

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

We have a busy term ahead and this newsletter is a summary of what curriculum learning will be taking place in our classrooms as well as some important upcoming dates. If you have any questions about anything at all please feel free to contact your child's classroom teacher. The year 3 & 4 team appreciates as much communication between home and school as possible. On most occasions, concerns can be solved by having a quick conversation with your child's teacher, so do not hesitate to make contact. Our emails are listed at the end of the newsletter.

Curriculum Learning

Numeracy

As a syndicate we will be focussing on number knowledge in addition, subtraction and basic facts. Simple rote based activities will help your child to retain number knowledge required for strategy work. I have also attached a "Number of the Day" sheet. Please feel free to use this as a guide to also support your child in further developing their number knowledge and speed of recall. We continue to place a huge focus on Maths Whizz this year. I would like to reiterate that usage is being closely monitored and by the end of term one the usage was high. Maths Whizz is an excellent programme and using the "Replay" mode is considered a regular part of your child's homework. All teachers monitor usage and if you are interested in this data please contact your child's teacher. Maths Whizz is continuing to prove its worth with our children. It would be fair to say this teaching tool is contributing to a positive shift in culture and attitude toward maths. Our children just love to get onto Whizz and get their green tick. Whizz provides real time learning and a needs based programme to close the gaps in your child's knowledge of maths. Nonetheless, if you notice your child is not happy about Maths Whizz please inform your child's teacher as nine out of ten times we have found children get frustrated and apathetic when they are stuck and require help.

☺ It is very pleasing to report the rate progress and achievement of our middle syndicate children. Please note to help sustain this level of success we need your help at home. Remember only 7 minutes a day of times table practice is a lot more effective (for everyone) instead of saving it up for an hour of homework a week.

We are running a math club for our Year 4 children who are working above their expected level. We are thrilled with the response of the year 4 children who do attend it and we are hoping to continue to offer this in our middle syndicate next term.

Literacy Writing & Reading

Overall our children in the middle syndicate are developing a sound understanding of the writing process. It is really pleasing to hear children talk about the similarities and differences between poetic and transactional writing. I would like to reiterate that in our syndicate we do not teach genres in isolation. As part of our teacher only day, the middle syndicate team moderated and reflected on independent writing samples. We never make overall teacher judgements using independent writing samples in isolation. We always triangulate children's achievement using a combination of evidence. However, these writing samples are very useful to help us identify areas of writing that require attention based on what children "are" or "are not" doing *independently*. The following have been identified as syndicate wide focus and broken down to match our school writing curriculum;

- 1) *Purpose and Audience - Goal: To learn to hook and sustain audience's attention by explicitly showing boring and interesting exemplars of writing.*
- 2) *Ideas - Goal: Expectations that before any writing tasks children must show and use evidence of planning. A brainstorm will help to note random ideas and a SOLO graphic organiser or a mind map (or the hamburger model) will be used to order chaotic thinking.*
- 3) *Structure - Goal: Formal teaching of tenses using verb structures.*
- 4) *Vocab and Language Features - Goal: To ensure children can identify language features that are similar and different between poetic and transactional writing.*
- 5) *Processing & Editing: Evidence – children are not consistent in basic surface features ie; capital of names and inconsistent use of full stops. Also I as a pronoun regularly written as a lower case. Goal: Strive for consistency in accurate use of punctuation and grammar.*

In the middle school, we promote “Reading for Meaning” and “Reading for Enjoyment”. This term there will be a big emphasis on students reading information relevant to their inquiry learning. Children will be encouraged to identify key points and interesting information. At home students are encouraged to discuss with you a story or an article they have read. Two great questions to ask our children are “What do you think about... and why do you think this?”

Inquiry Learning

This year our school wide inquiry theme is “Flight”. This term, in science we are focusing on the “native birds that fly”. In Social Sciences we will be addressing the politics of elections! Our team is very passionate about integrating learning where possible to offer our children contextual learning opportunities.

Physical Education and Health & Wellbeing

PE is held on Wednesday afternoons and the emphasis this term is on skills and applying these skills in the context of modified sports. As a syndicate we are also addressing the attitude of sportsmanship on and off the field. We will make reference to the melodramatic reactions of “professional footballers” in the World Cup to help us teach our children how to behave in controversial situations.

We have a polite “middle of winter” request – if you are willing to donate a box of tissues to your child’s classroom they will be gratefully appreciated. It is a timely reminder in the middle of winter to remind our children about “how to cough” and “how to blow your nose” and remember to wash your hands. We do appreciate if your child is unwell, please keep them home for a quick recovery.

Uniform

School uniform is compulsory. Black socks and black shoes are to be worn, or black sandals/jandals/bare feet. No coloured t-shirts are to be visible underneath school shirts i.e. hanging out below school shirts - black under-shirts are acceptable. We encourage students to bring a spare set of clothes for sport. No nail polish or make up is to be worn and all long hair is to be tied up with hair ties and bands in school colours (Bright pink flower head bands is not school uniform). Stud-type earrings are allowed. Hats are not compulsory this term. As stated before, please check that all uniform items are clearly named. If for whatever reason your child cannot wear correct school uniform, please write them a note to carry around with them for each day they cannot wear it. An important message went home with your children today. Our children are encouraged to change into “play” clothes after school to keep their uniform clean. Winter is here and it is important that uniforms are washed regularly.

No Activity Fees

Important Dates for Student led Conferences ☺

Student led Conferences are being held on Tuesday 5th August and Wednesday 6th August. We invite all parents to attend. I cannot reiterate enough the empowerment a child has when they share their learning with their parents. It is without doubt that our children get nervous but they love the opportunity to talk about their celebrations and achievements. You can book online through our website or pop into our school office to make an appointment. We look forward to seeing you.

Please check our school calendar for the latest information on important dates this term.

Kindest regards,
The Year 3 & 4 team;

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