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Ash Class Newsletter – Autumn Term 1, 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

We welcome you back for the new school year and we hope that you have had a lovely summer break. It has been good to see you all as we return from the holidays and we look forward to sharing a great year of learning opportunities with you. The children have settled really well into the new classroom routines and so far we are proud of the way they are taking on their responsibilities and developing their independence.

Curriculum

We are beginning the year with a mini topic all about 'New Beginnings', where we will spend time getting to know our new class. Our work will include: thinking about making good choices, what makes a good learner, our school values and the 'Rocking Rules'. We will be learning about how to keep safe on the Internet and when we are out and about. Our first main topic will be **The Egyptians and Me**. In Term 1, we will be focussing on Geography, looking at our local environment. The children will be looking at a range of maps to locate Chesterton and surrounding, cities, towns and villages. We will also be looking at different land uses in Chesterton and the surrounding area. Our RE work this term focuses on the big question, 'Who should you follow?' and our school value of respect. We will also be talking about the festival of Harvest, and thinking about people that are less fortunate than us.

After the half term break, our focus will be History, where we will be studying the Ancient Egyptians. The children will be looking at some of the key events and placing these on a time line. We will also investigate Egyptian artefacts as well as looking at the importance of the pyramids. Our RE work after half term will be thinking about our big question, 'Should you wear religious symbols?' and the importance of Christmas. We will also be starting to learn some French. For more information, you can view our Topic Wheel, which will be displayed in class windows and on the school website.

Daily Arrangements

At the end of the day, the children will be released from the classroom door to their parent or carer. We have asked the children to remain at the porch until their adult has arrived to collect them. If there are any changes to your usual routine, please make sure that your child is aware or let us know in the morning (or phone the office if things change during the day). We will make ourselves available at the classroom door, both before and after school should you have any quick questions or messages. Should you wish to have a longer conversation, please do make an appointment to see us after school, when we have more time available.

Staffing and Timetable Arrangements

Our usual weekly routine is that Mr Craven will teach on Tuesday morning, Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays, with Mrs Whybrow teaching all day on Monday and then on Tuesday afternoon. Teaching assistants Mrs Thorne, Miss Mansfield and Mrs Meaney will also be supporting the learning in Ash Class throughout the week.

On **Wednesday** mornings, the children will have a PE session taught by our new PE Mentor, Miss Porter, and the second PE session will be taught on **Thursday** afternoons by a member of the coaching staff from Club Energy.

On Friday mornings, the children will be taught by Mrs Broadhead (our specialist Music teacher).

We are all committed to the care and education of your children and meet regularly as a team to plan; discuss children's progress and share information.

Reading Books

Last week, we gave the children new reading books and diaries. Reading at home is an important and valuable opportunity for children to practise their skills and should be encouraged every day, for about 10 – 15 minutes. Please record comments in your child's diary, or ask them to write a comment! Reading diaries should be in school every day, so that we can record reading activities that they do in school time.

We encourage the children to change their book once it is finished and we ask that you do the same. The children are aware of where to find new books in the classroom, and changing books should be part of their morning routine. If your child is a 'free reader', there is a large selection of longer books for them to choose from. Please bear in mind that some of these books are more challenging than others and although we have shown the children where to find the ones most suitable for their stage of reading, if they pick one that is too hard, please encourage them to choose another one.

If at any stage you are worried about your child's reading, then please come and speak to us. Also, if you feel that your child is doing really well at home and the books are becoming too easy, please let us know and we will assess whether they are ready for the next stage.

This week, we will begin to set up our guided reading groups, in which we read together as a group, all looking at the same book. This is our main approach to teaching and practising reading skills and will be recorded in their reading diaries. Guided reading will usually take place once a week.

Homework

Homework will be available on the school website from 23rd September and again at the beginning of each term. We ask that completed homework be handed in each **Wednesday** so that it can be marked and time can be found towards the end of the week for any sharing of tasks when appropriate. Homework books will be returned home on a **Friday**.

