

Dear Parents,

First of all, a very warm welcome to all our new parents and an equally warm “welcome back” to our existing parents! I hope that you all enjoyed the summer holiday and were able to have some time relaxing and enjoying time with your children.

HELLOS

This term we welcome two new members of staff: Mrs Watson, who will be teaching Year 3 with Mrs Stirrat and Mrs Holmes, our new midday supervisor. We are pleased to have Miss Lauder back with us again after her maternity leave; she will be teaching Year 1 with Mrs Douch as well as teaching French throughout the school.

NEW PHONE SYSTEM

We have just installed a new telephone system which we hope will make things easier for you and for our office staff. When the phone is answered, you will be able to choose which function you require:

- to leave a message about your child’s absence
- to find out which clubs are running
- to speak to someone.

When office staff are already busy on the phone, you will be directed to an answer phone, rather than getting an engaged signal. Please leave a message – we shall be checking regularly and will get back to you as soon as possible.

PARENTS’ COFFEE MORNINGS

As last year, our first coffee mornings of the year are going to take the form of a “Meet the Teacher” session. Each teacher will have a turn to get to talk to you over a cup of coffee about the kind of work your child will be doing and the expectations for their class. You will also have the chance to chat to them and ask all those questions that seem to accumulate at the beginning of the school year. A list of dates for the coffee mornings is at the end of this letter, so please do come along and take this chance of meeting your child’s new teacher in a relaxed and informal setting.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS – HELP!!

We are very lucky at Dormansland to have so many parents who come into school to help out in different ways. If you have some time available on a regular basis, please think about coming into school to help out. We would love to have your help for any (or all!) of the following jobs:

- Hearing readers
- Helping to keep the library in order
- General classroom help – for art, science and all sorts of activities

If you would be able to spare an hour or two a week, please contact your child’s class teacher or Mrs. Douch to arrange a suitable time.

SHARING AFTERNOONS

Sharing afternoons will continue to run on the same basis as last year. We hold the afternoons on the first available Friday afternoon at the beginning of the month for infants and the last available Friday afternoon of the month for juniors. When we have an open afternoon, we shan't run a sharing afternoon that month. The dates of sharing afternoons are in the list of dates at the end of the newsletter. These afternoons are a great chance for your child to show you some of the recent work they have been doing.

SCHOOL BOOK AMNESTY

Now that the children are back at school, you may be giving their bedrooms a bit of a tidy up! If you should happen to come across any school books languishing under the bed or at the bottom of the cupboard, please bring them back into school. We honestly don't mind how many you come in with – we're just pleased to see our books back in school.

CONTACT WITH TEACHERS

Teachers are always happy to see you to discuss any concerns you may have, particularly in these early days of the school year as your children settle into their new classes. However, it would be appreciated if you could 'catch' the teacher after school, when they will have more time to spend with you, rather than in the mornings when they are busy bringing the children into school. If you are not able to see the teacher in the afternoon because of work commitments, it is often possible to come in and see the teacher earlier in the morning by appointment.

REPLACEMENT READING DIARIES

The children have all been given a reading diary, which serves as a useful record of books they have read as well as a means of parents communicating with their child's teacher. The children know that they need to take good care of their reading diary and to bring it into school each day, but if a diary should unfortunately become lost or damaged, replacements are available from the school at a cost of 40p.

UPDATING CONTACT DETAILS

Attached to this newsletter, are the current contact details we have for you. It's really important that we have your current telephone numbers, as well as the names and numbers of TWO ALTERNATIVE CONTACTS for when you are unavailable. This is particularly required for occasions when your child is unwell. Please would you check the information, make any necessary amendments and return the form to the school office by next Friday, 15th September.

SCHOOL UNIFORM...

Thank you for your support with school uniform. The children really do look smart in their uniforms ready for the new school year.

...AND PAINTING OVERALLS

To keep those new uniforms looking smart, please ensure that your child has a painting overall in school at all times. You can either buy a ready made painting overall, or convert an old shirt by shortening the sleeves and putting some elastic through the hem.

...AND PE KIT

Please ensure that your child has their PE kit in school every day of the week, not just on the days when PE is timetabled. Also, a quick reminder that no earrings may be worn during any PE activity, including swimming.

