



HARTLEY PRIMARY ACADEMY
NEWSLETTER 6 - JANUARY

Academic Year – 2014 - 2015



Dear Parents and Carers,

Once again, I would like to begin with a huge thank you for the amazing generosity with regard to Christmas gifts and cards, both personally and on behalf of all of the staff.

Happy New Year! We already have two hours more daylight now than we had on December 21st! I think we are beginning to notice that the daylight is still with us until almost 5.00pm now.

It's been a busy start to the year already...

PTA Movie Night

Mrs Gandhi and her willing band of volunteers organised our latest Film Night on our first Friday back. Each of these events runs more smoothly it seems than the last. However, this will be Mrs Gandhi's penultimate Movie Night, after initiating this and ensuring that it has become such a popular and regular event she is 'retiring' from the role. We are most grateful to her for all of the Movie nights we have enjoyed in recent years.

PTA support

With 418 children in school that equates to a great many families. PTA events are very popular and raise huge amounts of funds for the school – from which the children benefit. However the PTA is run by a tiny proportion of our parents. We were very pleased to welcome new members at the most recent meeting in January but more parents are needed if we are to be able to continue to run the events which families have come to expect. The Christmas and Summer Fairs do not just happen – they are the result of planning and preparation. But these can only continue if there are enough volunteers. A few years ago when the Easter Bunny hunt could not take place because there was no one to organise it there was considerable outcry from parents!

This year the PTA has scheduled the Summer Fair for **Friday 26th June** from the end of the school day until early evening. One of the reasons they have chosen to do this is because of the number of clashes with other local events and other commitments – such as sports clubs and family activities. However this cannot go ahead – on whichever day is chosen –without help. The PTA Postbox is an excellent way to make contact, alternatively speak to any of the committee members or the school office. Our PTA team has kindly put together an overview of their work and where they need help! Please check out Page 5!

Winter updates...

Hopefully the further we get into January and February the shorter the winter becomes and the less likely we are to have severe weather, However in the event of snow, we will follow our usual procedures for communicating what is happening. You can visit www.kent.gov.uk/winter for latest updates and can also tune in or visit the sites of KMFM, BBC Radio Kent and Heart FM for updates and closures. We will continue to use Home Connect and parents may like to consider signing up for text message alerts via www.kentclosures.co.uk. Please be aware there is a charge of 20p plus the standard network charge. KCC recommends parents should visit the BBC

or direct.gov.uk websites for home learning resources to support children's learning while the school is closed and although we are no longer a KCC school this seems to be good advice if there is any prolonged closure. We now have gas-fired boilers so we are no longer dependent on oil deliveries. Mr Goldsmith's snow moving machine is ready for action (if) we need help clearing paths and areas of access.

Coats, boots and skirts, hair and nail varnish!

We are in the middle of winter and children are expected to have coats in school **every day**. The weather can change dramatically during the day and children need to be protected. For girls, boots may be worn on very cold, wet or snowy days but they must be waterproof and plain, not furry or glitzy.

Nail varnish is great fun – for weekends – but please remove it for school days and please avoid 'tramlines', 'Mohican' type hair styles and 'skinhead' type shaven hair – save them for the holidays along with sparkly hair bands and clips.

Earrings

Should your child have pierced ears please ensure they have in their P.E. bags their own roll of micropore tape to secure earrings if they cannot remove them by themselves.

Our School Prospectus states:

"Children should not be wearing jewellery in school. If children are wearing a watch it remains the child's responsibility throughout the day. Small 'stud' earrings are acceptable for children who have newly-pierced ears. Jewellery must be removed or earrings covered with micropore tape (each child must bring their own supply) for P.E.

We have no means of storing items securely, therefore we strongly recommend that jewellery is left at home on P.E. days. We are not allowed to remove or assist with replacing stud earrings."

Clubs

Clubs began this week and letters have been given to the children. Thank you to Mrs Potter for collating the clubs across the school which is a huge undertaking. I am grateful also to the staff for giving up their time to offer such a varied programme. Thank you to one of parents, Mrs Dunnell who is running Signing Club this term.

