

Millhouse News

14th January 2022



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Dates & Reminders

Wednesday 19th January, 5pm – Governor CARS committee meeting

Monday 24th January – School Teams Ministry Assemblies

Tuesday 25th January, 5pm – Governor Finance Committee meeting

Thursday 27th January, 9:30am – Year 6 Parents SATs virtual information meeting (information to follow next week)

Thursday 3rd February, 10:30am – Governor Premises Committee meeting

Friday 10th February – last day of half term

Monday 21st February – Non-Pupil Day

Tuesday 22nd February – Children return to school

Wednesday 23rd February – Parents Evening (virtual)

Thursday 24th February – Parents Evening (virtual)

Parent Information

Welcome back to the new term. We hope you all had a restful and enjoyable Christmas break.

Communication

Please make sure you check your emails regularly throughout the day, including your junk folder. Most communications are sent via email so it is important that parents check to make sure they don't miss anything.

Menu Change

On Thursday 20th January there will be a change to our school dinner menu. This is attached with this newsletter.

COVID-19 Updates

Since we have returned after the Christmas break, we have seen a rise in the number of cases of COVID-19. This we feel is due to the more transmissible Omicron variant and the fact that families would have spent more time socialising during this period. Although we have cases in all year groups across the school, we haven't been informed that there is anything to be concerned about as this is a picture across the country and most cases are mild and appear to result in a shorter period of feeling unwell than previous cases.

We still have our same protective measures in place and will continue to ensure everyone follows them. Our risk assessment has been updated to reflect the new guidance and rules from the government and is available on our website.

Testing & Isolation

There are new procedures and rules around testing and isolation and we have set out how these apply to schools in a separate letter which was sent to parents on Friday. Please read these carefully and feel free to contact us if you are unsure about anything.

To ensure all members of our school community have access to support with, and learn how to manage, their mental and physical wellbeing.

Wellbeing & Support

As part of our ongoing commitment to looking after our children's wellbeing and mental health and we are pleased to say we are now able to offer a counselling service and therapeutic interventions for the children. These sessions will be delivered by Ms Slade who is a trained counsellor, working with both children and adults.

Many of our children already know Ms Slade, who is part of our pastoral team and has been working with children, staff and parents to support children's behaviour, wellbeing and attendance in school for a number of years now.

Parents and staff can make referrals for a child to receive counselling (although parental consent is required) and there is a separate referral process and form in place that must be completed. This is will be available on our website, in the wellbeing section.

To increase access to and improve provision of reading for all children

Reading

We thought we would share with you some of the things we have done over the past 12 months to help improve children's reading across the school.

- Reviewed our Phonics teaching and purchased a subscription to Bug Club Phonics so that children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 can access phonics support and resources at home and in school.
- Raised the expectations of what reading areas in classrooms should look like and how they are used.
- Ensured children have a reading lesson every day on top of their English / Literacy lessons. These include, reading comprehension (understanding), reading fluency (accuracy and speed) and reading practice sessions.
- Identified children who have some difficulty with reading and ensure taught sessions are adapted for them as well as putting in place intervention groups or programmes for these children.
- Replaced old or damaged books as well as increasing the number of books in school for the children to read (both reading scheme and 'free reader' books) as well as making sure every child received a book from Father Christmas. We have spent approximately £23,000 on books since January last year!

As parents, you can support your child's reading development by making sure they read regularly at home both independently and to an adult. The more a child reads, the better they get and the more able they are to access all other areas of learning. Children who find reading difficult are likely to find many other areas of the curriculum difficult as they can't access what they need to do.

To enhance children's motivation and their ambition for their futures.

Inspiring Tomorrow's Generation, Today

We have always offered intervention groups during the school day as well as small group tuition and 1-to-1 tuition to some pupils. This year we are increasing our support available to children in the key areas of reading, writing, maths and wellbeing.

Statistically, if children leave primary school being confident and achieving the end of Year 6 expectations in reading, writing and maths, they are much more likely to achieve good GCSE grades as they are able to access the lessons confidently. We also know that some children will find some subjects difficult either through lacking confidence or having an identified special need. There are also times when things beyond a child's control can affect how they learn, such as trauma, bereavement or friendship issues among other things. Therefore, offering and putting in place additional support either in class or as an extra session during the day, before school or after school is important in helping your child succeed.

Since November, we have offered nearly 200 children in years 1-6, small group tuition before or after school. These sessions are free of charge for parents (paying for private tuition is around £25 per hour) and are with members of staff who know the children well and can really focus on each child's individual needs.

In addition to these tuition groups, we have intervention and support groups in place for every year group during the school day covering phonics, reading, maths, social skills and wellbeing.

Parents can support their child's learning by ensuring they attend tuition groups if they are offered and trying the following points:

- Ask you child 'what have they learnt today?' rather than 'what have you done' or 'what happened at school today?'.
- Practise basic skills with them, such as times tables, number bonds and spellings.
- Provide opportunities to talk about different things such as events that have happened, places visited (or would like to visit), favourite activities etc
- Provide opportunities to develop social interaction skills through activities such as playing board games, sports games, cooking together or role play (dancing, acting etc).

If you are unsure of what activities to do, parents can also look at our '**Millhouse Milestones**' which is available on our website (<https://www.millhouse.essex.sch.uk/Milestones.php>).