

Bincombe Valley Primary School



Newsletter Number 87

January 2011

Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to you all.

School Attendance.

As you will know from previous letters we have been working very hard to improve attendance of children at school. We have been successful in lowering the levels of unauthorised absences and persistent absenteeism. However we are still not reaching the targets set by the Department for Education. Dorset County Council has written to me, to notify that we are on an OFSTED list as Grade 4 Unsatisfactory for attendance. Over the last year we have had to deal with a few cases when children were persistently absent from school and in two instances, Penalty Notices with fines have been served upon their parents. This is a last resort, but I think it right that we take a firm stand against a small minority of cases which leads to the school being judged poorly in regard to attendance. In consultation with my Chair of Governors we considered other steps to take. One of these was to not authorise any holiday leave, but felt such a step as punitive to families who genuinely need to holiday in school time.

My Chair of Governors and I would ask for your support in five key areas:

1. If your child is reluctant to go to school and playing you up or unhappy (perhaps they have a class test or have squabbled with another pupil) do bring them in. We can then try to deal with any issues.
2. If your child tells you they don't feel well, but you judge they are okay, please bring them in.
3. If they are unwell but perk up later in the day then encourage them to do some reading, writing and a few sums and bring it in when they next come into school. This may enable us to mark them as receiving their education off-site.
4. If your child is on holiday during school time encourage them to read daily and keep a diary which they can bring back to school. Again this may enable us to mark them as receiving their education off site.
5. Always contact the school when your child is absent or likely to be absent and let us know why. We will always try to help.

We do use the Dorset Education Support Service, although in my view they only become involved when attendance is extremely low (80%). I will always contact parents when their child's attendance falls below 95% and in many cases visit the home. If children are persistently absent through ill health, I will always refer them to the School Medical Officer for Dorset.

If you have any suggestions about what more we might do as a school to continue to improve attendance then please let me know.

School Activity for pupils in Year 4, 5 and 6.

Please find enclosed with this letter a savings card for our activity later in the year. The cards enable the cost to be spread over a long period of time. It can also be used as an incentive to get your child to carry out a chore with a cash reward to go towards their trip. For example: £1 for washing up, £2 for tidying their bedroom, £3 for cleaning the car.

Year 6 Springhead 5 days residential 20th – 24th June 2011 – Cost £110

Year 5 Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre 23rd & 24th May 2011 – Cost £60

Year 4 Leeson House 3 days residential 4th – 6th April 2011 – Cost £80

Mrs Mason has arranged a meeting in her classroom next Thursday 13th January at 2.30 pm to let parents of Year 4 pupils know about the trip to Leeson House.

BikeIt.

As our school is now a member of the BikeIt Scheme, we have two events taking place next week.

1. Bike it New Year Resolution Competition. A chance to win a high spec. bike, with lots of other prizes. On a sheet of A4 design a BikeIt resolution and decorate it with paint, felt, collage or photos. Entry forms from Mr. Strong. Closing Date – Monday 17th January.
2. Brighten your Bike or Scooter. Next Friday we are encouraging children to bring in their bike or scooter, decorated brightly but safely and to wear the brightest clothes they can. All entries will receive a small prize and there will be ten top prizes. Children who wish to enter are to leave their bike or scooter (subject to the weather) in the small Junior Playground, by the picnic lunch tables. The aim of the event is to get across the need to wear bright clothes when cycling and to have lights on when it is dark.

School Uniform

A reminder that all school sweatshirts should have your child's name on the label. Also please remind your child to bring in their PE kit including trainers for games outside.

I have also spoken to children about footwear and would ask that all children wear plain black school shoes. These are often sturdier, more hard wearing and less expensive than some of the heeled shoes, trainers and boots I have noted. School shoes may not be the most fashionable items so it might help you, if your child is badgering you for more expensive fashion shoes, to let them know that school shoes are the rule!

Homework and reading.

Thank you for the continued support of your child's homework and reading. Homework encourages pupils to work with independence and develop good study habits. Reading daily for a short period, to an adult or older member of the family, helps children become strong, confident readers. Children become even better readers when they talk about their book and are posed a few questions. Raising the standard of reading across the school remains our top priority as a school.

We have introduced new resources at Key Stage 2 and at Key Stage 1, Mrs Holloway is running a Book Club for some of our pupils.

Snow Procedures

We would like to keep the school open during snowy weather and would only close if conditions were severe so please listen out to Wessex FM or use the Dorset County Council website to check if we are open. We will always let the radio and Dorset know of any closure before 8.00 am.

Wet Mornings

Please note that pupils should not be on the school site before 8.30 am unless they attend Breakfast Club. During wet mornings we will ring the bell from 8.30am three times to alert pupils to go straight to class. It would be helpful if it is a wet Friday morning, that parents of Key stage 1 pupils take pupils into class and wait with the pupils until staff appear on duty.

Diary Dates

Thursday 13th January – Year 4 Parent's meeting regarding Leeson House Trip – 2.30pm

Friday 14th January – "Brighten your Bike" day – School Hall – 9.00am

Friday 14th January – Indoor Soccer tournament – Weymouth College – 4.00-6.00pm

Saturday 22nd January – Under 11 Girls – Football tournament – Bournemouth

Monday 24th – Friday 28th January – Reception Medical Screening – further information to follow

Friday 4th February – Netball Festival – Budmouth School

Tuesday 15th February – Parental Consultations – 5.00-7.00pm

Wednesday 16th February – Parental Consultations – 3.30-5.30pm (please do not seek an appointment before 3.30pm as school cleaning will be in progress)

Friday 18th February – School INSET day – School closed

Monday 21st- Friday 25th February – Half Term

Monday 28th February – School INSET day – School closed

Tuesday 1st March – Spring Term (second part) begins

Best wishes, Leslie Strong, Headteacher.