Before School

Please remember that children are your responsibility on the playgrounds until the teacher comes out to collect them at **8.45**. Scooters and bikes should not be ridden and ball games and chase games – such as 'It' are forbidden. There are too many little (and larger) people on the playgrounds – accidents are likely.

Please do not knock on the classroom fire doors in order to speak to teachers before school; if you have urgent matters which you need to convey to the teacher the time to tell them is when they come out to collect the class. For Reception and Year 1 classes, please appreciate that teachers need to supervise their class promptly at 8.45. Teachers in these classes are especially aware that they need to be ready to lead the class as soon as the children enter the building. Our School Office is here to help – please pop round and the team will relay messages to your child's class and you can arrange a Monday Pop-In from here too.

Inappropriate Language

Please be mindful of your language when you are on the playground or within the vicinity of the school. It is completely inappropriate for children to be exposed to aggressive language or swearing – and sets a dreadful example - which children may try to copy.

Dinner Money

Please can parents ensure payment for the week ahead is paid every **Monday** - either via cheque or cash (in sealed envelopes please). A large proportion of our parents kindly pay in advance – weekly or termly but the number of parents who do not pay in a timely manner and/or pay the incorrect amount is on the increase. The cost per day is £2.20 – £11.00 for the week. Cheques should be made payable to **TCS Independent Ltd.**

You can also pay online via <http://www.eschoolmeals.com/TotalCateringSolutions>. Payments online must be processed at the latest **by Sunday evening** for payment to count for the following week. We know the website states online payments can be processed until 8.30am Monday morning, but in reality, the payments will not go through in time if you make a payment on a Monday for the coming week.

'Growth Mindset'

We are still reminding children that it is important to 'Grow Our Brains!' Thinking Families has resumed this term and the children are enjoying their vertical groupings and the opportunity to consider a range of ideas and challenging views. Resilience, is, as ever a key quality which takes children's learning forward. We are focusing on the meaning of 'Grit' this term to encourage children to maintain their determination – in all areas of life!



Questionnaires

We are entering 'Phase 3' of our Parent and Pupil questionnaires. Each round is analysed and we consider how we can address issues raised. Homework is always an area of dispute. So many parents have so many different views. Some feel there is too much, some feel there is too little and there are many issues in between. Teachers work incredibly hard to prepare their daily lessons – and equally as hard with homework. It will always be an area of compromise and 'best-fit'. Thank you to those parents who support their children in completing homework and making sure it is back in school on the right day.

Another area is communication with regard to what is being taught and pupil progress. We are looking at how we can improve our website to give you more information with the former. Assessment and Pupil Progress is something we are spending a great deal of time on. As you are aware the Department for Education has decided that we will no longer be using Levels to assess pupil progress. They have given schools the freedom to determine their own systems. This sounds like a good idea, however, we have to be sure that we are 'measuring' our children across a range of results or a scale which is meaningful and standardised. We are doing a great deal of research, consulting with Trust and local Primary colleagues in order to adopt the best system. In the meantime we are still working in Levels at the moment until we are absolutely sure what our new assessment scheme will look like. We will keep you informed as soon things are clearer.

Whilst parents have mixed views on homework there is no question that parental support is vital in helping children learn their multiplication tables – the new curriculum requires children to know their tables fluently up to 12 X 12 by the end of Year 4. Listening to your children read on a daily basis and helping children learn their spellings are both equally as important.

Sports News

Our Football team finally got to play the final of the Kent Schools Tournament on Saturday 17th January. The boys played brilliantly and were awarded fourth place – the fourth best team in the

whole of Kent! An excellent result! Thank you to the team, their parents, Mrs Fewell and Mr Dutton. We heard this week some interesting football-related news. Danny Parish, an ex-student has been signed for Brentford Football club – he is now a professional player! Congratulations to Danny and his family.

