

Headteacher's Newsletter No 22

15/10/14

Earrings

As you will be aware, we follow the advice of the borough and recommended best health and safety practice with regard to children wearing earrings in PE. Our policy has been:

- No earrings should be worn in PE.
- Children should remove their own earrings and store them safely or parents should remove them before the start of the school day.
- Under no circumstances will staff remove them for children.
- Parents cannot give permission for earrings to stay on in PE.

There have been a few instances when children have been unable to remove earrings (for example because of an infection) and because of this those children have been unable to take an active part in PE lessons. I know parents have been as concerned about this as we have been and so we are going to make a slight alteration to policy.

- It remains the policy that all earrings should be removed before a child takes part in PE and that they should be removed by the child or by the parent before school.
- In the small number of cases where there is a long-term problem with this, we will allow children to participate with their ears taped under the following circumstances:
 - Children have ears taped by parents before school or
 - Children bring in suitable tape and do it themselves (neither staff nor other children should be asked to do this);
 - Earrings are flat and not protruding or hoops of any kind (hoops are inadvisable under all circumstances at school);
 - Parents have written to school to confirm the situation;
 - Teachers assess that the activities taking place in the lesson do not present an unnecessary risk to those children.

I hope that this clarifies policy for parents.

Football

On Thursday 9th October, the school football team played their first competitive fixture of the season here at Eastcote. This was in the first round of the borough's major football competition, the Kevin McCarthy Cup. Our opponents were Bishop Ridley Primary School.

As those who came to watch will tell you, weather conditions were "interesting", at times rather like running around while being hosed. The occasional clap of thunder added to the enjoyment.

I think our team were a little affected by the weather as they went two goals down in the first five minutes, but from that point they began a stirring fight-back. They made more and more chances and soon scored two goals to equalize the score.

Not stopping there, they came to dominate the play and if they had realised that there is no law in football that says when you are through on goal with only the goalkeeper to beat you have to hit it straight at him, they would have scored many more than the three they did get in the second half. Even when Bishop Ridley pulled a goal back, the team always looked in control. Final score: Eastcote 5, Bishop Ridley 3.

Well done to Lennon Barry, Tobi Alo, Cameron Lock, Samuel Crowley, Jeffrey Ogbata, Billy Smith, Sam Truscott-Smith, Celal Ozkirac, Billy Brewis. Goals: 3 from Billy Smith and one each from Celal and Jeffrey. Billy Smith had an outstanding game and was chosen as player of the match.

Many thanks to all the brave spectators for their support and encouragement.

In the second round, Eastcote will play Longlands Primary. We are also due to play in the Minor Cup (for smaller schools in the borough) but we await confirmation of our fixture.

School Improvement

We are constantly evaluating how well things are going in school, especially with regard to children's learning and it is always good to celebrate successes. Some of the things that we think have gone and are going well include:

- Philosophy - children have enjoyed the challenges in these sessions and staff have been pleased with how their learning and thinking have been enhanced. For example, in year three, thinking about the Stone Age, in a discussion about the lack of language there may have been, one year three child was openly exploring the connection between language and thinking - can we think if we don't have words to use!
- Chess - all children in years 4,5 and 6 now know (with an occasional reminder) the basics such as how pieces move. The year 5 and 6 children are now beginning to learn the tactics and strategy of the game and are playing full games successfully. We discuss with them how learning chess helps develop their thinking and their ability to learn.
- Learning about learning - in lessons we have some focus on particular ways that learning can be helped - we call them learning dispositions and liken them to muscles that we exercise and develop. We have extended this to having whole school focus on a particular learning disposition every few weeks. Earlier this term we thought a lot about what is called "distilling", which is all about picking out the most important bits of learning and using them in other learning situations. Our current focus is "capitalising" which is all about using all the resources available to help us learn (e.g. books, display, tablets, others).
- Modern foreign languages (known as MFL) - Key Stage 2 classes have weekly lessons with a visiting French teacher, M. Roger, who is a native speaker of the language.
- iPads - now being used effectively in the school using some great educational apps.
- Children's progress in learning - evidence from our assessments show that the great majority of children at Eastcote make really good progress in reading, writing and maths. We were especially pleased that so many of our year 6 children managed to reach level 6 in maths - a far higher percentage than national or local levels.
- The house system - the children have really enjoyed taking part in all kinds of competitions and earning house points.
- Sports competitions - Children have represented Eastcote against other schools in a whole range of sports.

But we cannot afford to be complacent - we look for ways to improve even further:

- We have just introduced the new national curriculum in most classes and want to ensure that we teach it in a thorough and engaging way so that children make good progress in all aspects of their learning.
- We want children to make even more progress, especially in those key subjects, reading, writing and maths.
- We are developing our outdoor areas and have a number of projects that are now funded and beginning to be implemented so that ours will be a school in which there is a good range of outdoor learning. Included in this will be areas, walks and spaces where there will be prompts to help children reflect quietly, find some solitude if they wish it and just enjoy their surroundings.

- We are ensuring that children's active participation in the life of the school continues to grow through the school council and children's committees.

Harvest

As you will be aware, the Charity Committee have decided to support Wateraid for this year's Harvest focus. Wateraid do a wonderful job in providing fresh water, sanitation and hygiene training for millions of people across the world. One of their most recent campaigns concerned the fact that millions of children go to schools that have no fresh water or toilets - children have to use a field and, as you can imagine, this particularly impacts upon girls, many of whom do not go to school because of the humiliating and unsanitary conditions they would have to face. Wateraid is seeking to provide toilets, fresh water and hygiene training to eliminate disease and take away barriers to school attendance.

Children may, if they wish, contribute by donating 10p for every time they go to the toilet during the week beginning Monday 23rd October. They will be invited to keep a tally of the number of times they use the toilet and bring in a donation at the end of the week. No one else will be monitoring them or keeping a count and there will be no difference in the procedures for going to the toilet in school, nor will non-participation be highlighted in any way - they can go whenever they need to as usual. This is just a suggestion children may use which will help to bring home to them the benefits their giving can bring to others. If preferred, children could simply bring in a donation of any amount at the end of the week if they wish to do so.

E-Safety

Thank you all parents who came to the recent e-safety event, I hope you found it informative and useful.

Thank you also to everyone who came to parents' evening and completed the survey on e-safety which helps us to know how we can help you and your children remain e-safe. We will be referring to the results on the website in due course. From these results we will try to address key e-safety issues with children in the course of their learning.

We have put copies of our draft new Safeguarding Policy in the office foyer and would encourage parents and carers to take one to read. We are happy for any comments or suggestions to be submitted to us before half term, which can be taken into consideration before finalising the document.

Disclosure and Barring clearance

Please would any parent or carer that has applied for this and received their clearance document, bring it in to the office in order that we can record the details and note that this is in place.

Life With a Labrador

My daughter, and now my wife, are planning to have another dog because dogs really enjoy having company - Thor would love it so much. Apparently s/he will be a spaniel who looks like this:



...and is called "Poppy". S/he doesn't exist yet, we haven't found one, but knowing the persuasive powers of my daughter and my wife (let alone my dog), I would be surprised if we don't have her/him within a year.