

URSULA TAYLOR VC LOWER SCHOOL

9th September 2010 Newsletter

First of all I would like to welcome back to school all children and families. I would also like to welcome all new families to our school and hope that you will soon feel part of our community.

We welcome new staff this term: Mrs Titterton and Mrs Ali join the lunchtime staff, Mrs Dilley and Mrs Harte join the Active Kids team and Mrs West joins the special needs support staff in Foundation Stage.

Parent Link – you may have noticed that Mrs Proctor and Mrs Owen have been present in the playground every morning. They have been appointed as our 'Parent Link' team whose responsibility is to provide a link between parents, home and school. Should you have any queries, however trivial or however major, please feel free to chat with either of them. Concerns and anxieties may arise over school issues or they may be of a more personal issue eg a child's behaviour, worries or family issues. Mrs Owen and Mrs Proctor can pass on school issues to the appropriate staff if they cannot answer the queries themselves. They can also refer family and home concerns to our parent support advisor. They are also aiming to organise regular afternoons when parents can get together purely and simply to have a chat and to get to know other parents. More information will be available next week. Mrs Owen and Mrs Proctor both have families who have been through this school, Lincroft and Sharnbrook and are also members of the local community thus giving them a wealth of experience.

I shall continue to meet and greet in the playground every morning and please feel free to stop and have a chat with me.

Golden Assembly

We continue to welcome parents and friends to our Friday Worship at 3.00pm when our 'Value Certificates', achievements in class, and birthdays are celebrated. The children do enjoy having their parents join them on this occasion.

All children who have had a birthday from the previous Monday to the Sunday following have their birthdays celebrated in the Friday assembly eg

On Friday 10th September we shall celebrate the birthdays from Monday, 6th September to Sunday, 12th September. However we shall also celebrate the birthdays between 1st and 5th September this week as there was no Golden Assembly last week.

We also celebrate children's achievements from out of school so please let me know of any achievements such as trophies or certificates.

Values

As many of you will remember we place enormous importance on the acquisition of values in this school. Every month (instead of every half term as we did last year) we shall concentrate on promoting a different value. For September our value is Friendship and this is how it will be promoted in school:-

- Staff modelling friendship
- Discussions in class
- In Collective Worship we will be looking at examples of friendship in the Bible and what friendship means
- Rewarding demonstration of being a good friend within each class
- The Golden Assembly 'Value Certificates' will be given to those showing good friendship skills
- We shall be giving the children a 'take home task' on friendship next week.

The skills of friendship which we aim to develop and encourage are:-

- Caring for and about each other.
- Welcoming
- Being loyal
- Listening
- Sharing
- Considering the feelings of others
- Learning to 'make up' and to forgive
- Offering friendship to others
- Allowing friends to be friends with others

At home you can help your child by:-

- Pointing out good examples of your own friends
- Praising your child when they have played well with a friend at home
- Talking over with your child how their friends might feel
- Helping your child to reconcile / make up with a friend

Social Networking Sites

We are somewhat concerned at the number of children who have been asking to be friends with members of staff on such sites as Facebook. Please could you ensure that your children do not do this. Our staff are NOT allowed to communicate with any children on a social networking site. Staff are also not allowed to accept invitations to be 'friends' (Facebook) by parents / carers of children in the school. However, there are situations where staff are members of the local community or are fellow parents and they are fully aware of the guidelines regarding confidentiality with regard to existing networks. This is common policy in most schools and I shall be communicating further on how parents can ensure that their children are kept safe when using the internet.

Last Term's Sponsored Swim

I would like to say a huge thank you for your generous response to our sponsored swim enabling us to avoid using monies from other curriculum areas. I would like to say a special thank you to the families who organised their own events to raise money such as one family who held a sponsored walk. We are very grateful.

Clubs

A variety of clubs will be running this term and details will be sent to the appropriate year groups.

Learning for Children and Parents

We have two projects for children and parents to learn together. Firstly we shall be running our very successful child and parent cooking sessions which we piloted last term. This will be available for Year 1 families. Secondly we shall be running ICT / Computer sessions for parents (or grandparents) and children – details to follow.

Credit Union

Just to remind you that the Credit Union Savings Bank is in operation every Thursday morning from 8.40-9.00am in the Glyn Suite (accessed from the outside door next to Miss Marks' classroom). On joining all savers have their own credit union membership number and receive a savings card, which is the saver's record of all payments and withdrawals. Membership is free and there is no minimum deposit. They will also receive a pencil case, pen and, in due course, certificates indicating their involvement as members. Please feel free to call in on a Thursday morning.

We are still on the look-out for volunteers who could help on a Thursday morning. Please speak to me or the Credit Union volunteers if interested.

Parent Conference – Saturday, 9th October, Park Inn, Bedford 9.30-4.00pm

Bedford Borough Parent Partnership are holding the above conference which will cover such areas as diet, sleep, continence, children's anger and the challenges of parenthood. If you are interested please approach Mrs Proctor (who will be attending the conference) or the office for further details.

Years 3 and 4 – The 11th Junior Bedford Aquathon – 3rd October

This is a swimming and running event which will take place on the above day. Year 3 children should be able to swim 66m and Year 4 children 133m as well as being able to run. Further details and application forms are available from the school office.

Measles

We have been asked by the Health Protection Agency to inform you that there has been a higher than expected increase in measles over the summer holidays. Health professionals are able to offer two doses of the MMR vaccine to protect those children who have not previously been vaccinated.

Important dates for this term

Individual & Family Photographs – Monday, 11th October

Harvest Festival – Wednesday, 6th October at 9.15am in school (provisional)

Reception Welcome to our Church – Wednesday, 20th October at 9.15am (provisional)

Book Fair – 13th – 20th October

Bedtime Story Evening (whole school) 6.00-6.45pm – Thursday 14th October

Parent Consultations – Tuesday, 19th October 3.45-6.00pm
Thursday, 21st October 3.45-6.00pm

Half Term – 25th – 29th October (inclusive), plus **Monday 1st November** when the school will be closed for staff training

End of term – Friday, 17th December

There will be further details sent out for all the events above and other events which will be taking place nearer to Christmas.

L M Fraser

**Term Dates for Schools in Bedfordshire
Academic Year 2010/2011**

Autumn Term 2010

Thursday 1 September 2010 – Friday 17 December 2010

(half term – 25 – 29 October, inclusive, plus Monday 1 November when the school will be closed for staff training)

Spring Term 2011

Wednesday 5 January 2010 – Friday 8 April 2011

(half term – 21 – 25 February, inclusive)

Summer Term 2011

Monday 27 April 2011 – Friday 22 July 2011

(half term – week 30 May – 3 June, inclusive)

(***May Day*** – Monday 2 May 2011)

Holidays in Term Time

We strongly request that holidays are not taken in term time as children do miss so much of their valuable time for learning. Children are often unsettled before and after a holiday which also affects their learning. However, occasionally there can be exceptional circumstances when travel in term time is unavoidable. In cases such as these a form can be obtained from the school office which should be completed, stating the reason for travel / holiday being taken in term time and returned to the office. In such cases the governors may be willing to authorise this absence for up to 10 days.