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Friday 8th March 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Attendance & Punctuality



Our whole school attendance from Reception to Year 6 has been 95.18% this week. This means that we are in the **Amber zone** (but very close to Green!) and we are not meeting our targets set by the Department for Education.

Play Equipment

As you will no doubt be aware, our new adventure climbing equipment has been installed and, as the weather improves, we are looking forward to our key stage 2 children enjoying the new challenges it brings. We have undertaken all the necessary risk assessments and safety checks. It is fully compliant with health and safety guidelines and we have also added our own measures including limiting the number of children using it at any given time, ensuring appropriate adult supervision and guidance for children when they are using it. The main purpose of installing the equipment, as well as providing great fun, is for children to:

- Develop a better understanding of identifying, managing and dealing with risk within their own physical limitations.
- Improve problem solving capabilities, thought processes and decision making.
- Improve physical fitness, strength, and resilience.
- Improve gross motor skills and movement.
- Stimulate imaginative play and creativity.

The equipment will be timetabled for each KS2 year group and can be used during play times as well as curriculum Physical Education as part of our outdoor and adventurous activities programmes of study.

Children's play, in general, is very different to what it was a few years back. Gone are the days when children made their own entertainment, making games up, building dens, climbing trees, etc. Such activities have given way to the digital age when children are far more likely to spend leisure time engaged in online activity or playing electronic games. As a result, children, in general, are less active than earlier generations which impacts on mental and physical health and wellbeing, and this is why we have tried to broaden their experiences in school.

Taking all this into account, there are a few caveats to consider. The very nature of the equipment, and activity it provides, comes with the risk of accident and, in some cases injury. As mentioned earlier, we have taken all the necessary steps to do as much as we can in terms of prevention of accidents, but we can never completely eliminate this possibility; very much the same as most things in life from crossing the road, playing a game of football, riding a bike or scooter, going to soft play, bouncing on a trampoline etc. etc. - they all have an element of risk. Dealing with, and managing risk, is part of our learning and a fact of life. In this sense, our adventure play equipment contributes hugely to our children's growth and we are very excited to see them benefit from it.

When collecting your child from school in the evenings, we ask that YOU DO NOT ALLOW YOUNGER SIBLINGS TO ACCESS THE EQUIPMENT. It is intended for the sole use of pupils during school time whilst supervised by school staff. This is in accordance with our insurance arrangements. If you are seen to be accessing it, please do not be offended when asked to stop.

Sickness Bugs

Please be reminded that pupils, who are off school due to sickness and/or diarrhoea, should not return to school until 48 hours after the last instance of vomiting or diarrhoea. This is to prevent other pupils from also becoming ill.

Outdoor Toy Donations

As part of our project in developing play, we would be grateful for any donations of unwanted prams or pushchairs that could be used by children in play. Additionally, any outdoor or garden toys would be greatly appreciated. If you have anything at home that you are able to donate, they will definitely be going to a good home!

Lenten Soup

Lenten soup will be served during breaktime every Friday of Lent that pupils are in school. All proceeds will go to support CAFOD. We suggest a donation of 50p per cup which can be paid in cash at the school office or directly to CAFOD:

www.justgiving.com/page/st-stephens-catholic-primary-school-1709209412775



Dates for the Diary (as always, dates are subject to change!):

Tuesday 12th March/Wednesday 13th March 2pm-5.30pm – Parent Consultations

Wednesday 13th March – Vision Screening for Reception Class

Friday 15th March 9.15am – Prayer, Song and Soup (Year 4)

Monday 18th March – Thursday 28th March – Year 4 Swimming Lessons Hadrian Leisure Centre

Tuesday 19th March – KS2 Dance Festival at Whitley Bay Playhouse

Friday 22nd March 9.15am – Prayer, Song and Soup (Year 5)

Friday 22nd March 1pm-3pm – Spring Disco

Week commencing 25th March – Holy Week Services

Thursday 28th March 9am – Awards Assembly

Thursday 28th March – Last day of Spring Term

Friday 29th March – Friday 12th April – Easter Holidays

Monday 15th April – School closed to pupils for INSET Day

Tuesday 16th April – Pupils return to school