



The Federation of Winklebury Infant and Junior Schools

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Newsletter no. 3

Dear Parents

Clowns

As I am sure most of you will know, there is, currently, a national 'craze' of people dressing up as clowns with the intention of scaring people and there is a lot of anxiety amongst the children and also you as parents.

Yesterday we spoke to children in the juniors due to growing fears, worries and rumours amongst a growing number of children. We spoke to upper school and were not going to speak with lower school, but then at 2.40pm yesterday I received a message that there had been a sighting in a Basingstoke school and the children were becoming anxious. I therefore took the decision to talk to lower school and told them we would keep them safe in school and their adults at home would keep them safe there. I told the children to share their worries with a trusted adult at home or school. We have not spoken to infants and won't unless things escalate amongst the children. A few infant children have voiced their concerns to the staff in their classes today and we have, individually, given them the same message we gave the juniors yesterday.

I know that some of you felt I should have let you know the messages we were giving the children, but when events move at a fast pace like they did yesterday, I sometimes have to make decisions that I feel are in the best interests of the children and I have to act quickly. I hope that you know I, and all of my staff, would never do or say anything to exacerbate a situation where children are anxious and scared. Quite the opposite – we work to allay those fears and hopefully make them feel safe. The messages we are getting from children today is that they feel safe in school but are more anxious about being out in the community or if a clown should come to their home.

Regarding information on social media about clowns targeting schools today, we discussed this at Leadership Team yesterday evening and will, if needed, deploy our arrangements for any emergency that poses a risk to the children. All staff know to be extra vigilant and Mr O'Dee has thought about which gates he will open, and when, for the end of the school day which may involve a few of you having to take a slightly longer walk to get on to the site until we feel the 'craze' and any risk to the children has minimised.

Please be assured we care very much about all the children and only ever act in their best interests with their safety at the heart of all we do. Mrs Bartlett or I are very happy to talk with you if you have any questions or further concerns.

Staff news

We will be very sorry to say goodbye to Mrs Hunt, our Admin Manager, who is leaving us at the end of this half term to take up a post in the secondary sector. We will miss her efficiency in the office, a key feature of her practice! We currently have an advert on Hantsweb and hope to appoint by the end of next week. If we are successful, it is likely that the person appointed will be unable to take up post until the end of November so please be patient until we have a new person in post – the rest of the team will be extremely busy!

Stand up to Cancer non-uniform day

Both schools will be supporting this national event on **Friday 21st October**. Children may choose to come to school in non-uniform in return for a donation to the appeal. Please send your child's donation in an envelope labelled for the purpose. Please note – we do expect a child in non-uniform to make a donation so please make sure that if you are not sending in a donation your child continues to wear school uniform that day. Thank you.

Thank you!

'Fun lunch' 6th October – thank you for supporting the fun lunch last week. 83% of the children at the infant school took up the offer of their free meal which means we missed the target of 87%. That means we will have money taken out of our budget unless we get 92% of infant children taking their free lunch on the next census day thereby balancing the figures. So, please watch out for the next fun lunch and consider your child having it. The cook and I have decided to hold more regular themed lunch days and to make these a little bit special with decorations and 'spot prizes' for lucky plates. We will make sure the themed lunch day coincides with the census day as we go forward!

Harvest produce – thank you for all your efforts to support the children in making a harvest box. We have had more boxes brought in than in any previous year and I know that Basingstoke Foodbank will be extremely grateful for your donations.

Macmillan Coffee Morning – you helped us raise £63.35 for this very worthwhile appeal, either by sending in cakes or coming along on the morning.

Sponsored Fun Run – we have already collected a magnificent £1247 in sponsorship money and will continue to take in any monies you have right up to half term. If you need to collect money from family members over the half term holiday, don't worry, we will accept your donations after the holiday!

Transition Year 2 to Year 3

As it was so successful last year, we are once again giving our **Year 2 children a 'taster' session in Year 3** tomorrow afternoon, **Thursday 13th October**. The children will all take part in an afternoon of activities, alongside the current Year 3 children, led by the Year 3/4 teachers during school time. During this time the year 4 children will be having an afternoon of activities with the Year 2 teachers at the infant school (the Year 4s absolutely loved this last year!). The end of day procedures will be as normal as children will be back in their current classes by 3.00pm.

On **Tuesday 18th October** at 9.15am and again at 6.00pm we are holding our **open morning and evening for parents of children due to move to junior school in September 2017**. You will receive a flier about this, but please be aware you may bring your Year 2 child with you. If you wish to do so, please send your child in for registration in their current class and go back to collect them from their outside classroom door in time for the meeting to start at 9.15am in the junior school hall. You will be asked to sign them out of the classroom and we will ask you to sign them back in again when you return them after the meeting.