Goodbye.....

At the end of this week we say a temporary Goodbye to Mrs Cashmore. She has coped tremendously well with the imminent arrival of Baby Cashmore but she is now hoping to have a few days at home with her feet up before the exciting event! We will let you know any news!

.....And Hello

Hello to Mrs Mead in Year 5 who has settled in so quickly – we feel she has been with us for much longer than three weeks! Hello also to Ms Knight who has joined us in Year 3, working with Ash class. Mrs Burrell is a qualified Higher Level Teaching Assistant and whilst still working with Ash class for some of the week Mrs Burrell has taken over Mrs Constant's role and will be working in classes throughout the school.

On a Sad Note

Some of our parents may recall being taught by Joan Davis here at Hartley. We heard this week that Joan had passed away. Our thoughts are with Joan's family.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Hollingworth
Principal

Read on for PTA News





PTA News!

Summer Fair

This year's event is a little different -- we will be holding it on **Friday 26th June after school** instead of the usual Saturday afternoon. The school calendar is remarkably full this year and we were unable to find a Saturday for this event due to residential school trips and other commitments.

We are in desperate need for someone to lead a team of keen PTA members in organising this year's Summer Fair -- we also have a wealth of step-by-step information on our Digital Library on how you can run this event. This is the PTA's main fundraising event and very popular throughout the community -- not just within the school.

Organisation

All parents are part of the PTA and it is great that so many people are able to help at the events and others support by coming along and having fun, so a huge thank you. Next year we need more people to step forward for the committee. There are a number of people who have offered consistent support for several years but who are planning to step down at the next AGM. It is a great way of supporting your child's school, raising money and probably is not as much work as you think!

The following roles will be available at the next AGM in September 2015:

Chair

As the face of the PTA you are responsible for encouraging and promoting fundraising ideas. Key aspects of your role include: chairing meetings, working closely with Secretary and Treasurer to ensure that PTA is running as smoothly as possible, producing three newsletters a year and promoting the PTA at the New Parents Evening. As a part of the Committee you are involved in deciding what events to plan and how money is spent. As Chair, you can take as big or little a role in organising individual events as fits with your life; previous Chairs have organised some key events, however this is not a requirement of the role. In fact, there is a dedicated team of committee members who take on and organise events -- it does not all fall on the Chair! Should you and a friend want to take it on together, this role is well suited as a job share.

Secretary

As Secretary you are essential for the administration behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of the Committee. You will provide a vital supportive role to the Chair and Treasurer - with the help of the Digital Services Officer. Key aspects of your role include: regularly checking the PTA postbox and email to ensure communication is dealt with by the appropriate person, managing the administration of the termly meetings (compiling and distributing the agenda, taking and distributing the minutes and updating the online calendar). You are also responsible for annually updating the Charity Commission with Committee information and maintaining contact information on the PTA email account. You will need to have access to a computer and be reasonably IT literate.

Digital Services Officer

This is a fairly new role within the PTA and we are looking for someone to shadow the existing Digital Wizard for a full 12 months prior to taking over the role (the current incumbent will still be available for support after this time!). We are lucky to have a Virtual Office set up comprising a library of PTA documents including event details and posters, a dedicated PTA website full of useful information, and digital contact and calendar. Your key responsibilities include: maintaining and managing Dropbox, changing passwords annually, making occasional content amends to the Wordpress site and supporting the PTA in updating its page on the Academy site.

Movie Nights

We are also looking for somebody who is willing to take over the planning and running of PTA Movie Nights. This is an extraordinarily popular event which generates significant income for the PTA and is great fun for the kids. Smita Ghandi has been running Movie Nights for several years and her expertise is unmatched! Ideally we would like someone to shadow her for one final Movie Night. The next Movie Night will be on Friday 18th September. The PTA would like to say a big thank you to Smita for all her hard work

If you would be interested in finding out more, or shadowing any of these roles to get a better idea of what to expect, then please contact us at hartleyprimarypta@gmail.com