

Risca Primary School

Autumn Newsletter No 5

Wednesday 14th October 2020



Dear Mums and Dads,

Not long to go now before half term. I can't believe how quickly time has flown. It is lovely to see how all of the children have settled into school, despite the changes that we have had to make to our environment to make everything safe. Can I also thank you all for your patience and understanding at this time. We are all working to new routines and protocols, and I know that the staff are very grateful for your understanding and support at this time.

Medication In School

Does your child need medication in school? If so, please contact the office and we can complete the necessary forms for the administration of medication in school. Please can I remind all parents that we can only administer specific medication which pupils use to manage long term conditions, such as asthma or diabetes. We cannot administer medications such as antibiotics/penicillin/calpol, as these are for short term conditions. Medications such as this must be administered at home. Additionally, I would be grateful if you would not send your child in with medications in their bag. These include over the counter medications such as cough medicine, throat sweets. All of these can pose an unexpected danger to other children. Please keep these at home and if necessary administer them before the children arrive at school. Many thanks.

Parking

It is increasingly concerning that many parents are choosing to park on the zig zag lines outside our school gates at the beginning and end of the day, and we are having a number of concerns raised by parents. Please could you ensure that you do not park on the zig zags when dropping off children. It is really important that the areas around the school gates are kept clear and safe for all pupils entering and leaving our site. I am sure that you will agree that we all want to work together to make our school site safe for all children.

Governor Vacancies

We currently have two vacancies for parent governors on our Governing Body. If you are interested in becoming a parent governor please contact the office and we will be happy to help you to apply.

School Dinners

As you know school dinners are to resume on November 2nd. Meals will be delivered in a 'meal in a box' format. I know that you have had menus indicating what meals will be served each day. Please take time to talk your child through the menu, so that they are able to make a choice of either the meat option or the vegetarian option.

In order that we can count the money in a controlled manner, and adhere to the Local Authority risk assessment for counting monies, we kindly ask that all monies are sent into schools on a MONDAY ONLY, in a clearly labelled envelope. Please label the envelope with your child's NAME, the AMOUNT of money sent in, and the DAYS that your child requires a school lunch. Please do not bring monies directly to the office, as this will unnecessarily increase the numbers of people in our foyer when we are doing our best to keep this area clear for safety purposes.

See-Saw

As you know, due to the current restrictions that we are working in, we are increasingly using See-Saw to send letters and communications / newsletters from school to home. Additionally this year we have purchased 'See-Saw classroom' which we use for our blended / home learning.

This year more than ever we are very aware that you may need to contact school in an emergency, for instance, if one of your family has tested positive for Covid 19, and in cases like this we are very happy for you to contact your child's teacher in the evenings or weekends. In fact, the sooner that we know about a positive case in our community the better, as this allows us the maximum time to liaise with Environmental Health and put isolation measures into place.

However, I would kindly ask that you restrict all messaging to teachers for emergency issues only. It is very important that all general concerns are directed through the office during school times only. This also includes notifying the office should a pupil be absent from school.

We currently have a small number of parents messaging teachers on the weekends and evenings for minor issues, and additionally we have parents contacting teachers to report pupil absences. I would be very grateful if from now on all messages are directed through our school office. This ensures that we follow correct procedures at all times. By directing all non emergency issues through the office, this will ensure that teachers can relax during evenings and weekends and fully recharge their batteries for the next day.

Self Isolation

Can I just give a quick reminder to all parents that children cannot attend school if anyone in the household is either POSITIVE for Covid 19, or importantly if anyone in the household is AWAITING a test result for Covid 19. Whilst anyone is either positive or awaiting the results of a test, all members of the household must self isolate, which means that they have to remain at home, and not leave the house. Many thanks.

Holiday Absences

As Caerphilly is still in local lockdown, please be reminded that we are unable to authorise any absences for holidays. Our local lockdown includes travel restrictions which state that residents are unable to leave the Borough for holiday purposes. Therefore we are not expecting requests for holiday absences from parents.

Parent Meetings

As you know we always hold a parents evening in this first term in order for you to gain an understanding of how your child is settling in with their new teacher. Naturally, under the circumstances we are unable to do this on a face to face basis, and instead we will organise telephone calls between teachers and parents on the week beginning Monday 9th November. In order for you to have a clear understanding of your child's progress we will send exemplar work home via See-Saw for your consideration, and your child's teacher will be happy to discuss your child's work during the telephone call. As with face to face meetings, our telephone calls must be timed, and they will be a maximum of 10 minutes long. Should you require a longer appointment to discuss any additional needs, please contact the office and we will make arrangements for an additional call. Many thanks for your understanding.

In order that we can contact you directly please can you ensure that we have an up to date telephone number. If you have changed your telephone number recently, please contact the office.

Harvest

Next week we will be talking to our children about the importance of Harvest and teachers will be doing 'in class' Harvest assemblies. As usual, we use our Harvest Festival time to ensure that we think of others who are less fortunate than ourselves. We will therefore, as usual, collect tins and dried food which we will donate to the Risca Foodbank. If you would be willing to contribute please send in your donations before the half term holiday and we will donate them after half term.

Birthday Cakes

You will be aware that we have to take extra precautions at this time, especially as it is clear that the virus is becoming more prevalent in all communities. Therefore from now on we will be unable to distribute birthday cakes in school.

Social Distancing

Thank you to all of you who are socially distancing on the yard. It makes things so much easier for staff when dismissing the children. Also many thanks for keeping the areas around the gates clear. This allows all parents to enter and leave the school site safely. Once again, just a quick reminder about waiting on the astroturf at the end and beginning of the day. This ensures that we can keep pupils, staff and parents safe.

Heating

Over the summer we were lucky enough to have new boilers installed in school. When commissioning the boilers we have experienced a few teething problems and in the first few weeks of term the heating was not as efficient as we expected. I am pleased to say that this weekend the few niggles with the system were finally ironed out and we have noticed a significant difference in the boiler capabilities. We expect this to make a significant difference to the heating system, and today, even though we have continued to keep windows open, to ensure a good though flow of fresh air, I am pleased to say that staff have reported that the building has been warm throughout. Please however continue to send your child dressed warmly to school. As you know, having a through-flow of air is integral to our risk assessment in our measures to minimise the risks associated with Covid 19. Many thanks.

Homework and Home Learning

As you know, we continue to send out our regular homework via See-Saw. This is in our new format of blended learning, which is designed to support you and your child to become familiar with our new blended learning format which we will use in case of whole or partial school closure. Can I urge everyone to have a go at our home learning tasks. They will be really useful should your child need to self isolate and ensure that the disruption to their education is minimised. Many thanks.

Useful Dates

Half Term

Don't forget that we are rapidly approaching half term. As a reminder, school is closing on Friday 23rd October and re-opening on Monday 2nd November.

Training Days

We have two training days scheduled at present. These are Monday 16th November and Monday 4th January 2021

Christmas Holiday

School closes for Christmas on Friday 18th December at 1.30, and then re-opens in the New Year on Tuesday 5th January.

Many thanks, stay safe,

Mrs Arthur and Staff.