



STAPLEHURST SCHOOL

Headteacher
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Dear Parents/Carers,

You will know from the Newsletters there have been a variety of exciting things happening in school recently:-

- We have had Daniel Blythe, the author of the Doctor Who books, visit and work with groups.
- Lydia Greenway, the international female cricketer, has coached our Y4 and Y5 girls.
- Tim Davies, the artist, has created more fantastic designs with children from Early Years to Y6.

These activities have enhanced the learning of the children and made it exciting and fun. The children are now ready to enjoy their well-earned Easter Break but before they do, I want to highlight some important issues which affect their learning and safety.

ATTENDANCE

Schools have greatly changed over the years and I believe for the better, but one thing has not altered and that is the need for children to attend school regularly in order to access the curriculum and learn everything on offer.

Children at Staplehurst School are loved and well cared for, it is obvious to anyone who sees them happily running into school. Sometimes they are ill and will be absent from school. We completely understand this and the decision to keep children at home is left in the capable hands of parents.

However, some children are absent or arrive late, far too frequently.

Why does this matter?

- Teaching is systematic; children are required to attend every lesson as these are the building blocks for the next step.
- If a child misses a 'few' lessons, it can have a significant impact on their understanding of new ideas. 'Missed' steps weaken the foundation of their learning which can result in future failure and a lack of confidence which can be more seriously damaging.
- It can also affect their relationships; their friends quickly make new ones because they are not always in school.

The same can be said of children who arrive late on a regular basis.

- The teachers begin their lessons promptly as no time can be wasted, if a child arrives after the lesson has started then they will not have received the input which is vital to their learning. **Imagine how it must feel to arrive late every day and walk into a group situation where everyone knows what to do and you don't?**
- No matter how hard the teacher tries, the child will automatically feel isolated and be disadvantaged. This is what happens to children who are late every day.
- **I urge parents to demonstrate their commitment to their childrens' learning by ensuring they attend school regularly and arrive on time every day; our children deserve the best we can give them. Every day counts, every lesson counts, every minute counts.**

Just a little bit late doesn't seem much but.....

He/she is only missing just....	That equals....	Which is....	And over 13 years of schooling that's....
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1.5 weeks per year	Nearly half a year
20 minutes per day	1 hour 40 minutes per week	Over 2.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
Half an hour per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 and half years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 and half years



STAFFING AND RESTRUCTURING OF OUR LEADERSHIP TEAM.

I would like to take this opportunity to update you on our leadership team which is presently being restructured; this is necessary to ensure the teaching and learning is meeting the new standards in education introduced 18 months ago.

- Mrs Murray is continuing in her role as Acting Deputy Headteacher; her dedication to the role is evident and she is enjoying the challenges it presents. The Deputy Headteacher position is now being advertised, we will keep you informed on how this progresses.
- Miss Decker is our newly appointed Assistant Head of Early Years with the additional responsibility of overseeing the transition to KS1; this is to ensure the high standards set in Early Years naturally follows into Key Stage 1. Miss Decker is excited about this new role and keen best practice is modelled.
- Miss O'Brien, our newly appointed KS1 Co-ordinator, will work alongside Miss Decker. Organisation and internal communication between classes will be her priority.
- Mrs Laura Masson, our temporary KS2 Lead, is a very experienced practitioner and is employed to promote best practice and raise standards. Mrs Masson will be with us until the end of the summer term and then will begin a new leadership role nearer to home.
- Mr Roker is developing the school grounds; last year he organised the outdoor classroom area and has now planned a 'meadow' to be planted at the side of the school field which will attract butterflies and will be attractive for the children when they are playing on the field in the summer terms.
- Mrs Seymour is our Literacy Lead and is making great strides in promoting reading, spelling and extended writing. I am sure you have heard of Buster Book Club – this is proving to be very effective in ensuring the children are reading as much as they can!
- We have now advertised for a KS2 Assistant Head, and a Maths Lead and will keep you informed.

PARKING

Like so many of you, we are very concerned about the parking situation outside the school gates. It is frustrating but the main problem is the school was built at a time when children walked to school, now most are driven - so many cars arriving together causes congestion and mayhem. **THE SAFETY OF OUR CHILDREN IS AT RISK.**

What can we do about it?

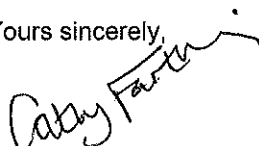
We cannot move the school or the estate. Whilst we are liaising with the local authorities and we are considering some initiatives, we want to encourage parents to:-

- Walk to school with your children.
- Operate the voluntary one way system to reduce the congestion. Enter Gybbon Rise from Bathurst Road and exit into Offens Drive.
- Park further away from the school and walk in - this promotes a healthy lifestyle for children.
- Park considerately. Show patience and tolerance of others and model polite, considerate behaviour in front of children.
- Show consideration to the residents who endure the dangerous parking every day and cannot sometimes leave their own home because their drive is blocked. Try and understand their frustrations.

OUR CHILDREN'S LIVES ARE WORTH THE EXTRA EFFORT

Wishing all our children and parents a fabulous Easter holiday, we look forward to seeing you next term on Tuesday 18th April 2017.

Yours sincerely,



Cathy Farthing
Headteacher