

# SCHOOL NEWS

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## Clubs

Please note that due to lunchtime clubs no longer taking place there will be no need for parents to book clubs for this term. Clubs such as Drama, rhythm gymnastics and karate have already been fully signed up for and will continue this term. We are hoping to introduce a new sports club on Thursday after school and possibly some breakfast sports clubs too. As the weather and light improves, football will start again and in the summer term, we intend to offer more opportunities using our outdoor ball court and field. We will send letters home with details of these, to the year groups concerned, nearer the time.

## Cold Weather

We noticed, especially at the end of last half term, when the weather turned particularly cold, that children were not coming to school adequately prepared. Please ensure during the colder months that children come with coats as well as named hats and gloves on colder days, as they will continue to play outside.

## Happy New Year!

We would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and a fantastic 2015. The children have made an excellent start to the new term and the new child-initiated topics are well underway already. The children have chosen to learn about volcanoes, earthquakes, UFOs, planet Earth, animals, magical worlds to name just a few! Their ideas have certainly brought our curriculum to life and most important of all, the children are learning about the things they have said they want to know and understand more about. Our new termly newsletters for each year group have been sent home today to give you a more detailed idea about what your child is learning. These letters contain some important key dates and information, so please take the time to read them.

## Handwriting

This week we have introduced a new style of handwriting to ALL children. It is known as a cursive style and involves the children joining all their letters. The key feature of our new style is that all letters start from the line. This makes joining much easier and helps pupils to develop a much more fluent and neatly formed style. We have been trialling this with some classes in school and have been amazed by the results so far. We will be delivering some intensive training to all children in the new style on a daily basis. These sessions will take place during guided reading sessions just for the first few weeks of term. Therefore, please bear with us whilst we get busy getting the children joining and please support us by continuing to hear your child read on a daily basis at home. On the reverse of the homework sheet sent home today, you will see how each letter is formed. Please encourage your child to use the new style when writing at home and make sure they are joining!!



## Parent Council

Our Parent Council will next meet on Monday 26th January at 5pm. We already have quite a number of items for discussion, but if you would like anything else added, please contact your class rep. If we don't cover it this time, it will be put forward to the next meeting. As usual, I will summarise the main points of the meeting in this Newsletter and the full minutes will be posted on the school website.

## Spring lunch menu and holidays

A number of parents have been asking for the new Spring menu. Please remember that this can be found under the 'School Information' section of the website. You can also find our holiday dates here too. This should be the first point of reference when booking holidays.

Unfortunately we will be issuing our first fines (EPNs) this term due to either persistent or extended unauthorised absence. The Local Authority continue to question us about our low attendance rates and what we are doing to address the fact we still have one of the poorest attendance rates in Stockport.

## General Election Day

The General Election will be taking place on Thursday 7th May. Due to the fact that our school is used as a polling station and there is an anticipated high turnout, we will have to use the school hall for the voting booths. Therefore, for safeguarding reasons as well as practicalities such as serving lunch, school will be CLOSED to children that day.

## Homework

As we informed you at the end of last term, the style of homework will be changing. There has been a significant amount of recent research which shows that homework is one of the least effective ways to boost children's progress. The most effective way to promote progress is marking and feedback - especially where the pupils have the opportunity to respond to marking and have their misconceptions addressed. Parental engagement in children's learning is also recognised as a more helpful factor than routine homework tasks.

Therefore, our homework now consists of learning key spellings and maths facts and completing at least 3 topic based challenges - some of which will provide opportunities for parents to engage with their children's learning. Homework will be issued every 6 weeks or so at the beginning of each half term. You should have received your child's sheet today. Please note the key assessment dates when maths and spellings will be tested and when challenges have to be submitted by. Many year groups also have maths homework set online using 'Active Learn' just as before - please remember to check this. If you have difficulties accessing the internet at home, pupils will be able to use the ICT suite at lunchtime on a daily basis for 20 minutes - these will be supervised sessions though children will be expected to work independently.

Homework is on the agenda for our next Parent Council meeting, so if you have any further questions, please forward them to your class rep.



Don't forget, you can keep up to date with school news through our Twitter feed. Follow us @EtchellsPS

Kind regards,

Cathy Beddows and the Etchells staff

