

22 January 2010

Dear Parents

I hope you all had a wonderful break and are now settling into the New Year. On behalf of all the staff of Oakthorpe, I would like to thank all parents and children who so generously sent in presents and cards and to wish you and your children an exciting, rewarding and successful 2010.

What a start we have had to 2010, with all this bad weather and school closures. It was unfortunate that we had to close the school for two days, but took this action due to the icy conditions around school, the reduced number of staff and the advice of the Local Authority. We apologise for any inconvenience, but had to put the children's safety uppermost. We made every effort to keep parents informed of the situation and apologise for our Parentmail texting service which let us down badly, resulting in many parents not receiving the text messages.

The 'Parentmail email' service has been working well and is an effective way of contacting parents. If you would like to register for this or have any queries on how to register/administer your account, please enquire at the Admin Office.

THE TERM AHEAD

We started this term with **Maths Week** which promised to be a very exciting week. Indeed the week, which focused on measurement, got off to an excellent start with children and staff dressing up as 'Measuring Superheros'. Thank you for your support with this – many costumes were very creative. Mrs Meraviglia and the maths team had organised a variety of visits, visitors, special assemblies and exciting activities that I know would have enriched the curriculum. We are rearranging these to take place during the next few weeks.

Our annual **Art Week** will soon be upon us and will be held during the final week of this half term, from the 8th to the 12th February. Mrs Noakes and the art team have organised visits to art galleries for some year groups, while others will have the opportunity to work with artists in school and use a variety of materials. Each year group will be studying art from a different culture and will create displays for the whole school to enjoy.

We have two special assemblies this half term. On Friday 5th February we shall be celebrating Chinese New Year. Years 1, 2 and 3 will be performing various items and parents of children in these year groups are very welcome to join us at 9.30. On Friday 29th January KS2 children will be taking part in a special Holocaust Memorial Day assembly.

You will shortly receive year group curriculum letters giving full details of teaching and learning this half term. Because we really want to involve you in your children's learning, the letters include guidance on how you can help your child.

As always your support with ensuring homework is completed is much appreciated. Please visit our website www.oakthorpe.enfield.sch.uk for more ideas on work that can be tackled at home plus of course information, dates, policies, events, etc.

ICT - FRONTER

You may be aware that most of the children in KS2 have recently been introduced to our new online learning environment called 'FRONTER'. To begin with we are getting used to how it works and using the system to send messages, while some classes are beginning to use it to set and complete homework.

Access to the system is very secure (Every child has their own individual log in and password) and is only available to the staff and children within the school. We hope you will work with us and encourage your children to use this system sensibly and use appropriate language in their messages. More detailed information about this system will be sent out shortly.

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Please read the leaflet concerning Free School Meals (FSM). We are keen to help any parents on income support. I am aware that the additional activities we provide children at this school can put a strain on the family budget but our aim is to give children every advantage and give them the very best we can provide. Please see attached leaflet.

LATENESS AND ABSENCE

It is important that you phone the school to let us know if your child is going to be late or absent from school. Please select option 1 (welfare room) to leave a message on your child's first day of absence.

Just to recap here are the options again:

- 1 Welfare Room (Aunty Mary) – to report your child absent/late or to speak to a member of staff about your child's welfare/sickness. If it goes to voice mail please leave a clear message as this is checked regularly and someone will get back to you if necessary.**
- 2 Senior Admin Officer/Head Teacher's PA (Mrs Stavrou)**
- 3 Bursar (Mrs Griffin)**
- 4 Training School**
- 5 SENCO (Mrs Sefer)**
- 6 Early Years (Reception Teachers)**
- 0 Switchboard**

SCHOOL TRIPS

When children go on school trips we ask for a **voluntary** contribution from parents/guardians towards the cost of the travel and the entrance fee, if there is one. Expensive trips are often subsidised by the school, as the voluntary contribution requested is small. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, the school can only offer special class trips and visits if voluntary contributions are received, otherwise the trip could be cancelled. Teachers, of course, will remind children to bring their money in, but no pressure will be put on individual children. The vast majority of parents recognise the value of visits and visitors and children often consider these to be highlights of school life.

LOST PROPERTY

Losing school uniform is expensive and causes distress for children and parents. We do our best to return lost items to children, but it would really help if all clothing is named, especially jumpers, fleeces and PE kits.

LAST TERM'S SHOWS

For those who have ordered DVDs and have not received them these should be with you in a few days. Parents can of course still order DVDs.

THE OAKTHORPE STORK HAS VISITED US AGAIN!

Mrs Pavlou is delighted to inform us that she is expecting a baby. She will go on maternity leave at the beginning of May and her class will be taken by Mrs Pitsillides who returns to us just before Easter. We wish her many congratulations on this wonderful news and wish her all the best.

LOLLIPOP LADY (School Crossing Patrol Officer)

Unfortunately our lovely lollipop lady Cheryl Blowes reluctantly left her post in 2008 due to a change in circumstances. Since then we (*the council*) have been unable to replace her, so if you know of anybody who would be interested in this post please make contact with our Administrative Office and we will put them in touch with the right department at Enfield Council. Hopefully we can secure a replacement this way.

CHARITY

Thank you so much for sponsoring Mr Skillett's Moustache month and for making donations to our charity tins at the Christmas shows. In total we raised a staggering £1,034.18. The money will be donated to Cancer Research.

We are still collecting plastic milk tops for charity. Children should place them in a box outside Miss Brittain's classroom.

DRAMATIC NEWS !

The Helen O'Grady Drama Academy and its team of actor-teachers are pleased to let you know that their dynamic drama classes for children are continuing to be held in our school.

The Helen O'Grady drama programme concentrates on speech, movement to music, and both scripted and improvised drama. The fun programme encourages good communication skills and self-confidence and the development of creative skills and a strong imagination.

The new term began on Friday 8th January 2010. The classes are from 3.45 – 4.45pm every Friday in the main school hall. To learn more and to book a place, please call Maja Lewis on 020 8350 5195, or come along to the hall after school on Friday. It's great fun!!

Mr Cumner-Price's absence will continue this half term, as he is continuing with his treatment. I am sure you will want to join me in sending him our best wishes for a speedy recovery. He has asked me to thank you for all your cards and good wishes and hopes you all have a very happy, prosperous and peaceful 2010.

Yours sincerely

A Del Greco (Mrs)
Acting Headteacher