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Dear Parents/ Carers,

Happy New Year and welcome back to the new term. With the excitement of our wonderful school trip a recent memory, we hope to continue to embrace the enthusiasm and positivity that the children approached the Autumn Term with. To ensure things continue to run smoothly, we hope the following information is useful and will give you a better picture of how you can continue to help your child to make the most of this term in Year 5.

### **Reading**

Your child should continue to fill in their reading diary with a record of their daily reading. These are checked regularly, and it is essential that it is looked after. The children understand that they take it home every evening and bring it back to school the next day having recorded the reading they have done that evening. There are times when they will be recording in it in school and it is the expectation that they read at home each night.

Please do keep an eye out for an insert in the front of their reading diary listing questions which will prompt the children to record a range of comments rather than focussing on just summarising the text each evening.

If you are able to find time to read with your child and particularly share thoughts on a book, discussing language, punctuation, characters' reactions, plot etc. they would benefit enormously. Please feel free to record any positive comments you have about your child's reading in their reading diary. This is a book for your use too and we do enjoy reading your views.

### **Homework**

Although we feel that homework should not be arduous, we believe that it is an important exercise in teaching the children skills of organisation and independence especially now they are in upper Key Stage 2. It provides them with an opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning, preparing them for what lies ahead.

Along with approximately twenty minutes of reading which we expect them to do each evening, whether it's with you or independently, we will usually set one piece of Maths and one piece of English homework a week which should take no longer than an hour to complete. Generally, the activities will be given on a Thursday, and we expect homework books containing completed homework tasks in on Tuesday.

Homework tasks will either be uploaded to Google Classroom or a hard copy handed out to take home. If it is on Google Classroom, it will be clearly indicated and accessible via your child's login. The children may print the homework task and stick the sheets into their book or may answer set questions directly into their yellow book. If your child has any questions about their homework, please encourage them to ask for help before the due date, when we are more than happy to assist.

Children will also be given their weekly spelling list as an assignment on Spelling Shed and a list of the words can also be found on Google Classroom. Please encourage your child to practise the games available to them at least a few times in the week. They may prefer to write out their spellings on paper and this is absolutely fine.

Each term your child will have a set of twenty 'Spelling Star' words to learn. Please help your child to learn these on a regular basis to ensure that by the end of the term their 'Spelling Star' can be awarded. These are set as an additional assignment on Spelling Shed, so they can practise them on there too. However, not all the 20 words can be uploaded to Spelling Shed so it is important to get the list from Google Classroom.

Please feel free to assist your child with homework tasks but often they will be consolidation activities which, for the most part, they should be able to complete independently. Presentation is an important element of completing written homework successfully so this is an area you may wish to monitor. Do ensure they are following the handwriting policy, joining letters and making them of consistent size. Headings should be underlined and dates recorded. Homework should be completed in pencil or using a handwriting pen with blue ink. Biro's are strongly discouraged.

## **P.E.**

P.E. is timetabled for Monday and Tuesday. The focus this term is on netball and fitness. After half term, it will be touch rugby and handball.

Our routine is that on these scheduled P.E days the children come to school in their P.E kit and remain in this for the duration of the day. For outdoor sessions it is important that they have trainers and, on colder days, track suit trousers and tops (a lightweight rain jacket can also be worn if the forecast looks questionable). However, for inside P.E. lessons, they will need collared t-shirts and shorts. **(Please refer to the school website for P.E. uniform requirements.)** We would be most grateful if you could check regularly that all clothing is marked with your child's name.

## **Classroom equipment**

All the time we are focusing on developing the children's independence. Part of this involves bringing to school, and taking responsibility for, writing equipment. It would be helpful, therefore, if the children were kitted out with items including pencils, a handwriting pen (no biro or cartridge pens, please), a rubber, a sharpener and a 30cm ruler, preferably a rigid one. Lots of children choose to bring in friction pens, which is fine. We do of course have equipment in school but it is good to see the children taking responsibility for bringing their own belongings into the classroom. The space that they have to hang their coats and bags during the day is limited so we would be grateful if you can supervise them in bringing only these essential items to school.

## **Curriculum**

We hope that as the weeks go on your child will talk positively about the things we are doing in class. The curriculum is full and demanding with expectations high but the children always show a keenness to learn.

In English, we will complete weekly comprehension tasks and receive formal spelling and grammar lessons. We will explore a range of genres through reading and writing sessions which will involve the children having a good understanding of narrative, balanced arguments and instructional writing, along with persuasive texts and poems. This term we will be using Michael Morpurgo's 'Kensuke's Kingdom' as our inspiration.

You can support your child in the English curriculum in a number of ways. To stimulate a love of reading, expose him/her to a range of reading material at home. Along with their reading book, do they ever pick up a newspaper or do you subscribe to a child's magazine? We hope that by talking about, and giving them a variety of texts, they will become increasingly enthused and engaged. Helping your child to learn the weekly spelling pattern and termly 'Spelling Star' words is crucial and guiding them in writing homework tasks by encouraging them to use a range of punctuation marks appropriately, varying the way they start sentences and praising them when choosing interesting and varied vocabulary will make an enormous difference.

In Maths the term has started off with understanding and using the formal written methods of multiplication, increasing in complexity and using the long multiplication method to solve complex number problems. We will be moving onto division and the formal method of calculating. We will then move onto the second fraction unit. This term there will be an even greater emphasis on investigative maths in order to deepen their understanding of topics.

In Science we will be looking at forces – gravity, resistance and mechanisms, including levers, pulleys and gears. Our geography topic focuses on comparing the UK to a region in South America and in DT they will be designing and making stuffed toys as part of our textile unit. Our DT in Year 5 is enriched by our involvement in the Ascot Bake Off. This is optional to take part in, but offers the children wonderful experience in cooking, team work, understanding of nutrition and local produce and the chance to improve their public speaking skills. More about this will follow. During the second half of the term, we will be learning about local history, focussing on how Cookham and the lives of children have changed at our school since 1858.

As you are aware, the children are learning French with Mrs Pow increasing their vocabulary and fluency. This term your child will continue to play the steel pans in their weekly music lesson. The Sikh religion will be explored in RE looking at the community of the Gurdwara and our PSHE lessons will focus on safety and the changing body (menstruation and puberty) this half term, and citizenship (including the law, protecting the planet and parliament) next half term.

The children have had a wonderful start to the year demonstrating their growth mindset and we look forward to celebrating many more successes as we move forward. As always, if you require clarification on anything, please feel free to email the office and arrange a time for us to meet or a phone call.

Yours faithfully,

*Gill Bailie and Sophie Law*

Useful websites:

BBC Bitesize KS2

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks2/>

Maths

[http://www.transum.org/Software/SW/Starter\\_of\\_the\\_day/](http://www.transum.org/Software/SW/Starter_of_the_day/)

Woodlands Junior Maths, Literacy and Science zones

<http://resources.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/maths/>

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/literacy/>

<http://www.primaryhomeworkhelp.co.uk/revision/Science/>

Spelling games

<http://www.crickweb.co.uk/ks2literacy.html>