

Spring Term Update 2

9th February 2018

Dear Parents

Can you believe we are at the halfway point of another academic year? It really doesn't seem that long ago we were welcoming our Year 3s to Whitehill; it is great to see how well they have settled and the progress they have made.

It is appropriate at this point to reflect on a few things and give you one or two pieces of information which fall outside the weekly content of my blogs.

Staff Changes

At the end of this academic year, Mrs Walton will be leaving Whitehill after over twenty years at the school. She has decided to take early retirement and I am sure has already been planning how she will enjoy her new-found freedom. I will obviously write again in due course as we plan for life at Whitehill without Mrs Walton.

I am currently in the process of appointing a replacement teacher and I have no doubt the pupils have been wondering why I have been showing so many visitors around the school. Again, I will let you know the details as I have them.

With regards to the role of Deputy Head, I am delighted to announce that Mrs Beresford will take over this post from September. As an existing member of my Senior Leadership Team, this will allow for the continuity we need so soon after our last Ofsted inspection. In addition to this, Mrs McConnell Smith, my Inclusion Coordinator and senior leader, will have a new title from September of 'Assistant Head – Inclusion'.

Whilst we will obviously be sorry to see Mrs Walton leave, we should also see these changes as exciting opportunities for the school to continue to grow.

Scooters!

We have noticed that there are an increasing number of younger siblings using the mornings and after school times to practise their 'scooting skills' on the playgrounds and also the slopes between the two. Could I please ask that younger brothers and sisters scoot well away from the class lines as the pupils line up in the mornings (if at all), and certainly not up and down the slope leading to the pupil entrance.

Messages for Teachers

Communication is an important part of school life and I am grateful to my staff who are in the playgrounds before and after school to enable parents to catch up with them and share key pieces of information about their children or to ask a quick question.

It is imperative, however, that the teachers are also able to take their classes in first thing so that the day can begin on time. For that reason, can I ask that only quick and important messages are given in the mornings? Please consider whether the information you need to share could either be written in your child's home-school book, sent in a letter or actually relayed by the pupil themselves. Certainly we need to be encouraging that independence of pupils in Upper School in preparation for when they move on to secondary schools which is always sooner than you think. You are also welcome to contact your child's teacher via the school office if you feel a longer meeting might be needed.

I also know that the teachers would love you to come up and share exciting and positive news and information about your child which they can then use in discussions in class. We love hearing good news!

Dogs

Thank you for continuing to follow the rules regarding not bringing dogs onto the school playgrounds. I have recently had a couple of parents speak to me about dogs being brought to school and then waiting by the school exit gates. Whilst I have little control where you stand outside the school grounds, could I ask for you to please just move a couple of metres further away from the actual gates, removing possible congestion and pupil anxiety. Thank you again for your support on this matter.

Pupil Absence

We have introduced a new system for checking pupil absences. Should your child be absent from school and you have not had the opportunity to let us know through the usual channels, then a text will be generated and sent out to the primary contact asking for you to confirm the absence.

Scarlet Fever

We have had two cases of Scarlet Fever in school which is a reportable infection. Please see overleaf.

I hope you all have a great half term and look forward to seeing the pupils all back in school on Monday 19th February.

Steve Mills