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30th September 2017

**SEPTEMBER UPDATE**

Dear Parents / Carers,

What a brilliant start to the term! In four short weeks so much has happened! Hopefully the new Facebook page and the Twitter feeds have gone some way to sharing our daily adventures: not least the Key Stage Two residentials!

Following parental feedback the Twitter feed has reappeared on the home page of the website: you can also access Twitter through the link at the bottom of the home page. All year groups now have Twitter accounts, which are available to view on the year group pages.

Please don’t let social media replace other forms of communication – I am usually on the playground or at the end of the phone. Do come and share your feedback with me. As a school striving to be the best we can be, positive and constructive feedback helps us ‘*Grow Together’*.

**Pupil news:**

I have been so proud of the children who have received celebration certificates for their achievements – what a talented school we have!

I particularly enjoyed the Year 4 Harvest Celebrations in Holy Cross on 28th September: it was lovely to see so many parents and to watch the children share an important message. Thank you all for the donations to The Hope Centre. I delivered our harvest gifts for which they were truly thankful: they filled a whole pallet!

Piper Mullen has the exciting opportunity of dancing at the Royal Derngate Theatre in Aladdin! Charlie Mills was the rookie champion, competing against 13 year olds in go-karting this month. If your child has been involved in an extra-curricular event you’d like to share, do let me know.

**Growth Mindset:**

Many thanks to those of you who attended the welcome event on the 8th September; you will have heard some of my ideas for the future of Pattishall CE Primary School. We have launched the use of the language of Carol Dweck’s Growth Mindset in order to encourage resilience and determination in learning and would appreciate you using this language at home too. Everything you say in front of the children contributes to their mindset – they are constantly looking up to you for how to think and behave and this can influence their learning mindset, just as our own childhood influences our own mindsets.

For more information on Growth Mindset, please have a look at: <https://www.mindsetworks.com/science/> There’s even a mindset quiz you can take to see what your own mindset is like.

Mindfulness goes hand in hand with Growth Mindset. When you practice Mindfulness, the prefrontal cortex physically grows; grey matter forms in the hippocampus (the memory hub in the brain) making recall easier; and neural pathways bypass the amygdala (the prehistoric brain that serves your fight/flight/freeze responses: i.e: your fixed mindset voice).

Mindfulness is now being prescribed by GPs for depression, anxiety and anger as a result of the neuroscience behind it.

Engaging in screen time is the opposite of mindfulness.

If you're interested, I can recommend: "Sitting Still Like a Frog" - great for bedtime routines.

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/aw/d/1611800587/ref=mp\_s\_a\_1\_1…](https://www.amazon.co.uk/gp/aw/d/1611800587/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1506715788&sr=8-1&pi=AC_SX236_SY340_FMwebp_QL65&keywords=sitting+still+like+a+frog&dpPl=1&dpID=418v-S99S%2BL&ref=plSrch)

**Reading:**

Reading is the key to learning. If a child can read by the time they are six, researchers at Cambridge University’s Institute of Education have discovered that their working memory is far better developed. This means that they will be able to hold instructions in their head and focus for longer. Reducing screen time and making time to share books is the smallest act that will be the biggest gift we can give to our children; as it will build their confidence and allow them to meet people and go places beyond their wildest dreams – using their creative brains to fill in the gaps.

To this end, we are changing homework: the children will receive a Homework Record (thank you to FoPs!) in which they record at least five reads a week – this can be part of your bedtime routine. For every five reads, the children will earn a house point and a raffle ticket. There will be a raffle in each class at the end of every week and certificates given in Celebration Assemblies for the Reader of the Week.

FoPs’ big project this year is the redesign and refurbishment of the Library – we’re all so excited! Each class will also be developing their own ‘Book Nook’.

Also, from Monday 18th September, the school will begin ERIS (Everyone Reading in School) from 3.00pm. This is time for the children to enjoy a book, share their reading, change their books or listen to a story.

Miss Hornett will be holding an information evening for all parents on Monday 9th October at 6pm. All welcome.

**Presentation:**

One of our school development targets this year is to improve presentation. This encompasses the premises, the uniform and the work the children produce. We are exploring handwriting schemes and have worked hard over the summer to improve the signage and main entrance. This is on-going as we intend to use teak oil on the cedar cladding and are looking of ways to fund the resurfacing of our car park: all suggestions welcome!

We would like to ask for your support in two ways: please ensure the children tuck their shirts in, button up cardigans and polish their own shoes. I realise that this seems draconian, however I am a true believer that a little discipline and taking pride in one’s appearance really does have a positive impact on a person’s outlook and well-being – I learnt this through my husband’s time in the Fire Service; also we have some stiff competition with schools in the local area. I know there might be some grumbles from the children – but please go with it and support me in our drive to raise standards.

Also, if you can offer some time and/or some teak oil to help with the cedar wood, please do let the office know. Even if we could each do 20 minutes, we’d get the job done before the winter sets in.