Important news about returning forms to school

Please be aware that from today, if a letter comes out to you requesting return of a form for a trip or other activity, **we will not accept forms returned later than 9.00am on the day before an activity. If your child's form is returned after this time your child will not be allowed to take part unless there is an exceptional circumstance I have agreed beforehand.**

Office staff are spending increasingly inordinate amounts of time chasing up non-returned forms so that children are not disappointed and can be included, for example on a trip. We never want to disappoint children but we have a safeguarding duty and we need time to ensure all procedures are able to be carried out in a timely manner. There is a lot of preparation for an activity such as a trip including risk assessments, copying the children's annual information forms that you completed in September, sorting medicines for children etc. and this cannot be done efficiently if office staff are having to copy forms on the very morning of an activity and sort medicines, and class staff are having to change groupings. Thank you for your help and co-operation.

Harvest assemblies and Christmas performances

It has come to my attention that some of you are asking why it is necessary to split the harvest and Christmas performances, which means you may have to attend on more than one day if you have more than one child in either the same, or the different, school. This is because we now have too many parents to fit in the halls with the increased number of children on roll. I am sure those parents who have been to the infant harvest assemblies yesterday and today, will agree it would not have been possible to get another three classes' parents in too! We are trying not to have to limit places for assemblies and performances and this is the best solution we have found.

Parent Survey summer term 2016

Please find attached the governing body's analysis and response to the annual parent questionnaire we sent out in the summer term. Thank you to everyone who took part and please be assured we will act on suggestions that are practicable and within our remit.

Bring a Bulb to School Week – week beginning 31st October and 7th November

This will be the sixth year of a 'Winklebury tradition' – 'Bring a Bulb to School Week'. In order to continue our work to improve the school grounds for the children, we would like to encourage more colour and flowers through planting bulbs across the site. If every child and member of staff brought two or three bulbs to school we'd have a lot to plant in the grounds and hopefully a good show in the spring! Last year's donations all came up but we need lots more bulbs to create a really good 'show'. Please consider supporting us in this and send your child to school with some bulbs any time from now up to Friday 11th November. The bulbs will be collected at the Federation Admin Office. Thank you in advance for your support.

Operation Christmas Child

We are once again supporting the 'Operation Christmas Child' project. Operation Christmas Child is the world's largest children's Christmas project and delivers shoeboxes of Christmas gifts to children around the world who would otherwise not have a present to open on Christmas morning.

If you would like to donate a Christmas Shoebox, you need to wrap an average sized shoe box in bright Christmas paper and then fill it with gifts suitable for a child, for example a doll, a football with a pump, a cuddly toy, hygiene items (toothbrush, toothpaste, bar of soap, flannel, comb) and school supplies (pencils, pens, notebooks, colouring books). You then need to attach an Operation Christmas Child label for either a girl or a boy and indicate the age your box is aimed at (available on website or from the Federation Admin Office). Finally, you need to include a £3 shipping donation to cover transportation costs. Further details of how to pack your shoe box and ideas for what to include are available in the leaflet 'How to Pack Your Shoebox Gift', available in the Federation Admin Office or online at www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/occ.

Each class will also be making a class shoebox, so if you are unable to help your child fill a shoebox, but would like to send in an item or two, we will use these in our class shoeboxes.

Please bring all shoebox donations into school between **Monday 31st October and Friday 11th November** and we will arrange to transport all the shoeboxes to a local collection point.

New menu for school lunches

Please be aware there is a new menu for school lunches starting October 31st - the new menu will be sent out next week.

What's been happening at the schools?

The regular 'slot' in the newsletters designed to keep you up-to-date!

* The Federation choir performed brilliantly at the Mayor's Annual Variety Show on 3rd October – well done to you all!

Opportunities

We have the following information in the schools – if you would like a leaflet please pop in to collect one from the Federation Admin Office or ask us to send one home with your child:

* London Irish rugby camps 26th to 28th October in Basingstoke – call 01932 750 100 or visit www.london-irish.com/camps

*Half term holiday performing arts and sports camps run by premier – visit premierperformingarts.co.uk or call 01953 499040

Dates

Remaining inset days 2015-2016 when school is closed to the children:

* Monday 27th February 2017, Tuesday 28th February 2017, Friday 7th April 2017

The schools are closed for half term Monday 24th October to Friday 28th October inclusive

Yours sincerely

Mrs C.A.Clayton - Head of Federation

**THIS DOCUMENT CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATIVE FORMATS
ON REQUEST TO EITHER SCHOOL**