

Newsletter 3: 2019 20

Dear Parents/ carers

It looks like the weather will find us out at Viney Hill next week- no matter, we are all looking forward to our week of adventure with our Year 6's.

Tomorrow morning- hoping to see a few of you tomorrow on a 'Wheelbarrow and Spade' morning-- coffee brewing for 9.30am

Vision roll out- please look at our [new videos](#) on the website.

Vision Quote -2

The vision defines and in turn is defined by the way we teach; by the principles or common threads running through our pedagogy and professional development. We are all about the learning and we feel strongly ...

'that to see the act of learning as something not for its own sake but because of what it will get you reduces the wonder of humanity. We are thinking, feeling, art-making, knowledge-hungry, marvellous animals, who understand ourselves and our world through the act of learning. It is an end in itself. It has far more to offer than the things it lets us write on application forms. It is a way to love living right now' -
-Matt Haig

Low take up of Cheltenham Literature Festival tickets- We still have 40 tickets available for the Cheltenham Literature Festival on October 7th and could end up losing money if we don't find a home for them. Of course we recognize that there is a significant cost and also that there are many other trips preying on your purse this term. This then is a late in the day, understanding but slightly desperate bid to entice a few more of you to send your children on the trip. The quality of the experience is clear enough- it is a 'fantastic opportunity for the children to listen to what inspires the authors as well as ask questions and talk about their books'..... the authors being Joe Todd-Stanton (author of Arthur and the Golden Rope, Marcy and the Riddle of the Sphinx and The Secret of Black Rock) and Chris Riddell (author of the Goth Girl series and the Ottoline series). Please do consider again this wonderful opportunity. We would need to know if you were still interested by the close of day on Monday.

Reading volunteers

We are looking for a few volunteers to read with individual children across the school on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday afternoon. If you are able to help, on a regular basis, would you please notify the office in the first instance and then Mrs Young will meet with you to discuss the reading process further. Thank you.

Re: Affording the pastoral work that goes on at our school

We have developed a significant range of pastoral support 'opportunities' for children over the last few years including provision way beyond the norm for a primary school, for example counselling, play therapy, anger management groups, mentoring through outdoor learning and through cookery. These have become an invaluable layer of support for our pupils and often have high impact on things like confidence, self-esteem and mental health generally—all of which, as parents, we would want for our children above most anything else.

As we all know there is a growing body of evidence that this generation's mental health is suffering. There are many theories as to why this might be: we feel our job is not to reason why but to find appropriate, proportional responses to the children's needs. We look to our policies and practices generally to achieve this but we do also offer the kinds of opportunities above, over and above our core offer.

We are however struggling to fund these opportunities and we are going to have to ask parents to help us fund them for their children from now on. I'm afraid there is no specific pot of money given to schools to fund the kind of extra support we are offering and not surprisingly therefore, very few schools attempt it. We have managed up to now by tapping into trusts and other sources of funding wherever we can to supplement the school budget. However the school budget is looking very tight these next couple of years and things are becoming increasingly difficult.

I am sure you would agree, we do not want to lose the excellent relationship we have with some of these practitioners and the easy access our pupils have to their excellent support, when life is tough. Rest assured this kind of provision will always be optional and discussed with parents first and henceforth we will always provide information about the support both in a meeting as well as in a leaflet. I am hopeful that we can find a way forward if we all pull together.

If you have any questions going forward about our offer or about how we might be able to support your child's mental health, please don't hesitate to talk to your child's class teacher, Mrs Bennett or myself.

Holidays:

At the Parent Forum on holidays, it was felt that more information on holidays and their impact on the school community might be useful for people.

Here is the paragraph about impact in the letter sent home last year:

....'the costs are often hidden from view. Essentially every holiday taken makes it a little more difficult for us to get the job done: the more holidays that are taken, the more difficult it becomes. Any holiday will mean that pupils have missed out on learning. This learning will more often than not be part of a wider unit of work and/or will have links to other learning going on in school. Teachers have to work to fill the gaps for returning pupils; help them catch up on missed work where necessary or re-explain a concept, which, in turn, takes away from other pupils in the class. It is common for returning pupils to struggle for a few days to regain their confidence and composure as learners (some can take a couple of weeks to get back to where they were before) and hence learning is directly affected for an even longer duration. Given no child is an island in school and works with other pupils all the time, as a talk

partner; as a member of a group working on a project; in a position of responsibility in class or beyond, as a the member of a sports team, their absence is also felt by their fellow pupils. Please don't think I am over-stating this case. Teachers generally are very understanding and will always want to make the difference for returning pupils but the sheer numbers are now often making this impossible.'

There will be a **Parent Forum** to continue the conversation we have started about holidays on the 16th October at 3.30pm.

Nick Moss