

Headteacher's Newsletter No.11

30/1/14

Clubs

One of the parents was asking about availability of clubs for key stage one children and we hope you have now received the table of clubs showing this. We have had a word with the providers of the martial arts club and they have agreed to open it to the KS1 children as well as the older ones.



As far as clubs are concerned, we are always looking for new opportunities both before and after school. Anything we could add to our current programme we will do so, however we will need a good level of take-up to make them worthwhile.

I know that some time ago the possibility of a regular breakfast club was investigated but due to numbers, it simply wasn't feasible. However, we want to look into whether now there would be sufficient numbers to make it possible. If this is something you would like to see, please let us know, together with an idea of what your use of it would be (e.g. two children every day...).

Curriculum

You may be aware that the national curriculum is changing - some subjects more than others. Staff have been working hard to ensure that your children are taught the new curriculum in as interesting way as possible. As teachers, we know that when children's interest is really engaged, they become much more absorbed in learning - hence we also talk to them about the sorts of things they want to learn, and we seek to incorporate this in what we do. Whenever I have been in the classrooms with the children, I have found levels of engagement to be very high - rarely have I seen any children not totally caught up in the activities, whether it be listening to the teacher, working in a group or just getting on with their own learning. This is a tribute to the hard work of staff who prepare and deliver high quality lessons and really give themselves whole-heartedly to the teaching task. I have found that staff at Eastcote do not just do their jobs, they are passionate about them and are committed to seeing the very best for each child.

Homework

I am a big fan of educational research because I believe that what we do as a school should be well evidenced as to its worth for the children. Interestingly, studies into the effectiveness of "traditional" homework for primary aged children indicate that we should think carefully about what we give them to do.

This is a something I will return to because I am aware that the subject of homework can provoke strong feelings with some believing children should do certain amounts (a few would even say the more the better!) whilst others would like to see it abolished completely (no, not just children). We will seek to base our homework policy on best evidence and in future newsletters I will write about some of the issues.

Parking

Unfortunately, despite many requests and reminders, we still have the problem of some parents or carers parking their cars across our neighbours' driveways, at the beginning and the end of the school day. It is illegal to block the access of a property and it is a reportable offence. At the very least it is frustrating but at worst, can stop someone trying to leave their property in an emergency. Please be considerate and ensure that parking takes place away from these areas.



Absence Management

Some parents may recently have received letters regarding your child's attendance levels. These have been generated as a result of our regular visit by the Education Welfare Officer from Bexley, who checks our registers and raises any issues she finds. The purpose of these letters is to highlight the situation to parents who may not be aware that attendance levels have fallen and to encourage ways of addressing absence in future. Some absence will be unavoidable in the case of illness and medical appointments that cannot be arranged for out of school hours and this is taken into account.

Letters received for ongoing lateness are also generated from these visits. We have to remind parents that arriving at school after 8.55am when the gate has been closed will be recorded as late. Arriving at school after 9.15am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence for that session and this will also impact your child's overall percentage attendance level. These are the guidelines put in place by the Education Authority which we are instructed to follow.

After letters are sent, we are told to monitor the situation for 3 weeks and if there is no improvement during this time, we refer the case back to the Education Welfare Office who then, as it is a legal requirement that your child attends school, has the authority to take the matter further.

We generally have a very good level of attendance here at Eastcote, with children enthusiastic and happy to come to school and with your support on this issue, it allows us to provide your child with the opportunity to progress and achieve.

Life With a Labrador



I didn't realise just how acute and sensitive Thor's hearing or smell was until I started giving him the odd piece of cheese as I was making my sandwiches. Now, whenever we are in the kitchen preparing food and getting things out of the fridge he will usually be in the living room asleep, and he won't stir unless we get the cheese out in which case, by the time we have moved it from the fridge to the work surface, he has appeared and is sitting there quietly with his "surely you love me enough to give me some of that" look on his face. Funnily enough, when we get out his worming medicine, it has precisely the opposite effect.

How can you resist me?

And just a little request from the office

If you have put a note in your child's contact book that involves your child coming in late or leaving early for any reason, it would be really helpful if you could let the office know too.

