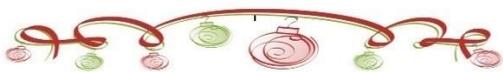




Fir Tree Newsletter

Issue 7
7th
December
2018



Dear Parents,

The final few weeks are upon us before we break up for the Christmas festivities. There will be lots happening throughout the school with performances, singing and Christmas Dinner!

I am very conscious that Term 2 is a busy term in the run up to Christmas and there are lots of demands on parents for tombola contributions, money for fund raising, raffle prize donations, permission slips to be returned etc. etc. etc. I just wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge 'thank you'. Without your support and your kind donations these events wouldn't be the success that they are. I hope that you will join me in saying that our Christmas Bazaar last week was a great success. We are certainly feeling festive at Fir Tree at present and this event certainly kicked Christmas off with a bang. I am pleased to announce that we raised a fantastic £1,000 with £50 being donated from our cake stall towards the Priors Court Family fund. The School Council and Mr Osmond will look at using the proceeds to improve the outside area in the New Year, so we will keep you posted.

We had a fantastic whole school visit to the Corn Exchange to watch the Panto on Wednesday and I was immensely proud of how well the children behaved.

Next week our Years 5 and 6 perform at the NAT Winter Concert at Trinity School on the evening of Thursday 13th December. They have been practising lots this week and we are looking forward to them representing us at the event, we hope to see many of you too supporting our pupils and joining with the fun. Tickets are still on sale from the Trinity office.

A new date added to the diary dates on the right is a Christmas Service. We thought it would be nice to end the term with some songs sung by the classes; readings and some communal hymns followed by tea and mince pies; it would be great to see you there.

I do hope you have had a great start to December and the build up to the Christmas festivities.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Regards,

Lindsay Wood

Headteacher

Value of the Month for December is...

APPRECIATION

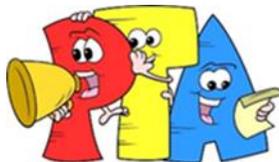
Throughout December we will be focusing on the value of appreciation, as we feel it is a very fitting month for it.

What is Appreciation?

The word "appreciation" means really seeing something for what it is- an awareness of how special, how lucky, how unique, how blessed, how big, wonderful or awesome something is. Appreciation is a recognition not based on comparison, but based on the intrinsic value, character or immensity of a thing or state itself.

Suggestions for parents to work with children at home:

1. Help your child take care of their things.
2. Teach them to respect their belongings and the property of others.
3. Demonstrate an attitude of thankfulness for what you have and for your life together.
4. Hugs, kisses and loving words are powerful expressions of appreciation. Use them often along with sincere thank-yous.



I am delighted to announce that we now have a PTA for Fir Tree Primary. We had our first meeting a fortnight ago where the committee was established and discussions were had regarding some fundraising events for next year.

I know that they would like to keep you informed via the newsletter going forward themselves. We are hoping to run a Movie Night; Easter Event and of course the Summer Fayre. Can I take this opportunity to thank all those that have put themselves forward for the committee but also to those that have said they are happy to help when there are events too! I owe a personal thanks to many on the PTA who helped to prepare the tombolas and hampers for our Christmas Bazaar.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday 7th January at 7pm if you would like to join us please do come along.

Diary Dates

Thursday 13th December
NAT Winter Concert @ Trinity

Tuesday 18th December
Christmas Dinner

Wednesday 19th December
Christmas Service 9:30am

Wednesday 9th January
PTA Meeting 7pm - School

Wednesday 30th January 2018
Curriculum Evening – 7pm

Teacher Training Days

Wednesday 19th December 2018
– pupils finish at 12pm (Training for staff in the afternoon)

Thursday 20th December 2018

Monday 7th January 2019

Thursday 4th April 2019 – pupils finish at 12pm (Training for staff in the afternoon)

Friday 5th April 2019

Friday 28th June 2019



KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE

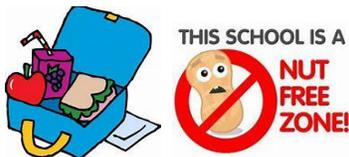
As a parent myself I know how helpful is to be aware of how to keep our children safe on-line. I will always try and update you through the newsletter with advice about apps or on-line games that are appearing. The NSPCC have a handy Online Safety part on their website at the following link to help parents keep their children safe. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keepingchildren-safe/online-safety/> or you can type online safety into their search box on their website.

The NSPCC have worked with parents, carers and children to find out what they feel about current popular apps that children are using. You will also find the link <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/?order=title#> useful to learn about the risks involved. Please do take time to look up the link and to find out what children themselves say about the risks involved.

For example, one of the apps they looked at had the following risk assessment:



I hope you find this useful.



We have a number of children in school with severe nut allergies which would require the administering of an epi-pen in the event of a severe reaction. With this in mind can we please ask that children who bring in a packed lunch from home have no nut products eg peanut butter sandwiches, walnut cake etc. in their lunchbox. Many thanks for your cooperation in this matter.

Can I also gently take this opportunity to gently remind you that children should be provided with a healthy packed lunch. Please avoid cakes and sweets and do encourage fruit, yoghurts and healthy alternatives. We have recently seen unhealthy drinks appear in boxes too.



Outdoor P.E.

The school is continuing its outdoor P.E. provision and the weather is getting colder! For this to be achievable and safe, we would like to remind everyone that an outdoor P.E. kit would be preferable:

- Tracksuit, trousers, sweatshirt and outdoor trainers.
- Gloves and hat when very cold!

Next week you will see that our MUGA is being resurfaced to ensure that high quality PE continues to be taught at Fir Tree.



September 2019 First Time Admissions

Applications for first time school admissions (for children due to start Reception in September 2019) must be completed online at <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/primaryadmissions> by **15th January 2019**. We are always happy to show parents around our school. If anyone you know is still undecided and would like to visit our school please ring the school office to make an appointment and/or to obtain an admission pack.



You may have seen recently in the news that all Year 4 children will have their multiplication skills formally tested in the summer term of Year 4 from 2020

Why a new test?

The DfE says that the check is part of a new focus on mastering numeracy, giving children the skills and knowledge they need for secondary school and beyond. The purpose of the MTC is to determine whether Year 4 pupils can recall their multiplication tables fluently (being able to answer times tables questions accurately and quickly, without having to work out the answers).

The times tables test will be introduced in English schools only. It will be taken by children in Year 4, in the summer term (during a three-week period in June; schools will decide which day to administer the check).

In June 2019 the multiplication check will be voluntary (schools will be able to decide whether to administer it or not). In June 2020 it will become compulsory for all English maintained schools, special schools and academies (including free schools).

What are we doing to support your child?

Times tables are taught across the school from Year 1 upwards and as previously mentioned we have just started Times Tables Rockstars in Key Stage 2 – the children have been very receptive to this and it is helping their speed and recall; this platform can also be accessed at home and is often set as part of the weekly homework.

How can you help your child?

Because the National Curriculum for Maths is so extensive, there is an expectation that parents will help their children learn their times tables at home and not rely on schools to bring them up to speed.

Some of the techniques you can use include:

- Practising times tables by rote.
- Asking your child multiplication questions out of order – such as 'What's 11x12? What's 5x6?'
- Asking your child the related division facts: 'What's 8/4? What's 9/6?'
- Using arrays to help your child memorise times tables – you can use fun objects like Smarties or Lego bricks to make it more entertaining.
- Giving your child word problems to test their skills, like 'If Peter has 800ml of orange juice and needs to share it between four friends, how much can they each have?'