**Website:**

Our website, which is voluntarily maintained by Mrs Walton (for which we are extremely grateful), is undergoing some redevelopment – which is why some pages are a little empty or require updating. We are aware and are working on it behind the scenes. Please do let us know if there is any information you feel would be beneficial on the website.

**Parking:**

As a Mum who often drops off by car, as a teacher who has worked in several schools and as a resident who has lived near a school for many years, I know just how difficult this subject is. We’re all busy and there isn’t enough space for all the traffic.

Please can I ask that we all consider the local residents by not parking across driveways, on bends, narrow pavements or yellow lines: if we can car share where possible or walk to school, I would be most grateful. As a village school in the heart of the community, we all need to work together to ensure each other’s safety.

**Attendance information:**

Northamptonshire County Council states that I should not authorise leave unless there are exceptional circumstances and attendance is already good. To this end, our policy is that any request for a holiday during term time will be recorded as unauthorised. Apologies for this, but I am following procedure.

90% attendance equates to half a day off each week, which adds up to a whole term over Key Stage Two. The way that the curriculum, and each week is planned, is geared up to develop children’s knowledge and understanding, building on prior knowledge. Gaps in attendance will equate to gaps in learning. Attendance above 95% results in better rates of progress and positive relationships.

Plus, we’re all here because we love the job! We all want the very best for your children. Let’s work together to ensure that each child has the best start in life.

**Healthy Schools:**

Many thanks to you all for supporting us in our drive to uphold our Healthy School status. The children are enjoying their healthy playtime snacks and treats at lunchtime.

Please feel free to feed back any comments about the hot meals to Dolche as they welcome feedback and are continually striving to improve.

The children have started their daily ‘Run-a-Mile’ (in all weathers!), which is going down really well. Many have already beaten their personal bests! 12 laps on the playground is a mile… Feel free to have a go in the morning!

As a wonderfully rural school, I want the children to climb the trees, explore, be out in the fresh air, get regular exercise and take risks. However, I also have a duty of care and Health and Safety law to abide by. It is for this reason that we have limited the height to which the children can climb during school hours. We know that at the yellow line, we could assist if they got into difficulty. I hope you understand that, with 153 little people to look after, we have to have some rules to ensure consistency, safety and a little order.

**Church of England School:**

When I was appointed as Head Teacher, one of the first tasks the Governors charged me with was raising the ‘Christian Distinctiveness’ of the school in order to meet the good or better criteria of the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) core questions. As a result, this is one of our development points on our School Development Plan. Having worked in a school with an ‘Outstanding’ grading for SIAMS, I know that there is some work to be done in order to more fully celebrate the heritage and culture that surrounds being a Church school.

Our values are still the same and the wording surrounding our values has not changed on the website; however, in order to develop our ‘Christian Distinctiveness’ in preparation for our next SIAMS inspection, we do have to be more overt in our language surrounding ‘Collective Worship’ (assembly), prayer, our chosen Christian values and the Christian calendar.

Please rest assured that our school is inclusive and serves the whole community. No one member of staff is allowed to project their personal religious beliefs and the children will continue to learn about and celebrate all faiths, religions and beliefs; as well as learning about evolution, humanism and scientific theory.

Growing up surrounded by the values of faith, generosity, ambition, pride, cooperation, courage, respect and patience, as well as Jesus’ teachings of being a good person and living a good life, our children will have the resilience they need to face the challenges that a modern, secular society poses.

**Calendar Events:**

October

* 02/10/17 The Great Pattishall Bake Off to support Macmillan 9am
* 02/10/17 Maths Curriculum Evening for Parents 6pm
* 09/10/17 English Curriculum Evening for Parents 6pm
* 03/10/17 GenVW in school from 3pm (Grandparents)
* 06/10/17 FOPs Disco 6pm
* 10/10/17 Year 6 to Northampton Saints for Young Citizens (Police)
* 17/10/17 Parent’s Evening
* 19/10/17 Parent’s Evening
* 20/10/17 Wear Pink for Breast cancer

November

* 04/11/17 FOPs Film Night time TBC
* 10/11/17 Armistice Service in Holy Cross 10:45am *Lead by Student Council*
* 17/11/17 Wear Spots for Children in Need
* 23/11/17 Music Concert performed by children who have peripatetic lessons, time TBC
* 27/11/17 Mufti for Gosset Ward
* 29/11/17 Blue Butterfly internet safety

December

* 11/12/17 Year 3/4 Church Assembly – Holy Cross 9.15am
* 12/12/17 FOPS Crazy Hair Day for tombola prizes
* 15/12/17 Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children
* 19/12/17 Carols on the Playground 3pm
* 19/12/17 FOPS Winter Festival
* 19/12/17 Christingle in Holy Cross 6pm
* 20/12/17 Whole School to see Peter Pan at The Deco
* 20/12/17 Whole School Christmas Lunch!
* EYFS/KS1 performance dates TBC

Many thanks for all your kind comments and on-going support. If you have any questions – do come and ask me face-to-face: always happy to help as we’re in this together.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs E. McLean

