

Friday 21st February 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

*Happy Friday everyone…*

**Mobile Phones**

One for upper KS2 here. Parents, if your children come to school with a mobile phone so that they have access to communication on their way to and from school, please remind them that they are to be turned off whilst on school property. Some children have been taking photos at the beginning of the school day and this does lead to safeguarding concerns. We have spoken to the children about this but would appreciate your support. Furthermore, we have had one or two incidents with the app, TikTok, and would ask that you discuss your children’s use of this.

**Homework**

After what seem like endless discussions, we’ve decided to go with the majority for now. The focus should be on those three key areas of learning:

1. ***Reading for pleasure:*** as we’ve mentioned before, this is so important (we’re sure you agree!). Please read with your children, encourage them to read independently where possible, and communicate with us through reading journals.
2. ***Spellings:*** Support your children with these. In the infants, it is very much about supporting the children with their sounds and how they might use and apply these, as well as looking at some high, common frequency and tricky words that pop up. In KS2, much the same but with the coloured spelling lists we really are trying to nurture that independence. The lists are pretty long but the children should becoming used to focusing just on those words they find tricky and practicing those.
3. ***Timestables…especially Rockstars!*** ***Timestables Rockstars*** really is a quite brilliant app/website and really engages the children in improving their timestables skills – not only with multiplication but division also. We recommend just five to ten minutes a day but just as often as possible really and their speed will rocket in no time. We all know how important timestables are and the better the knowledge here, the stronger the likelihood of using and applying these skills across all areas of maths. If you are struggling to log in, do let us know!

*Because we are no longer using the half-termly grids/lists, we’ll now be giving weekly* ***Talk Homework****. In KS1 this will be based upon ‘sticky questions’ or linked to a particular topic (you’ll see!) and in the juniors, it’ll will be a focused question that will inform discussion at home – perhaps to do with current affairs or most probably linked to the topic that the children are studying at school. This is so that they can share their thoughts, think more critically and offer their opinions. There is very much a focus on children acquiring knowledge in the current educational climate, but we very much feel that there is no point in having knowledge if you can’t discuss thoughts and opinions about that knowledge. Talk homework will aid this. Look on your children’s class pages and ask them about their talk homework every Friday!*

**KS1 English Workshop**

We have a date! We’ll get a letter out very soon with the specifics but it will take place on the afternoon of Wednesday 11th March. The first session will be in the infant hall at 1.30pm with Mr Parker and Mrs Hall and the second part in your children’s classrooms, illustrating what was discussed in the first session!

**Parent Partnership meeting**

Is meant to be on Tuesday 25th February. We will be postponing this meeting and we’ll let you know the new dates as soon as we arrange it!

**Science Week volunteers**

Mrs Vitkin has been in touch with some of you brave volunteers who have agreed to come in on Monday 23rd March. If you have yet to receive an emailf rom Mrs Vitkin, please let us know and she’ll offer you some additional info! Thanks again!

**Science ‘Question of the Week’**

Last time the question was question was ***‘What do the rings in a tree trunk tell us?’*** Your junior children may well now know the answer! This week’s question is, ***‘Who is Alexander Graham Bell and why is he important?’*** Please do talk to your children about this (maybe find some to take a look at yourselves?) and help to further enhance their curiosity in the world around them!

**Parent contacts and workshops – looking after ourselves**

As mentioned last week, there is lots of information on the Pastoral Care page under the Information tab on our website regarding support for families of children who may have mental health concerns or, indeed, who suffer from these themselves. You should have had a flyer about Trafford’s Early Help offer and gives details of a Promotional Event for Trafford Council’s Commissioned Early Help Offer. It is on 11th March, 10:00-13:00 in ‘The Street’ area at Trafford Town Hall.

**Come on everyone…let’s build our alumni community**

Let’s keep this going…we are really building here and would love to develop this project in collaboration with the education charity, ***Future First.*** It involves building a community of former pupils (and even friends of those former pupils) who are willing to forge closer links with our school and perhaps be on hand to help us out and inspire our children in all manner of ways. So please get talking – sign up yourself and ask others to sign up on our online portal…the opportunities are endless! Thank you and here is the link…

<https://networks.futurefirst.org.uk/signup/urmstonprimary>

**Continuing with E-Safety**

Keep an eye out for our monthly newsletter which hopefully will help with some valuable information on current apps, games and E-safety issues that your child (and us adults!) need help with. January’s issue will be emailed to you.

Have a lovely weekend!

Kind Regards,

*Mr Parker and Mr Doherty*