



Friday 24th May 2019

Dear Parents / Carers

This has been a short half term for us all. I can't believe we are at the next holiday point and I bet you can't either! I hope the lovely weather continues so that you and your families and friends can enjoy outdoor experiences together.

Although the half term has been short, the children have been learning lots as ever! The **Hedgehogs, Rabbits and Bees** have been exploring traditional tales. It has been lovely to see and hear their communication and language development as they have been acting and retelling stories both inside and out. They have also been eager to share their number work that they have completed with the help of Jack's magic beans!

The **Bats, Robins and Frogs** have been enthused by their class text Beegu. They all made fantastic detectives when Beegu crash landed at school. The letters that they wrote to me were full of questions including conjunctions; how could I refuse their requests for Beegu to stay? We clearly have future engineers in Key Stage One too. They can design, choose and use materials to make a space buggy! The Year 2 children's SATs have been completed. They have, quite rightly, been calm and relaxed and proudly telling me that they have done 'their best ever work in their lives' – what more could we ask for?

I had a fantastic day with **Squirrels, Foxes and Spiders** on Tuesday at Poole's Cavern. I was impressed with how the children relayed and used their knowledge from their text and topic learning throughout the day. The children have also worked hard in maths. Decimals and statistics can be challenging but they are using their learning walls, CPA strategies (concrete, pictorial, abstract) and are using essential life skills of resilience and perseverance to secure and master their understanding.

As well as learning in school, may I thank you all for supporting your child's home learning too. The contributions sent in for our **Community Art Project** exemplify perfectly why it is so important that children have opportunities to be creative, develop and showcase talent and skills in all areas of the curriculum. The entries are exceptional and all unique. We are currently framing and displaying every single one and can't wait to show them off at Westwood College and then share them with you all once they are back in school.

Thank you also for your generosity of time and resources. Mr and Mrs Maydew and Miss Smith have been into school to share their sheep and chickens. They were excellent at answering the children's questions and explaining all about farming – an important aspect of our local community. The donations for our **school garden** have been very well received. Take a look at the developments so far. The staff came in on a Saturday to make sure that we are ready to 'get gardening' with the children after half term. I can't thank my team enough for giving up precious time at the weekend!

Once again, we have celebrated yet more sporting achievements this half term at St Edward's! Our Year 3 and Year 4 **football** teams showcased their competitive nature balanced with team spirit at Leek Town last week. I always feel immensely proud to be the Principal of St Edward's as I watch from the side-lines. Thank you to Mr Carter for giving up his family time so that our children can take part in these tournaments.

The staff would like me to thank you, once again, for the many comments and compliments that you share with us. We also appreciate and value your views and are available to answer queries and discuss and resolve concerns. Mrs Leese and I are out on the playgrounds in the morning and afternoon whenever possible and are happy to pass on messages and / or arrange face to face meetings with appropriate members of staff. Support staff on the entrance doors will also take and relay messages and staff will then liaise with you at their earliest convenience.

I have spoken with a few parents in relation to **uniform** queries (thank you for your support and understanding) but I thought it may also be useful to clarify a few points in my letter today. New to nursery children will be expected to adhere to the new policy in full from September 2019. However, for the rest of the school, V neck jumpers and school PE bags will be phased in over time. They are not expected for September and current uniform can be passed down to siblings. When items need replacing, please purchase new in line with the policy. Reasoning behind a school track suit, trainers and wellies in school is so that we can develop our active curriculum and promote positive health and well-being through learning experiences in school. We want to learn outside in all weathers – not just on PE and forestry days. We believe that children and teachers should have the flexibility to adapt and change the way they teach, learn and play. We know that the children will love to play in the snow on the school field when the opportunity arises! We are also planning to increase opportunities for our younger children to take part in sporting events and competitions – watch this space! We will be making an amendment to the policy giving you the option to agree that your child can remove their own earrings for physical activity in school. In terms of school bags...big bags have been identified as a health and safety hazard in school. Our environment is not big enough to store them but all children will have a class tray to store their book bag and personal items such as gloves etc. We also intend to work with the Middle Schools in terms of teaching children to bring and self-manage belongings as part of transition for Year 4 in the summer term.

I have been asked by a grandparent to raise a **health and safety** concern. It has been reported that vehicles are speeding on Ostlers Lane and there are concerns for the children's safety (and all members of the public) as they travel to and from school in vehicles and on foot. Please be mindful of this and drive responsibly at all times. On a positive note...**Fresh Start** had their kitchen hygiene inspection last week and, once again, achieved the highest rating of 5 stars! Well done to Jodie and her team and thank you for making sure that the children's food is prepared, cooked and stored safely!

A few more updates in terms of staffing...Mrs Shepherd is still with us but we are unsure of how long for as her house move is imminent! Mrs Rushton has now retired after a long period of absence. She was unable to join us for a farewell assembly but we wish her a long and happy retirement and thank her for work and commitment to St Edward's. We are looking forward to Mrs Johnson's return from her maternity leave after half term but are also sad that she will be leaving us at the end of the school year. She has been successful in securing a teaching position in a school closer to home, quite rightly protecting her work-life balance and time with her family. Mrs Johnson will be mainly working alongside Mrs Hordern in Bats and Mrs Clifford in Squirrels on her return after the holidays. She is looking forward to teaching many of the children that she has taught previously in the Early Years ☺. We will also be saying farewell to Mrs Eyre at the end of the summer term. As you will know, Mrs Eyre has been a much valued member of our lunchtime team and she will be missed by children and staff here at St Edward's. On a final note, remember to check out our Twitter page to share experiences and events from school @StedwardsC

See you all very soon for a busy last half term of this academic year!

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Mrs Machin
Principal