BREAKFAST CLUB

Breakfast club is already up and running and offers an excellent breakfast and good child care for your child from 8.00 a.m. until school starts at 8.50 a.m. The cost is £2.50 per morning and you do not need to book in advance. Please make sure that your child arrives by 8.30 at the latest, so that they have time to eat their breakfast.

MEDICINE POLICY

Just to remind you that our staff are not able to administer either prescribed or 'over the counter' medicines for children in school and nor should children bring any such medicines into school to take themselves. Should your child need a dose of medicine during the day, parents may visit the school during the lunch break to bring and administer any medication themselves, by prior arrangement. (Children with asthma and medical conditions requiring emergency treatment have different arrangements – please ask me for details, or ask to see a copy of the policy.)

GOOD ATTENDANCE...

Thank you to everyone who took the trouble to read and respond to comments about attendance on their children's reports last term.

Just to put things in perspective for you about what kind of attendance rate is considered acceptable, it may be useful for you to know that the government considers an average school attendance rate of less than 95% to be a cause for concern. Our whole school attendance rate has been lower than this for the past few years and so we have been set targets to improve it.

The good news is that we have achieved the target set for us last year. The target was 94.7%; we managed to achieve above this - 95% average attendance. Thank you to everyone who helped us to achieve this, especially if you did not take your children out of school for a holiday or long weekend away.

This year's target is 95.1%, so please keep up the good work in ensuring that your children are in school as much as possible.

... and PUNCTUALITY

Please ensure that your child is at school and on the main playground ready to line up at 8.50 am. The names of children arriving at school after this time will go into our "late book" and we shall be in touch with the parents of persistent offenders!

MORNING AND AFTERNOON ROUTINES

This is just a reminder that to encourage independence, we prefer all children to make their own way on to the playground in the mornings, rather than be brought on by their parents, so please say your goodbyes on the red tarmac area. Please also do not stand on the path by the flagpole – sometimes the path is blocked by parents and pushchairs and the children find it very hard to get past.

At the end of the school day, please ensure that you keep an eye on your children if you are chatting to other parents or waiting for their brothers or sisters to come out. In school we don't allow the children to climb on the trees, climb on or jump off the tables, and run up and down the bank. Please help us by reminding your children, both those at school and their younger siblings, about these safety rules. Again in the interests of safety, please do not allow your children to ride bicycles or scooters inside the school grounds.

TESCO SPORT FOR SCHOOLS

This scheme is running from 11th September to 5th November 2006. You can help us by collecting the Sport for Schools vouchers whenever your shop at Tesco. We shall be exchanging the vouchers for sports and playground equipment, to help to keep our children active and healthy.

SCHOOL CLUBS

Details of school clubs for this term will follow in a separate letter.

SCHOOL TRIPS OVER THE YEAR

To help you to plan ahead, attached to this letter is a projection of all the trips and visitors we are planning for each year group this year. I hope that having this information in advance will give you plenty of warning of when expenditure is likely to come your way.

As for last year, to reduce the number of times when we ask you for contributions, we have lumped together the payments we request for Art Week, Science Week and Friendship Day, and are asking you to make one payment of £6.00 to cover all three events. Please send this payment into school before half term, together with the attached slip from the bottom of this letter.

Of course, as always, if you are experiencing financial difficulties, please come and see me or Mrs Douch in confidence to discuss what help we can give you.

REMINDERS

 Payments into school

Please make our hardworking office staff's lives easier by putting payments for trips, milk, swimming, etc. into an envelope marked with your child's name and class, the amount enclosed and what it is for.

Also, please make all payments to school by cheque. It makes banking the money much quicker for us and means that we do not have sums of cash on the school premises. Cheques for school lunches should be made payable to: Surrey County Council. Cheques for all other payments should be made out to: Dormansland School Fund.

 Allergies

We have a number of children in the school with fairly severe allergies, including several with a nut allergy. Because of the risk of a severe reaction to nuts in any form, I would just like to remind you that we have declared the school a "nut-free" zone. Please do not include any nuts or nut products, including peanut butter, in your child's lunch box.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jane Cowley
Headteacher