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What a busy term that was! I am glad to report that children have done an amazing job of getting back in to the school routine after such a long time out. Over the past few weeks, children have been working really hard and returning to their best after the long period out of school. They have been a real credit to themselves for the way they have put what is happening in the wider world to the back of their minds and have made learning their priority and focus. Long may their excellent effort continue!

Term Dates

This Thursday, October 22nd, is the last day of term. Children need to be in school on this day. We start back again after half term on Monday, November 2nd and all children are expected to be in. This year's term dates can be found at: <https://www.surfleet.lincs.sch.uk/news/calendar/> These have been on the website since July and this is always the best place to look in case you need clarification about term dates.

Term Time Absence

At Surfleet Primary School we want to do everything we can to ensure that your children have the best education possible. One major part of this is regular attendance. Clearly, we all want all children to be in school 100% of the time, but this is an unrealistic expectation over the whole year, particularly in these strange times. With this in mind, we follow the government guidance of aiming to meet whole school attendance of at least 95%. It is our job to monitor attendance and to act if we believe that support may be required in order to keep each child's attendance at 95+%. We also have a duty to ensure that all children are safe and well both in and out of school. This is why we expect parents to contact the school at the start of a new absence with the reason why a child is not attending. If this contact is not made, we will contact you as per our attendance policy. If we do not receive a timely response, then we will most likely have to undertake a home visit so that we can be sure that all children are safe and well. As a last resort, and only if we have concerns over children's safety, we may need to contact the police or Children's Services. Quite simply, if your child is not going to be in, just let us know!

Holidays During Term Time

This is just a reminder to say that holidays during term time will only be authorised in **exceptional** circumstances. If a holiday or absence is not authorised then we are duty bound to inform Lincolnshire County Council who will then decide whether to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or not. The school are not

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involved in this process once we have informed the LCC team nor do we receive any financial gain for reporting such absences.

Our main duty in this regard is to inform you of the protocols regarding these kinds of absences and what our intentions would be if you did decide to take a holiday during term time. This part of the newsletter makes this clear. If you need any further clarification, please contact the school office to book a telephone appointment with myself. Whilst we appreciate that holidays are much cheaper during term time, we cannot take this into consideration as it is not an exceptional circumstance.

Start/Finish Timings

Thanks to the superb effort of the children and parents, the staggered starts have worked brilliantly and we have been so thankful to everyone for keeping their distance in the playground and around school.

We now feel that we can start to get the school day timings more close to what they used to be, so from Monday November 2nd, the timings and entrance points for each class will be as follows:

Oak Class school starts - 8:35-8:45, school finishes - 3:10

Children in Oak class should still use the rear entrance accessible from the side gate near the car park.

Maple Class school starts 8:45-8:55, school finishes 3:10

Children in Maple class will continue to use the main entrance and should wait on the crosses on the playground before being told to enter.

Willow Class school starts 8:45-8:55, school finishes 3:00

Children in Maple class will continue to use the main entrance and should wait on the crosses on the playground before being told to enter.

Parents who have children in more than one class should attend between 8:45 and 8:55 and wait on the front playground.

No children from Maple or Willow will be allowed entry to school until 8:45 unless attending breakfast club.

As with any plan, this will be reviewed on a daily basis and amended as necessary.

Healthy Snacks

Many of the children and staff have agreed that we would like to make promoting healthy lifestyles a key focus for our school moving forwards. The first step is for us to draw the children's attention to what they are having for their mid-morning snack and whether it is 'healthy' or not. In order to help them know what this could look like, we have devised a suggested list of what could constitute a 'healthy snack'.

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Plain biscuits/crackers

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- Cereal bars
- Yogurts (tube not pot)
- Cheese

Whilst these are not all as 'healthy' as we may like, they are clearly all better than crisps, sweets and chocolate!

From the start of next term, we will be monitoring what children have for their snack and offering support and education where it is needed.

Reading

Many thanks to those parents who support and promote regular reading out of school. Being a fluent reader and understanding what the text means are both vital parts of learning and we all need to ensure that children have the opportunity to read an appropriate book regularly. As a school we will do our part by making sure that your child has a book to read that is at the right level for their reading ability and comprehension. We will also promote a love of reading by sharing quality texts in class and in all lessons where it is possible. All classes also reward those children who read out of school through their reading tree display where children can move across the branches the more they read. Surfs are available if children are consistently reading **at least** 3 times per week!

Please do your bit by either reading with your child (or any other adult/older child) or providing an uninterrupted time and place for the child to read to themselves. Also, please make sure you write in their school planner to say that they have read or sign if a child has written in it themselves.

We appreciate that sometimes books get ruined or lost and we request that you inform us of this to avoid us having to discuss this with the children (which can cause them distress). As ever, we would expect you to reimburse the school if this did happen at £5 per book. In such a circumstance, we would write to you informing you of the charge to replace the book.

Pen licence

Something exciting is happening in Years 4, 5 and 6 – PEN LICENCES! If children can achieve the criteria listed below, they will be granted a pen licence, which means they can write in their books with a pen provided by the school. I wonder who will be the first to receive their hallowed pen?

- All letters are correctly formed and handwriting is joined
- Correctly sized letters: short and tall letters with ascenders and descenders
- Capital letters are not joined and are the correct size
- Total of 5 consecutive pieces of evidence
- Writing consistently sits on the line
- Clear spaces between words

Strangely enough, since we have discussed the pen licences with the children, the standard of handwriting and presentation has vastly improved. Amazing!

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Autumn is here, Winter is coming

It is official, the summer is over and the changeable autumnal weather is upon us. Please bear this in mind when sending your child to school each day. Whilst we will not force older children to wear their coats and jumpers (unless it is raining or very cold) we still expect them to have these items of clothing in school. Also, please remember that we have to have our windows open throughout the school because of the current public health guidance and so jumpers are sometimes needed inside!

Likewise, on PE days, please ensure that clothing is appropriate for the conditions **and** activity. Footwear for the PE aspect of the day should be trainers or plimsolls not school shoes or fashion boots!

If we believe that children do not have the correct clothing or footwear for the weather or activity, this will be logged on our system and the class teacher will discuss this with you. Please do not take offence, we are simply doing our job by ensuring that children's welfare is our number one priority.

Plans for next term

Even though we are in the midst of a global pandemic, we are still thinking if there are any ways we can do some of the things we normally take for granted in school, particularly at this time of year. After half term, I will send out another newsletter outlining our plans.

Have an enjoyable break and keep safe!



Mr R Chipperfield
Head of School

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