

FOUR OAKS PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Volume ~ Issue 8 20/21

Infant Department: 0121-675-4040

Junior Department: 0121-675-2685

15th January 2021

Dear Parents and Governors



At this point in the year it would be traditional to say Happy New Year but obviously we have started the year in a very untraditional way. Nevertheless, whether your children are at home, or at school I hope that you are all safe and well, and can look forward to times that are brighter than those we are living through at present. Many thanks to everyone for their patience and support in these very challenging two weeks since we returned after the Christmas break, and let's hope we haven't got too many more weeks to wait until we can all be back in school together.

Key Worker Booking System

For our Key Worker parents, we now have a flexible booking form which can be filled in to book a place for your child at school over the next five weeks. If you go to the "Latest News" section of the website, you can visit the Key Worker page and then click on the link which takes you to the form. To accommodate shift patterns, you can select one or more days for each of the next five weeks. I would stress to parents, as I did in my letter last week, that we would ask all families to think very carefully about these decisions to help in minimizing the number of children in school. If shift patterns change at the last moment, as many NHS workers' patterns do then please contact school by telephone and we will try our best to accommodate you.



A plea to all Key Worker parents; when collecting your children from school at the end of the day please come on to site alone and wearing a mask, as we need to keep the number of people on site to a minimum. Also a reminder that key worker children do not need to bring any bags into school, merely a water bottle.

Remote Learning

Thank you so much to the many, many parents who have sent messages of thanks into school either by email, text, telephone or face to face, about how quickly we have put our remote learning provision back into action, having been given such a short period of notice. To the few parents who have expressed their deep dissatisfaction about having to facilitate their children's learning at home and the content of our remote learning package, let me state this:



The Government have set out their guidelines pertaining to remote learning very clearly and that they expect schools to:

1. Set assignments so that pupils have meaningful and ambitious work each day in a number of different subjects.
2. Set work that is of equivalent length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school, and as a minimum:
primary: 3 hours a day, on average, across the school cohort
secondary: 4/5 hours a day, with more for pupils working towards formal qualifications this year.
3. Provide frequent, clear explanations of new content, delivered by a teacher or through high-quality curriculum resources or videos.

We feel that the Government have got this entirely correct in saying that a variety of activities is highly important and our Four Oaks remote learning offer clearly ticks every box.

To look after their mental health, we would never sit a child in front of a device for a whole school day in normal times, so we are not setting that expectation for you.

We have many parents who only have one device at home, or who are even sharing a device between their children and themselves in order to facilitate both school work and parents' work. If we had set out our remote learning package where children were expected to be in Teams meetings all day every day, we would end up excluding many children from their entitlement of remote learning.

This is also true of our families who have two or three children in our school, if they were expected to be in live sessions all day then we would end up excluding many children and we are not allowed to do this, and will not do this!

In conclusion we feel our remote package enables our staff to touch base with every child on a regular basis and **give them all quality time**, offering the children a rich curriculum where staff can assess their learning and can see what learning steps the children have taken, and clearly sets out expectations for parents with regular communication that is updated consistently. The Governing Body and Local Authority are more than happy with what we have offered in the last 9 months and the way that our provision is developing over time. I know that at present our Year 5 and Year 6 teams of staff are trialling the 'assignments' feature within Microsoft Teams which enables homework tasks to be dropped to children and picked up and marked by staff, thus getting rid of the need for emails to be sent back and forth. As you can see we are constantly trying to develop and improve our provision for the children, whether it be utilizing new technology or driving back to school late at night to sort technical issues which some staff have done this week.

My staff will follow up with families if we have no contact in terms of work that the children have engaged in at home, so if there is anything that we can do to support you then please talk to us at school. We really do understand that parents also have work commitments to fulfil from home, but it would be great if you could help your children to attend their Teams meetings as this week has been evident proof of the fact that the children get so much from being in contact with their teachers and friends on a regular basis.

FOSBACS

At present we have had to shut FOSBACS down in order to minimize the number of children and adults on site. FOSBACS will re-open once we get to a stage where school is going to open to all pupils.



Social Media

In a last plea to parents I would ask them to think twice before taking to social media to either criticise the school in relation to the Covid-19 situation, or question the ethics of people who have their children in school. Believe it or not we are all trying our very best.



I presume that all parents do understand that all comments on platforms such as WhatsApp groups get back to us with great speed. It is a stressful time for all of us and no one is exempt from getting frustrated or worried, but if any of our pupils were to do this then there would be severe repercussions, so why should it be ok for adults to do this? In school, as adults, we always say that we are role models for our children and we tell them to copy what we do, and I'm sure you would agree with me as fellow parents that this is a really important ideal to uphold. If you have a complaint, or a worry, or even just a mild concern, then please talk to us.

