



September Newsletter

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Welcome Back!!

I am very pleased to be able to welcome you all back after a scorching sun drenched break! I hope you all enjoyed a relaxing and happy few weeks despite the weather not being its best. Can I also welcome all of our new children and parents. It is lovely to have our Reception children in the school, and to see their excited faces as they begin their school lives. It is a wonderful time for them, for the parents and for us. Welcome to you all.



And can I welcome Miss McMath, Miss Abrehart and Miss Davies to our teaching staff. They have already settled in well to the school and I know that all three will be an asset to us and our children. Please say hello when you see them on the playground and get to know them a little.

We also have a new face in our office and I would like to welcome Mrs Gemma Smith to the school. She is working alongside Mrs Smith and Mrs Kelleher and she will be our first point of contact for parents. Welcome!

Can I please take an early opportunity to reinforce a few rules for everyone regarding behaviour at the start and end of the school day.

The school site is open from early in the morning so that people can gain access to the nursery and to our own Breakfast Club. **However, can I ask you not to send your children to school before 8.40 in the morning.**

It sends a shiver down my spine when I see a child standing alone outside the school on a dark morning, sometimes from as early as 8.20. They are very vulnerable, so please don't expose them to any risk by letting them come to school before 8.40am. This is when we officially provide supervision. Either I or another member of staff will open the gates at this time to allow everyone onto the playground. If you send your child to school before 8.40am, or even if

you accompany them yourselves, please understand that there is no supervision and we cannot be held responsible for anyone's safety before this time.

Can I also ask parents not to take it upon themselves to open the gates and let everyone onto the playground. Please wait for us—even if you think we are a little late! I occasionally get held up on my way out as people ask me things, but I do try to be out there at 8.40 promptly!

Also, please don't let your children use any of the climbing apparatus, before or after school. During break times, we have a large number of adults supervising the children, but before school there are only 2 or 3 of us on the playground and it just isn't enough to supervise the climbing apparatus. So please keep your children off the pirate ship and the climbing apparatus in the far corner of the playground.

We also don't allow anyone to scoot or ride a bicycle on the school premises. We had a nasty accident a few years ago when a pre-school aged child on a scooter rode into an adult, causing a serious injury, so please don't let your children use scooters or bicycles on the school site.



Mrs Jones, our Family Liaison Officer or FLO, and I are on the playground not only to supervise the children, but also to provide you with a point of contact should you need to discuss any concerns which you may have; so please don't hesitate to come up to us and raise any issues you need to share. If you let us know about small issues when they first arise, we can often sort them out before they grow into something more important—so please come and talk to us about any concerns you have.

Failing that, if QPR or Wasps have won at the weekend, feel free to come up and discuss this with me, particularly if Quins have also lost. However, if both my teams lost, it's probably best just to stay away.

Buildings

Obviously we have come back to a greatly improved school building. It is fantastic to finally have an entrance foyer and office area which is suitable for a school of 420 children. Our days of having 4 or 5 of you trying to fit into our tiny cramped foyer are over.

More importantly, alongside the office we now have a fully equipped medical



room and a toilet and shower which are adapted to allow disabled access. This will allow us to treat your children's medical needs without compromising their dignity in anyway, which certainly wasn't the case when our medical facilities consisted of a bucket and a chair in Mrs Williams' office.

The money for this improvement was only found when Mr Paul Carter, the Leader of Kent County Council, visited the school at the behest of our then local councillor Mrs Elizabeth Tweed. They were both concerned at the lack of medical facilities at our school and it was only because of Mr Carter's direct intervention that funds were found. So, we owe him and Mrs Tweed a big debt of thanks.



now have a fort guarding the door! I just hope that the Reception children don't arm themselves with cutlasses, and stop us getting into the school. We have also replaced the steps which did lead into the classroom. We now have a ramp which will obviously allow easier access for those in wheelchairs, or with pushchairs. I thank the PTFA for all of the hard work they complete to raise funds for projects such as this.

We have submitted for planning permission our plans



for the extension of the hall, the kitchen and the construction of a second hall and removal room.

Unfortunately Sport England have raised an objection and we have had to amend our plans. We need to get approval from Ashford Borough Council quite soon so that we can then submit an application for funding to the DfE in November. There is only one window for such applications each year, and if we miss the November deadline, we will have to wait until November 2016 before

The PTFA trying again. Hopefully we can satisfy the demands of the im-Sport England and gain Sport England and gain improvements to the Re-approval for the development in time to bid for this year's round of DfE class en-capital grants. We

These grants are only available to academies and the opportunity of gaining funding for such a large scale development was a major factor in our decision to gain academy status. Fingers crossed that we can get planning permission and can then submit a successful bid.

If we are successful and are able to extend our hall and kitchen, we will move to having just two meal sittings with one at 12 and the second at 12.30. We would be able to have indoor PE lessons throughout the year, because we would have a second smaller hall in which to practice the nativity, concerts, assemblies etc. A larger hall would also allow us to invite parents into assembly, which would be great.

If we receive planning permission and the funding for the development, the After School Club mobile would be moved 20 metres or so further along the path whilst the construction takes place. Once completed, both the Breakfast Club and After School Club would be housed in the proposed large removal room which is part of the construction.

False Instagram Account

Last week we wrote to warn you that someone had set up an Instagram account in the name of Godinton Primary School. The site contains a welcome message under my name. A number of girls in Years 5 and 6 who use Instagram have been contacted by this site and have been asked to follow it. When they have done so, two of them have then received messages which purported to come from me.

Can I please categorically state that no children would ever be contacted by me or my staff through such social media. If your children ever receive a message on social media which purports to come from any member of staff, do not answer it under any circumstances. Ignore it and report it to us straight away. We don't send messages to children.

We have no idea who has set this site up and who is sending the messages. It is nothing to do with us. Unfortunately without Instagram's help, we cannot find out. We have asked Instagram to shut the account, but because Instagram is American, it is not subject to the same laws and regulations as a European site. The Godinton Primary School Instagram account is still up and despite our best efforts, it appears likely that it will remain so.

The matter has been reported to the safeguarding authorities and to the police.

I can assure you that the children have regular and comprehensive e safety lessons here as part of their ICT curriculum. However, I would urge parents to take note of what has happened and to pay very close attention to your child's use of the internet. Not only have the girls been sent messages from my name, but they have also received messages which supposedly came from classmates—but which were also false.

If you enjoy social media—and whilst I detest it, I quite appreciate that a great many people do—I quite understand that you are going to want to use it, and that your children are likely to wish to do so as well. However, I would urge you to learn from this incident and keep very close control on the social media which your children access.

Gate Guardians

We are very lucky to have Mrs Champion as a gate guardian at the school entrance from the Chimney's car park. Her job is to make sure that once a child has come onto the site, they don't turn and run home again, which they sometimes want to do if they realise they have forgotten PE kit or the like. It is vitally important that we are able to ensure that once a child has come onto the site, they don't leave for any reason.

However, we don't have gate guardians on the main entrance, nor the back entrance gates. Mrs Chessman used to complete this role for us on the back gate, but unfortunately she left us at the very end of the last academic year.

This is a very simple, but crucially important role in ensuring the safety of our children. If you are interested in taking the role on, please call in at the office and let us know.

We require you to start work at 8.35am when the gate guardians pop in and put their high visibility coats or wet weather gear on before walking out to their gates at 8.40 am. You come back inside at 9am and finish work at 9.05am.

The position is paid at £7.22 per hour and is subject to appropriate DBS checks and references. Please help us keep the children safe.