

Garden Fields J.M.I School

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Dear Parents,

I have a number of updates for you for this week as we go into the final week before half-term and our children can have a well-earned rest. It must be particularly difficult for them after a long period without their school routine and they have done very well to keep going for so long! I am sure that many are very tired and in need of a rest. We are nearly there!

This week we have been trialling getting each year group through the dining hall over our normal lunch period. We are doing this in such a way that all the tables are wiped down before the next year group come in and the children continue to play on a year group allocated playground. I am very pleased to say that as this has worked well we will be able to offer all year groups a school hot dinner, should you wish us to provide them with one, from the Monday after half term, that is **Monday 2nd November**: the menu together with a covering letter is attached to this email. Thank you to Mrs Corley our MSA lead and her team together with Mrs Keen our cook and her team for their hard work to organise this.

On another matter, I know that it is harder to communicate with our teachers at present in the way that we usually would, particularly with younger children whereby the teacher might have a quick chat on the playground. It is always possible to send an email to the office marked 'for the attention of' but I know that our teachers miss those opportunities for that face to face contact. I am therefore very pleased to announce that our Parent Consultations this year will be run using a 'Parents Evening System' which allows us to hold meetings by video (a bit like Zoom/Google Meet/Teams). We will send out more information later but please note that we are aiming to hold these after school on **Tuesday 24th and Thursday 26th November**.

We are very pleased with our children's response so far to our Recovery Curriculum comprising of the Herts for Learning Back on Track for English and Maths programmes and the ABC's of St Albans topic. Some parents have asked about the assessment of the children as part of this. Essentially we are continuously assessing our children with all the work that they do. Assessment isn't just about testing and certainly before Year 6 there is little formal testing in primary education. Because of the long period out of education that many of our children have had, we have spent the first half term helping the children to settle back into normal school life and school routines and expectations again.

However, teachers have been beginning to use some of our usual reading benchmarking materials to see how the children are doing in reading and will be moving on to doing some writing and maths tasks over the rest of the term so that we have really robust data by the end of term. Therefore, although our consultations will be in November, our first written reports this academic year will be in the Spring term.

The Autumn consultations will instead focus on the actual work that your children have done in books/folders, their learning behaviours and generally how they have settled back into school.

Today we have had our flu vaccinations and we managed to get through the whole school! Many thanks to Mrs Dorman, whose organisation was praised by the nurses as was the behaviour of our children, which is lovely to hear! A further session for any children who missed their vaccination today will be arranged for after half term.

And on that note, I have some rather sad news that Mrs Dorman will be leaving us after 9 years at the school. She leaves us after half term to take an admin role at Christ Church in New Greens. She has kindly offered to work a few afternoons after half term to begin with whilst we find and settle in a replacement. She will be greatly missed for her fantastic support to the school office and for all the medical support she provides for our children. We wish her all of the best for the future!

Have a good weekend everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Farrugia