

HEMDEAN HOUSE SCHOOL

CAVERSHAM

10 January 2018

Dear Parents

WELCOME FROM MRS CHALMERS

Having now officially joined Hemdean House School as the full-time, permanent Head Teacher I am very much looking forward to working with the school Governors and staff for a positive, happy and successful future.

Communication

I am looking forward to building long and happy working relationships with you, your children, the wonderful committed team of staff and dedicated Governors. I am pleased to have already had the opportunity of meeting with several of you to date. I work very much on an open door policy, if you wish to discuss any matters with me directly please do not hesitate to contact me at any time via my school email address which is headteacher@hemdeanhouse.co.uk or through the school office. During term time I will always endeavour to respond to parent emails and calls within two working days. In May I will be sending out a questionnaire to all parents, staff and pupils, having had a full term in post and, as such, look forward to reading your responses and comments thereafter, all of which will help me when writing the school development plan with the Governors this summer.

Spring Term Diary Dates

Further to the provisional Spring Term Dates provided before the end of last term we have been working on confirming these dates and, as expected, there have been a few changes. I have attached the new listing of Spring Term Dates and request that you please refer to this updated listing at all times and disregard the previous provisional dates as issued in December.

New for this year I have introduced two new opportunities to join us at school this term, namely 'Terrific Tuesday' on 23 January and 'Fantastic Friday' on 2 March, 9.00 – 10.00 am on both days. These parent sessions offer you the chance to join your child in class, look through their school work in preparation for parents' evening and, in turn, have an insight into being a pupil at Hemdean House School. Parents' evening will be held in the school hall on Thursday 8 March from 5:00 – 7:00 pm. This slightly later time will hopefully be more convenient for more parents.

The Spring Term Concert is now on Tuesday 20 February at 7:00 pm and the Year 3 and 4 School Play is on Tuesday 20 March at 7:00 pm. We will also be holding an inter-house Art Exhibition and Easter Bonnet Parade on the last half day of term on Friday 22 March at 11.00 am. Two other dates to be aware of in advance are the NSPCC Number Day on Friday 2 February, (children will need to come to school wearing something with numbers on) and World Book Day on Thursday 1 March, (children to come to school dressed as their favourite book character). Class assemblies for Reception, Year 1, 2, 5 and 6 have been added to the Spring Term Dates, Years 3 and 4 class assembly will be scheduled for next term given that they are preparing for their school play this term.

We are currently reviewing the term dates for 2018 / 2019 and details will be issued shortly. In the meantime please be advised that this year's October half term will be extended by two days.

Staff Meetings

With effect from Wednesday 24 January there will be no Homework Club going forward on Wednesdays given that our weekly staff meetings will now take place after school on this day.

School Uniform / Pupil Appearance

As you will have read in the class teachers' welcome back letters we are all now tightening up on school uniform and encouraging pupils to take extra pride in their appearance. As such, please can we request that you ensure that your child has full correct school uniform to include a plain navy blue coat, navy hat, gloves and school scarf. I would very much like to see boys' shirt top buttons done up, ties neatly tied and shirts tucked in at all times. I would also appreciate if all girls with long hair could have it tied up during the school day for both appearance and health and safety reasons and please can nail varnish be saved for weekends and holidays.

Absences and Lateness

As a school we are legally required to monitor and regularly review all absences and lateness. If your child is going to be absent or late from school for any reason on any day please inform the school office no later than 8.30 am. The school day starts promptly at 8.45 am and all pupils need to be in their classroom by this time. Pupils arriving after 8:55 am will continue to be marked as late in the school register and this information will be recorded on school reports. Please be advised that all planned absences require prior approval, if your child needs a day out of school for any reason please contact me directly to request this in writing in advance of the day in question.

Healthy Snacks

Further to our introduction of healthy hot school lunches last term, as from Monday 15 January please can you ensure that your child's snack is a healthy one of fruit, vegetables, bread sticks, crackers or plain rice cakes. Chocolate, crisps and sweets are sadly no longer part of the new Hemdean House healthy eating plan. Please be advised that this also applies to packed lunches.

Spring Term Focus

For the first part of this term I will be spending as much time as possible in the classroom getting to know your children and the teachers. I have also started meeting with the Head Teachers of the local senior schools and the Managers of the day nurseries and pre-schools to continue to build, develop and grow strong and lasting relationships, networks and opportunities locally.

Friends and Family Referral Scheme

With the start of a new year and in recognition of the school's continued excellent academic results and high place in this year's Sunday Times Top 100 Primary Schools listing, we are pleased to be offering the Friends and Family Referral Scheme to reward your loyalty, and hope that you will be able to take advantage of this new initiative.

As before, I am very much looking forward to working with you in leading the school forward.

Kind regards



Mrs Helen Chalmers
Head Teacher

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