



Windermere Primary School

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NEWSLETTER 7

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to school! I hope that everyone had a peaceful and enjoyable break. I would like to thank you on behalf of the staff for the many cards, gifts and edible treats which were given to us at the end of term.

Christmas seems a long time ago now, but hopefully the memories of our wonderful performance 'Stable Boy' have stayed with you. It was a very successful production, a delight to watch and a credit to the hard work of all the children and their teachers. KS1 certainly set the bar high for the summer KS2 performance...!

The spring term is slightly shorter than the autumn one, but we will still be packing a lot in before Easter. We are already looking forward to our trip to the O2 for *Young Voices* at the end of January and many classes are organising school trips this term.

Spring Clean for Charity

In the summer we were visited by a lady from Hertfordshire Air Ambulance who explained to us about the important service they provide. It is very reassuring to know that at a time of medical need, they might provide any one of us or our children with life-saving treatment or transport. They are not funded by the NHS, but are a charitable organisation that relies on donations from the public.

Financially January is often a tricky month, but luckily one of the ways in which we can help them raise money is by donating your unwanted (clean) clothes, shoes and textiles. So whilst you are have a clear out and deciding if those trousers still fit or you will ever honestly wear *that* dress again, why not bag it up and bring it into school so that we can pass it on to the Hertfordshire Air Ambulance.

We will collect bags of clean clothes, shoes and textiles during the week of **27th January – 31st January**. Please do not bring them into school before this week as we are very limited with space and cannot store them.

Coats and Coatpegs

In general our classrooms are quite spacious. However, the cloakroom areas are not! The most that any child needs to bring to school in their bag is a water bottle, their reading book and planner/reading record book and their homework book. Too many children, particularly in KS2, are bringing large rucksacks to school which are, in effect, little more than walking waste bins containing lots of bits of screwed up paper, letters they forgot to give you, a fascinating pebble they found and an odd glove. As class numbers are increasing there is simply not enough room to hang these huge bags up and they represent a trip hazard on the floor. In addition to this, the curved tops of rucksacks curl the edges of the homework books, making them appear scruffy and not looked after. I appreciate that children in KS2 would like to acknowledge their transition to the juniors by moving away from the KS1 book bag, so from the autumn we will offer an alternative dispatch bag for KS2. I will be showing the children alternatives and we will involve them and you in the choice. We will phase in their use (or a similar alternative) from September 2014.



End of the School Day

As you are all aware, the school day finishes at 3.15pm. We try *whenever possible* to send the children out on time, although sometimes there are delays. It is an important life skill to learn that you have to tidy up after yourself and the children are expected to do this at the end of the day. If this is not done quickly and efficiently, this may mean that some classes are late coming out. The teachers try to allow sufficient tidying up time, but not too much and they certainly do not deliberately hold children back to inconvenience parents. Most of our parents are extremely supportive and polite, but recently some parents have been extremely rude to members of staff. This is unacceptable and if this occurs again, some parents may be asked to collect their child from the office at the end of the day instead.

Reading Volunteers

It would be great if the teachers and teaching assistants could listen to every child read each day. Unfortunately if they spent only five minutes listening to each child read, this would take 2½ hours every day! Clearly this isn't practical. In the past we have had a number of parents who have very kindly given up some time to help out in the classroom, either listening to readers or helping children to change their library book. We are keen to recruit more volunteers to pop in for an afternoon and give children a chance to read to an adult. Could you find some time for us?

Half-Term Fun

The St Albans West partnership runs some holiday activities in half term. Many of them are held at Bowmansgreen Primary School, but some are at Mandeville and one or two other local schools. Details are displayed on the door by the office and if your child is interested in participating then please ask at the office for an application form. There is a cost involved and bookings should be made directly with Bowmansgreen School. These are very popular, so get your application in quickly!

Sport Relief Mile

Once again St Albans City Youth are organising the Sport Relief Mile for the area. It will be a fun, family afternoon, which in recent years has raised over £50,000 for good causes. It will be held in Highfield Park on 23rd March 2014. If you are interested in entering please visit their website: www.cityyouthfc.co.uk and register.

Bad Weather Arrangements

Just to remind you that if any of the snow currently being experienced by North America makes it our way it may be necessary to close the school. We only do this if we are unable to provide a safe environment for the children. This includes not having sufficient staff on site to provide an adequate level of supervision. In the event that the decision is made to close the school, parents will be notified in three ways.

Internet: www.hertsdirect.org will contain information about the closure status of all schools in Hertfordshire. This can also be accessed from the front page of the Windermere website.

Text: We will send a text to all parents for whom we have up to date mobile phone numbers.

Radio: Three Counties Radio will include information about school closures during their broadcasts. If the weather changes during the course of the school day, we are sometimes obliged to close early to ensure that everyone – children and staff – can get home safely. If this looks possible, then please look out for notification of an early closure on your mobile phones.

Mrs. D. Raftery
Headteacher