** – There is lots of work that will be set on Purple Mash including reading (Serial Mash), times tables, maths games and topic work. Familiarise yourself with this in advance by getting your child to show you and complete some work.
- **Spelling Shed** – You should be already using this weekly for your child to learn their spellings. If you are not sure how to, please have a go in advance and ask for help if you need to. The difficulty increases based on the number of correct answers so it is best to monitor your child as getting help (e.g, using a dictionary) could lead to work that is too hard for their level.
- **Home Learning routines** – If your child is used to sitting down at home for a set period of time to concentrate on home learning (with my own children this is either Friday evening or Saturday morning to get it done), your child will find working during any isolation much easier.

In school we have been working intensively with children to train them in the applications we would use in a class/school isolation. This includes using video lessons, Seesaw to post their work, Spelling Shed, Serial Mash for reading, Purple Mash and also Google tools such as 'Google Docs'.

# Newsletter

## Remote Learning

We have worked hard to have plans in place to provide isolating pupils with remote learning. This falls into 2 categories, an individual child or siblings having to isolate because of symptoms/positive test of a household member or a whole class bubbles/local lockdown situation where a whole class are isolating (see above). In both situations there is an expectation that your child will complete work and upload evidence of this work, for example on Seesaw

## Ofsted:

Before half term we had a visit from Ofsted who were conducting research into schools return to full time education, plans to support 'Catch Up' following the damaging effect of lockdown on childrens' learning and planning in place for remote learning. Although restricted in the detail they publish, their visit was very positive and reflected, I believe, the hard work and planning that has gone into the return to school at Phoenix. A copy of their letter is attached to this newsletter email.

## Arrival at school:

Thank you for your cooperation with the morning drop off. Can I ask that parents keep their child by their side until there is a gap at the gate. When the gate is first opened, please do not send them immediately as this causes too much grouping. Thank you

## Key Stage One Phonics Screening

Cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2020 means that Parrots (Y2) did not take the check when they were in Year 1. In the 2020/21 academic year only, it is statutory for schools to administer a past version of the phonics screening check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2020 autumn term. This will take place in the next few weeks. Please note that this will be very low key and will not feel like any kind of test for the children. The Pelicans' (Y1) phonics assessment will be conducted in June 2021 as will a re-assessment for any child in Year 2 not at the expected standard.

## Attendance

We are hoping to restart the raffle prize 'Not Late Gate' to encourage as many children to be at their desks as possible at 8:55 at the latest. Children start learning whilst the register is taken so it is really important for pupils to be 'ready for learning'.

Attendance letters are standard letters that follow our attendance policy and firstly are there to inform parents of their child's current attendance, including how their child has been marked in the register e.g. late. Sometimes parents think it is only sent to them however this is consistent across the board and is part of our open communication.

## Eco Council Elections

Eco Council elections will hopefully take place in the next 2 weeks (dependent on staff and Covid effects). Pupils interested will need to read out a short, prepared speech before voting starts. You may want to help them with this over the next week so that they can say how they would help their class and school be more Eco-friendly or support wildlife on our site.

Mr Johnson  
Headteacher

## Children In Need

We would like to thank you for your support of this worthy cause; the children looked great. As a school we raised a massive £195.95. Special thanks to Archie who counted it all



# Newsletter

## Odd sock day



Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November is the start of Friendship Week. We will be celebrating the end of this week by taking part in Odd Sock day. All children are encouraged to come to school in Odd Socks to show their support for the anti-bullying campaign.

## Head lice

As with every school head lice is an ongoing problem. The best advice we can offer is that you brush your child's hair for 5 minutes **every night** with a special designated 'nit comb'. If your child should 'welcome an uninvited guest' during the day it will take 24 hours before that visitor can lay an egg and so if you brush out that visitor every night then they will not be able to breed. If you could include this as part of your normal daily routine this should soon resolve the issue. You could combine this task with hearing your child read to you; or while you are watching some TV together or while you are just chatting about what they have done during the day. We have some free combs so please come and get one. We do have some free combs so please come and get one.

## September 2021 Year R in take

If your child was born between 1 September 2016 and 31 August 2017 they will be due to start school in September 2021. Online applications opened on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and close at midnight on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021. Please ensure you register and then complete the application form before this date.

## Affordable bike sale

We have been advised that there will be an 'affordable bike' sale at Goldwyn School TN23 3BT between 10am and 1pm on:

- Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December



This will be held with hygiene and social distancing procedures in place. Please feel free to go along.

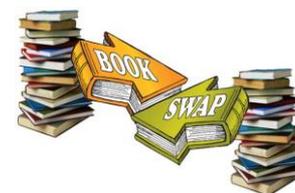
## Attendance

Attendance is an area that is always extremely important and with the uncertain times we are in at the moment it is even more important than ever that we know why a child is not in school in order for us to be able to keep all the children and staff safe. Please contact the school via phone or email first thing in the morning with the reason your child is absent including all symptoms they have. If your child is absent for 5 consecutive days you will need to provide medical evidence for this absence; if no medical evidence is received this absent will be recorded as unauthorised and may lead to a penalty notice being issued.

## Bockhanger Library

Due to COVID the library is unfortunately closed for the time being however this does not stop your child from reading – which is the single most important lesson your child needs to learn!

Hopefully you have noticed our new 'Book Swap' Shop by the main office where you can gift, borrow or have a book of your choice. Please encourage your child to use this facility; let's get everyone reading.



We will let you know when Bockhanger Library reopens.

# Newsletter

## Holiday requests/penalty notices

Any request for holiday leave will need to be made in writing to Mr Johnson. Following KCC guidance and the School's Attendance Policy leave will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Any leave taken without authority will be recorded as G (unauthorised leave). Any leave of 10 sessions (5 days) within a 100 session period will be reported to the KCC Attendance office and will result in a penalty notice being issued. The Penalty Notice gives you the opportunity to pay a penalty fine instead of being prosecuted for the offence of failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The amount of the penalty is £120 per parent, per child, but if payment is made by you within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice it will be reduced to £60 per parent, per child. If you pay the penalty within the time limits, no further action will be taken against you in connection with the offence as set out in the notice, i.e. your liability for the offence will be discharged.

## Email Communication

Communication between school and home is vitally important for your child's happiness, progress and to ensure you don't miss any event. Email is our main form of communication and so it is important that we have your correct email address. If you need to amend or add a second email address please either speak to the office or email us on [reception@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk](mailto:reception@phoenix-primary.kent.sch.uk).

Following us on Twitter at @Phoenix\_Ashford or via our website is also a great way of finding out what is happening in school.

## Term dates

- Term 1 – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020
- Term 2 – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November to Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- Term 3 – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January to Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021
- Term 4 – Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February to Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021
- Term 5 – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021
- Term 6 – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> June to Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Staff development days – closed to children

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020
- Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020
- Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021
- Monday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021
- Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

## Important dates

Please find below a list of dates for upcoming events at Phoenix for this school year. These dates are only provisional. We will do our best not to change them but unfortunately at school sometimes unexpected things crop up which may mean we will need to amend things. Hopefully you will find this helpful.

Dates are as follows:

- |                                    |                                |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 21     | Class photos                   |
| Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> June 21    | Year 6 Residential trip        |
| Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 21 | Year 6 Residential trip return |

# Newsletter

## House Points

Remember that children can earn house points for displaying any of our six Phoenix Values: Resilience, Collaboration, Courage, Independence, Reflectiveness and Responsibility plus there will a chance to win points by being the best house to show good lining up, completing homework on time and having a P.E kit in school, so you can help your child's house to win! You can now see the weekly updated figures on the website.