Crossing Warden

Due to the National Lockdown situation the Local Authority have pulled the crossing warden service at the end of Edge Hill Road and Walsall Road. I have registered my disappointment with this but am yet to hear back from them. If this situation changes then I will inform parents immediately. Even though we have fewer children coming to school at the moment I would stress to families to take great care when crossing this very busy road.



FSM

For those families in receipt of free school meals, we have been offering a free packed lunch daily from school but I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that hopefully from next week we should be able to offer vouchers as in the summer lockdown. We have been advised by the Department for Education that the scheme will not be operational until the beginning of next week and we will then be given a day on which to order the vouchers, but we hope to get the vouchers to those families as soon as possible. We will therefore not be offering the packed lunches next week.



Super Stars and Acorns



The following children received Super Stars (Infants) and Acorns (Juniors) in Assembly on 17th December. Well done to them all!!

Bumblebees	The Whole Class
Ladybirds	The Whole Class
Owls	Jack C.
Hedgehogs	Seren-Rae
Turtles	Jessica P.
Sharks	Olivia
3E	The Whole Class / Pola
3R	The Whole Class / Jai
4C	Eva
4G	Maelynn
5B	Freddie H.
5SB	Yashesh
6E	Evan
6W	Sophia

Courtesy Cup Winners ~ on 17th December

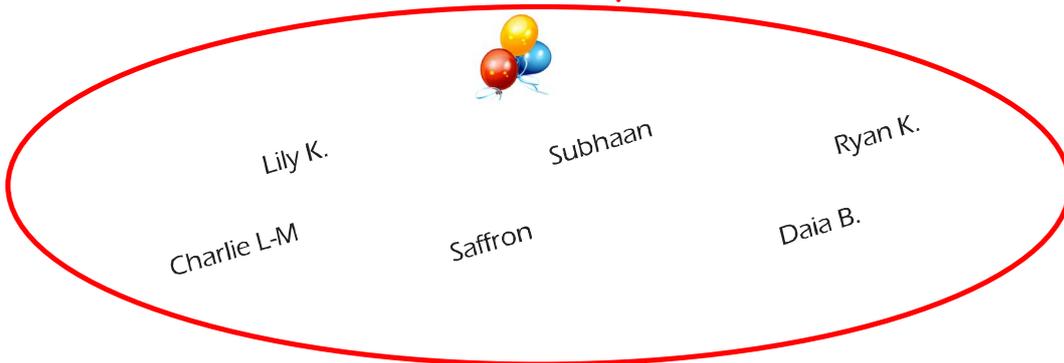
Reception	Alistair / Sebastian
Year 1	Reuben / Henry
Year 2	Elsie / Jovan
Year 3	Khadija / Tobias
Year 4	Jai R. / Olive
Year 5	Cole / Lily H.
Year 6	Molly / Reuben S.



Well done to all the winners!

Alison Mander—Kindness award
 Last Half Term it was awarded to:
 Infants— Isla F. (Hedgehogs)
 Juniors— Thea C. (3R)

Infant Birthdays



Donations of Small World Figures

Once the children return to school we will be on the look-out for any donations of what we call Small World play figures to add to our lunchtime play equipment. By that we mean small model animals, small model vehicles or small action figures. If you have anything like this that needs a good home, then we would be happy to assist. If you could sanitize them and place them in a carrier bag, we will quarantine them before letting the children play with them. Many thanks.



Admission Arrangements

Just a reminder to all present and new parents that our admission arrangements, including the set criteria for gaining a place at Four Oaks Primary School, can always be found on our school website under the 'Our School' tab at the top of the homepage. A reminder that the last day for applying for a place for September 2021 is today (15th January) and that even if you have a sibling in the school an application must be made through the council website.

Milk Money



As many of our Infant children, who are coming into school, are attending on different days we will be logging the days that they come in and will then send a bill via SchoolMoney at the end of this half term, if your child has milk. We will revert to payment in advance once all children are back in school.

Children In Need

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Children in Need appeal before Christmas. I am pleased to announce that we raised £368.00.



PTA 200 Club

Here are the results of our double December 200 club draw. The draw took place with the help of the Owl class. Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to everyone for your support.

The winners of the December draw are:

£100	No. 162	Mr J Taylor
£20	No. 1	Mrs E Higgs
£20	No. 54	Mrs Underwood



Congratulations!

Free blowdry from Soniabetts Styling Hub - No. 178 Mrs K Sherlock

Bottle of Shellac nail polish from Exclusive Beauty Spa— No. 157 Mr J Taylor

ICT Tip of the Week

To help families adjusting to a "new normal" following the measures taken to stop the spread of coronavirus, we've created this dedicated space to provide expert advice, resources and tools to make the best use of tech. #StaySafeStayHome

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/staysafestayhome-tech-advice-for-families/>

If you have any queries regarding any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Benton
Head Teacher