

Dear Parents,

I hope that you all had an enjoyable spring break and welcome back to what promises to be a very busy term indeed. A quick glance at the list of dates at the end of this newsletter will show you just how many different events and activities we are packing into the next 13 weeks: residential trips, theatre performances, sports events and art week to name just a few ... what an exciting term lies ahead of us!

EVENT INFORMATION LINE

With such a large number of different events ahead of us we have been thinking how we can handle your enquiries more effectively. The school office always gets a lot of phone calls from parents wanting to confirm the details of school events. With this in mind, we are now changing our phone system so that if you dial the school number and press 2, you will hear a recorded message with details of events and clubs.

WILLOW IGLOO

We are all very pleased with our willow igloo now that it has been planted. As it grows it will provide valuable shade for the children in the summer. The money to buy the willow was raised by the school council and Year 6 children helped us to plant the willow. Many thanks to Paul Bushell for his help with the planting.

HINDLEAP WARREN

Years 4 and 5 had a fantastic time at Hindleap Warren last week, despite some very wet weather. The children thoroughly enjoyed the range of activities that were offered and the wetter and muddier the better as far as they were concerned! A big 'thank you' is due to our teaching assistants, who worked much longer hours that week so that they could accompany the children and also to the teachers who stayed overnight. Without staff who are prepared to volunteer this extra time and effort, we just wouldn't be able to run such worthwhile activities.

ADVANCE NOTICE - EARLY CLOSURE – SDP AFTERNOON ON 11TH JUNE

This year we shall be holding our School Improvement Planning afternoon on Wednesday, 11th June. On that afternoon the school will close for children at 1.30 p.m. During the afternoon all staff and governors will be engaged in looking at the improvements to the school that have been made over the past year and identifying the areas we want to work on in the coming year.

COFFEE MORNING – 30TH JUNE

Our coffee morning this term is for all parents across the whole school and has 'Being Active' as its topic. Come along at 9.00 am for a cup of coffee and to hear Mr Anscombe talk about what we do in school to encourage your children to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle and how you can support this at home.

NUT FREE SCHOOL

A gentle reminder that we are a nut free school! This is because we have a number of children in school who have severe allergies to nuts or any products containing them.

Just recently, we have had a couple of instances of children bringing in sweets or cakes to celebrate their birthday which have contained nuts. Please help us to ensure the children's safety by checking that any sweets or cakes you send in, as well as any food in your child's lunch box, do not contain any products with nuts.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

I know that some other local schools have now stopped authorising any term time holiday absences, for however short a period. The Governors at Dormansland have not currently decided to follow this path, but their policy does not allow absence for the following reasons to be authorized:

- Any absence during Year 6
- Family birthdays
- Day trips
- Long weekends
- Birthday treats
- Shopping trips
- Visiting relatives
- Minding the house
- Looking after relatives

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has asked all schools remind parents of the following:

"The DCSF are asking schools to encourage parents to avoid term-time holidays whenever possible. Schools must remember that they can only approve absence for family holidays if they consider that there are special reasons which warrant the holiday. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the maximum allowance is ten school days in a school year regardless of the number of holidays taken. Holiday prices and the fact that parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school are not special reasons. Ten days absence for a family holiday can result in pupils with poor attendance becoming persistent absentees.

Further information is available on the DCSF website, www.dcsf.gov.uk. A copy of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 is accessible via www.statutelaw.gov.uk"

Please do consider your child's school attendance very carefully before booking a term time holiday. As the DCSF say, if your child has had even a modest amount of absence due to illness, taking a term time holiday can reduce their attendance rate to a level where our Educational Welfare Officer, Catherine Jones, will become involved. She is interested in any child whose attendance falls below 90%.

If you would like to know what your child's current attendance rate is, Mrs Lowe is able to provide this information on request.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jane Cowley

Headteacher

REMINDERS

· Please ensure that your child's uniform is clearly named – particularly important at this time of the year when the weather gets warmer (we hope!) and the children often leave sweatshirts outside after playtimes. It is quite difficult to reunite a dozen unnamed, identical sweatshirts with their correct owners!