

CONIFERS PRIMARY SCHOOL



1st December 2016

Dear Parents/Carers,

With the days growing shorter, the nights longer and many shops already filled to the brim with Christmas gifts and accessories, we look back over a busy November and forward to a few more weeks before the festive break.

It was a pleasure to welcome so many of you to our Parent Evenings, and thank you to all of you who took the time to answer our short questionnaire and provide feedback comments. In total we received just short of two hundred replies, all of which were very positive. Only three left without the information expected - and as a school, we will ensure that parents and carers are given the information both promised and required. Some of you may remember that the option to give feedback was also offered and again all of these were positive with statements such as: 'Lovely staff, school really turning around positively', 'Very happy with the progress my child is making, loving their time at school', '.....thought we had a great school before, but now I know we have'.

We also had some constructive feedback around Homework timetables and ways in which to understand teaching methods, particularly in Maths. To that end, a Homework timetable has now been published on our school website and can be found by following the drop-down box to 'curriculum' from the 'Our School' tab. In respect of teaching methods, both our Maths and English leaders are organising the production of short video clips; one to show the methods of 'cursive' handwriting and the other, ways in which maths calculations are carried out. Look out for these videos in the New Year.

Conifers Primary has long been renowned for the way in which it nurtures every child that comes through the school. In order to refine and build upon that provision we are aiming to become a 'Thrive' school. This approach supports children with their emotional health, well-being and social skills, all of which are needed for learning to take place. Thrive is based on up-to-date neuro-science and research into child development and will help staff in our school to adapt their approach to individual children to build self-esteem, well-being and improve behaviour. It is early days in respect of achieving this goal, but Thrive activities are already being built into children's learning, to develop their self-understanding through carefully crafted conversation and discussion. In line with the ethos of the Thrive approach the Governors of the school have recently ratified a 'Safe Touch' Policy which outlines the use of 'Safe Touch' to calm, soothe or regulate a child's emotions. This policy also outlines, that, under special, agreed and supervised conditions, specifically trained staff will consider using 'Safe Holding' as one of the means available to them to either; calm a distressed child or contain an angry child who has, temporarily, lost control of their emotional reactions. The Policy can be read, in its entirety on our school website.

The newly formed PTA - Friends of Conifers, have already made their mark with fund raising ideas and events and are spearheading Christmas activities for both the children's enjoyment and as a way to earn some extra income for the school. The Friends are busy organising a Christmas Raffle. Every day after school they will be selling raffle tickets in the playground. 20p a ticket or £1 a strip. The draw will take place in Assembly on Monday 12 December. A big thanks to them all for their time and effort so far.

Lastly from me comes a farewell to a member of staff who is relocating to a new county and a new school. Mr Hagan leaves us at the end of this term to continue his passion for teaching reception children and I would like to take this opportunity for thanking him for his dedication and commitment to Conifers children for the past three years. On behalf of the staff and governors we wish him well! Miss Ward will be stepping into his shoes from January and the children of Acorns have already had the opportunity to meet her, when she covered a day of lessons for Mr Hagan a few weeks ago. She was very impressed by their enthusiasm and politeness and they, in turn, appeared to be extremely receptive to her calm and clear approach. We look forward to welcoming her to Conifers.

Until then - I wish you all a very Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Johnson
HEADTEACHER

Christmas Events

Please find below a list of Christmas events, it is creeping up on us very quickly and I know you like to have as much notice as possible so that you can attend as appropriate.

Thursday 1 December	KS1 Film night - Arthur Christmas
Friday 2 December	Non-uniform Day for all children, bring in a Christmas item donation, biscuits, mince pies, chocolates etc KS2 Film night - Elf
Wednesday 7 December	YR Nativity at 10.30am
Thursday 8 December	Winter Wonderland Disco KS1 - 5.30-6.30pm KS2 - 7-8.15pm
Friday 9 December	Christingle Service with Father Richard (at school) for Years R, 1 and 2 at 9.15am
Monday 12 December	Year 3 singing at Harbour Lights Court - pm Christmas Raffle draw in Assembly
Tuesday 13 December	School Carol Service at St Paul's Church 10am
Thursday 15 December	Christmas Party Day Children come dressed in their party clothes and they are provided with a party lunch, funded by the PTA Committee Year 1 singing at Buxton House - pm
Friday 16 December	Christmas Jumper Day for all, £1 donation School closes at 1.30pm for Christmas Holidays
Wednesday 4 January	Children return to School

Lost Property Sale

Don't forget there is a Lost Property Sale the first Monday in every month, the next one is Monday 5th December, 3.15pm, outside the Rainbow Room. Come and grab yourselves a bargain!!



Harvest Festival

Thank you to all of you who donated food for our Harvest Festival. We have received a letter from the Weymouth Foodbank, the people that we donated our Harvest Festival Food to, and I quote:

Christmas Raffle

This year we are having a big Christmas Raffle, and the Friends are selling tickets after school every day in the playground, 20p a ticket or £1 a strip. The draw will take place on Monday 12 December.

Reception

In the last week before half term the Reception classes went on their first trip to the fire station! First we learnt about fire risks, spotting potential problems in the home. Next we braved the outside and learnt how to cross roads safely and we all got the chance to drive a car! Mr Hagan was very sad he couldn't fit in it.

Continuing on our 'People who Help Us' topic, we had a visit from the Dorset Police Force.



Year 3

In year 3 this half term we were lucky to go and explore the Tutankhamun museum in Dorchester. Having learnt about the discovery of Tutankhamun by Howard Carter the children were excited to learn more about the boy Pharaoh himself. The children thoroughly enjoyed exploring the antechamber and the tomb itself and finding out more about mummification and the treasures he was buried with. Special thanks to parents who were able to accompany us on the trip.

PE and Sport

Over the last few weeks, we have seen the netball team participating in the local schools league at Budmouth. The team won their opening fixture against Wyke Regis, drew with Radipole and lost to Bincombe and Southill. Miss Frampton and Mrs Wilson took both the girls and boys football teams to the area tournament on Friday 14th October, the girls team came 3rd overall and the boys team came 4th in their group. Congratulations to all children who have represented the school.

Extra-curricular clubs are continuing to run, we currently have spaces in girls football and Zumba cheer on Monday and netball on a Tuesday. We also have spaces in our badminton breakfast club which runs on a Thursday morning from 8.15-8.45 which includes a healthy breakfast. If you are interested in any clubs, please ask for a letter in the office or see the Notice board outside Pine class.

Finally a big thank you to all the parents and carers who have supported their children this term in their sporting achievements, especially those who have helped with transporting children.

