



Welcome Back to Whitehill!



September 2018

Dear Parents

As we get underway with a new academic year at Whitehill, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all our new pupils and their families and trust that you will find your time as a member of the Whitehill community both productive and rewarding. It has been lovely to visit our Year 3 classes and see how well the pupils have settled and to see them rise to the challenges being set. I have enjoyed talking with them about their first few days and also what they have been getting up to over the summer break.

Equally, I would like to welcome back our older pupils and trust everyone had a relaxing break. I know the teachers have been impressed with the way the classes have settled back into their routines.

In addition to the new pupils who have joined Whitehill this week, I would like to welcome our new members of staff who have joined the Whitehill team. Mr Lord and Mrs Cornell will be teaching in Years 3 and 5 respectively. Mrs Small is increasing her time with us and joining the Year 5 teaching team as Mrs Davies begins her maternity leave – I will keep you informed of any news on the baby front! We also welcome Mr Waluk who takes over as our new Site Manager.

I try to keep written correspondence to a minimum where possible when it comes to newsletters, preferring to keep you informed of much of what is going on via my weekly blog which appears on our website every Friday afternoon. There will be times, however, where we will need to write but we will try and keep paper copies to a minimum.

As always, this first newsletter is a chance for me to draw your attention to one or two things that will enable the school to run as smoothly as possible.

School Diary Dates

With this letter, you will receive a copy of the provisional School Calendar for 2017-2018. What I have done is put together a date list outlining the events which are currently in the school diary for the whole academic year. As with anything of this nature, whilst every attempt is made to ensure the dates are accurate, they are of course subject to change; particularly those for the Spring and Summer Terms. Any changes will be sent out as soon as they are known, together with additional dates as and when they arise. We tend to reprint the calendar at timely intervals.

The School Run

When arriving and leaving school each day, pupils should use the pedestrian entrances rather than walking through the staff car park. It might take a few extra minutes but it is much safer. Can I also remind you that dogs are not permitted on the school grounds and would also ask that should you walk your dog whilst bringing or collecting your child you don't stand right by the school gates?

I know it is tempting with all of our lovely play facilities but children are not allowed on any of the equipment before school starts. They can catch up with friends on the playgrounds.

Uniform

The new term sees an increase in new uniform. Please would you make sure everything is named so that should an item of clothing lose its owner, they can be reunited! You would be surprised how many sweatshirts we collect on a daily basis that don't appear to belong to anyone. I would also recommend pupils bring in a spare pair of socks in their PE kits for when they do PE outside. A pair of white sports socks will prevent pupils having to go home with wet feet when getting changed after the lessons.

As stated in our uniform policy, I would also like to remind you that earrings are not permitted. Should any child have had their ears pierced over the summer break, and they are not yet in a position to remove their studs, then these must be taped to prevent injury. Thank you for your support in this matter.

School Lunches

We are fortunate to be able to offer 'pupil choice' as part of our lunch provision. This flexibility reduces waste and increases efficiency in the kitchen. If pupils want to change their lunch arrangements, I would ask that you contact the school office and ideally we would need half a term's notice.

Whilst we are on the subject of lunches I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that Whitehill is a 'NUT FREE' school. We have several children who suffer extreme reactions to different types of nuts and could end up hospitalised if they inadvertently come into contact with them so we appreciate your cooperation on this.

Looking Forward

Talking with the staff, there is plenty to look forward to over the course of the year. There are exciting trips taking place in all four year groups as well as the two residentials for Year 4 and Year 6. The Year 5s are planning their 'Space Sleepover' again following on from the successes of the last three years. You will be sent a letter shortly outlining the programmes of study for your child's class based on their Curriculum Topics. We will soon be getting our extensive extra-curricular programme started and pupils need to listen carefully to the announcements being made in assembly. If they are ever unsure, all they need to do is ask their teacher.

School Development Priorities

As well as the pupils having plenty to keep themselves occupied, the staff team and governors have plenty to focus on too. Our priorities for this year's development plan continue from the work we were doing last year with marking and assessment. You will see that we have invested in new style exercise books for the core subjects and will be looking very carefully at the way these are used. Equally, we are investing a great deal of time in changing that way that pupils in all year groups are assessed and I will give you more information on this later in the year as it may impact upon the way the school reports are used.

Communication

Finally, I would like to remind you that I post a 'blog' on the school website each Friday (www.whitehill.herts.sch.uk) outlining the many highlights of the week and also looking forward to what is coming up. (I haven't missed a week in five years!) The link is also tweeted and Twitter is another valuable source of information used at Whitehill. It is especially useful if your child is on a school trip as we can report traffic updates. If you are not following our secure feed (@whitehilljunior) and would like further information, please talk to me or Mrs Cook.

Wishing you all a wonderful year and I look forward to seeing you around school. Please feel free to come up and have a chat if you see me looking lonely!

Best wishes,

Steve Mills

Mr Steve Mills
Headteacher

