

Hillstone News

5th September

SNAG

Why not come along and join the SNAG group? This stands for School Nutrition Action Group. It consists of parents, staff and children all working together to provide the tastiest and healthiest food provision for our children. The dates for the year are as follows:

2nd October
13th November
22nd January
11th March
29th April
10th June

Dates

I am hoping to get a calendar of dates out to you by the end of the week containing trips, residential, special events, sporting fixtures etc.

Why not set up a payment scheme with the office so that you can spread the cost of payments for things like trips and residential.

PTA

The PTA are always looking for new members to help organise events and to come up with new ideas. They meet every Monday afternoon in the staff room—just turn up if you are interested in helping the school to raise much needed funds.

I hope that you all had a very enjoyable summer holiday. It's been great to see all the children back in school today, looking smart in their uniform.

PE kits and uniform are available to purchase from the office.

Please remember, children should not wear 'character' head bands.

I would like to say a huge thank you to the PTA who ran a magnificent summer play scheme. We were given a grant by the government so were able to run the play scheme for free which included a lunch. The grant was part of the "Happy, Healthy Holidays" initiative which aims to promote healthy eating alongside physical activity. We had approximately 70 children daily and they were all involved in preparing their own healthy lunches. The behavior of the



Last day of the play scheme

Budget Cuts

Like most schools, we have had to face budget cuts. This has resulted in some difficult decisions. At the end of last year we had to close Kindergarten and lost 3 members of staff who took voluntary redundancy.

This year, we are no longer able to afford to operate the walking bus or to offer swimming lessons to year 2.

We have also had to suspend the Golden Adventure trips for outstanding attendance. We have run this incentive for a number of years now and I am convinced it has helped our attendance to be above national. This is a tremendous achievement and it is vital that we keep up this good attendance. Lessons are so jam packed these days that we know any days lost will have an impact on learning. However, the golden adventure was costing £10,000 a year and we are therefore unable to continue with this incentive. We will still run a golden time activity at the end of each term for those children with 100% attendance and an afternoon with inflatables at the end of the year for those children who have 100% attendance all year.

I hope the situation is eased in the future.

School Improvement Plan 2019/20

- ◆ Assessment of Reading
- ◆ Working with Parents
- ◆ Art and Display
- ◆ STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Maths)

Healthy Eating

We are very proud of our food offering and acknowledge that our wonderful chef has transformed the eating habits for some children. We are very aware of the obesity epidemic and the benefits of healthy eating. As a result of this, chef feels uncomfortable that we still have as many sweets and cakes in school as we do, as we are a publicly funded body. Cakes and sweets should be seen as a treat that are given only occasionally. For a while now there has been a tradition that children bring in cakes and sweets on their birthday. As we would like to encourage healthy eating even more so, we would ask that you do not send in such treats for children's birthday. You can choose to give these treats outside of school, allowing other parents to make the decision regarding their child having the sweets or not.

For the moment we will still have sweets at Christmas and Easter as special events.

Please be reminded that children should not have chocolate in their lunch boxes. I will send out a copy of the lunchbox policy which gives ideas for lunch boxes, recommended by the British Nutrition Foundation.

Working in partnership

We know that working in a positive atmosphere with parents provides the best outcomes for children. We are really proud of all the opportunities we offer to children, in terms of residentials, music provisions, clubs and trips etc. The staff give up so much of their own time to ensure that these take place. Sometimes it can be very frustrating for staff when it feels as if this is not appreciated by parents and indeed that get criticised.

We also know that there are times when parents will have a concern. It became apparent last year that comments were made on Social Media sites such as Facebook, making parents quick to anger and become challenging towards the school and staff. This was often happening without knowing the full extent of the issue and was presented in an aggressive way.

The best course of action if you have a concern is to see the child's class teacher in the first instance and state your concern in a calm manner. They may not be able to see you immediately if they are teaching or have meetings planned but they will get back to you as soon as possible. Talking it over with the class teacher will usually shed some light on the matter and help to resolve it. If you are still not happy, then you can ask to see their phase leader. These are Ms Kinsman in the juniors (KS2), Ms Sheehan in the infants (KS1) and Ms Newman in Reception and nursery (foundation stage). If this still does not resolve the issue, you can then make an appointment to come and talk to Mr King or myself.

I would ask that everyone conducts themselves in a respectful manner. My staff should not be shouted at or have someone be rude to them. I have also been shocked, as have other parents, by arguments that have taken place in the school playground, where adults have used abusive language toward each other in front of children.

Keep in touch with what's happening at school by following us on twitter
@Hillstoneps or using the web site www.hillstone.org.uk