Phonics and Spellings

The children have been grouped according to their stage of learning in phonics, which is based on the assessments we have completing during the first few days at school this term. They will be having a 20 minute session each morning, Monday to Thursday, focusing on the reading and spelling of phonics.

PE kits

The children have two PE sessions a week; however, it is helpful if the children have their kit in school every day. It would be useful if children could have PE trainers in school and appropriate outdoor kit as the weather gets colder. Please can you ensure that your child's PE kit is named clearly!

Please note, pupils are not permitted to take part in PE lessons whilst wearing earrings (unless they have been pierced within the last six weeks in which case they are permitted to tape them up until six weeks have passed.) Staff do not have the time to assist pupils with the removal or insertion of earrings. If pupils are not able to manage earrings independently, they should not wear them to school on days when PE is timetabled to take place.

Outdoor Learning

This year, Ash Class will be having an outdoor learning session on a **Thursday**. The children will be able to develop their problem solving and team skills; physically challenge themselves; explore the natural world and develop their imaginations and creativity. Outdoor learning will take place whatever the weather, so it is vital that children have appropriate clothing available in school. They will need: trousers/tracksuit bottoms, warm jumper, waterproof coat and wellingtons (plus hats and gloves as the weather gets colder). These clothes need to be in separate from PE clothes as they are likely to get wet and muddy. Please send appropriate clothing in a named bag.

Parents Evening

There will be formal parent / teacher meetings on **Wednesday 16th and Thursday 17th November**, where we will have the opportunity to discuss your child's progress so far and targets for the year. An appointment sheet will be sent out nearer to the date.

Other Dates

Thursday 29th September – 2pm MacMillan Coffee Afternoon

Thursday 6th October – 11am Harvest Service followed by Community Lunch

Friday 4th November – Ash Class' Celebration Worship

Contact

Should you need to contact us about any matters arising, you may email us direct on the following email addresses:

jcra8965@chesterton.oxon.sch.uk

nicolaw@chesterton.oxon.sch.uk

Please be aware that any messages sent may not be seen until later in the school day or after school as we are often busy with classroom duties and teaching earlier in the day. In all cases, we will endeavour to reply to you within three working days. Obviously if the matter is more urgent, for example about attendance or changes to the routine of collecting your child then you should contact the school office or speak to one of us at the start of the day.

Reminders

- **School Dinners**– please adhere to the system of ordering dinners, details of which can be found on the school website, along with menus and order forms. Dinners for the week need to be ordered by the preceding Wednesday.
- **Packed Lunches** – please can I remind you that the school requests that packed lunches **do not contain nuts** – as we do have children in school who have life-threatening allergic reactions to them. We also ask that grapes or cherry tomatoes included in lunch boxes are cut in half to help prevent choking.
- **Snacks** – We provide a variety of fruit for Year 2 children at morning break, so other snacks aren't necessary. If they wish, Year 3 children should bring a snack of fruit or vegetables. **Do let us know if your child has any food allergies or intolerances.**

- **Water Bottles** – please make sure children have a water bottle with them every day (separate from any drink in their lunch box) as this allows them to access water as and when they require it. Water only in these bottles please (not squash, juice or flavoured water).
- **Absence and sickness** – please let the office know if your child is not attending because they are ill. Also please note that Health Protection Agency guidance states that children should not return to school for 48 hours after the last episode of either sickness or diarrhoea.
- **Hair** – please can you ensure that long hair is tied back. This helps ensure children’s safety when using climbing equipment etc. and also curbs the spread of head lice.
- **Wellingtons/Outdoor Shoes** – make sure that your child is prepared for outdoor play by providing wellies or outdoor shoes/trainers and a warm, waterproof coat when necessary. Wellies can be left at school so that they are available every day for your child to use. These should be clearly named.

Kind regards,

Mr Craven and Mrs Whybrow