

Commonswood News on the Ninth



September 2017

Email: admin@commonswood.herts.sch.uk

Tel: 01707 880420

Fax: 01707 880422

Welcome Back & welcome to all of our new families!

I hope that you and your children have had an exciting and lovely break from school and are ready for a busy term ahead. It usually takes just a few days to get back into the daily routines and by now the children will have settled back into their usual patterns but are probably very tired by the end of the week. A very busy term lies ahead as you will see from the diary section and I am certain that it will be enjoyable and successful once again.



New teachers

I am sure you will join me in welcoming our newly appointed teaching staff Miss Ingamells and Mrs Scott who have all been busy over the holiday preparing their classrooms and lessons. Mrs Setterfield has also joined us and will be supporting Year 6 pupils.

A Huge Thank You

Thank you for all the gifts and delightful comments made to staff throughout the school at the end of last term; it is such a pleasure to work with so many positive thoughtful and generous parents. We would strongly recommend that you log on to Parent View (which can be found on the school's website) and answer the survey questions about 12 aspects of the school.



Twitter  - Why not follow what's happening at school through Twitter.

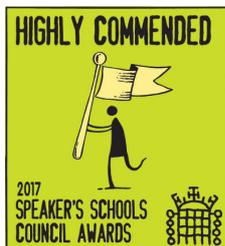
Parliamentary Review



Every year the government publish a 'Parliamentary Review' for education which seeks to showcase outstanding or considerably improving schools in a report aimed at highlighting best practice and raising standards in education. Only a small handful of primary and secondary schools nationwide are featured each year. A hardcopy of the review is sent to every school in the country to support the sharing of good practice. Each edition is edited by Rt Hon George Osborne MP and includes a commentary from Sean Coughlan (BBC's education Correspondent) and Mark D'Arcy (BBC's Parliamentary Correspondent).

It has been a huge honour that our school has been recognised at a national level and asked to share our outstanding practice. I have written the review which outlines our journey of school development. The review will be published later this month.

School Council



You may remember that last term the School Council entered the House of Commons "Speaker's School Council Award" competition. We are delighted to say that we achieved a status of Highly Commended and have now have the logo to include on our school letterhead. There were hundreds of entries this year, more than ever before, so we are hugely proud of the children's achievements. Also Commonswood School was highly commended following a nomination for the school's anti-bullying work.



Attendance

Good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects. Parents of children of compulsory school age (aged 5 and over) are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Department for Education collects pupil's enrolment overall, sessions missed and number of possible sessions available to them, where a session is equivalent to half a day of school. The Attendance Improvement Officer monitors this and punctuality on a termly basis together with evidence of the work carried out to bring about improved attendance for those causing concern.

Parents are required to:

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy of their children's school

- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify their child's school if he/she is absent. **This should be done on each day of absence.** They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the child returns to school.
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- avoid booking holidays during term time
- Provide a written **request** for absence making it clear why the absence is an exceptional, unrepeatable circumstance.
- ensure that the school are informed of any changes of contact details

Research shows that in general the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of KS2. Demands on standards for each year group is now greater than ever. It is imperative therefore, that children meet their milestones as they progress through school. Parents are notified of how their children are doing through parents' meetings and in the end of year report.

Commonswood Primary & Nursery School rewards good attendance weekly for cohorts of children from Y1 – Y6 through the presentation of attendance cups and attendance prizes.

Penalty Notices

At Commonswood Primary & Nursery School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. Persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect. If a pupil has more than 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in two consecutive terms (including unauthorised holidays) the LA may issue a Penalty Notice in accordance with current regulations following one warning letter. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. Applications to issue a penalty notice must be received within 10 days of the final absence cited to ensure the penalty notice is issued quickly. If the penalty is not paid within 42 days the LA may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

Punctuality

- Any pupil arriving after 8.45am should report to the school office. Parents must sign their children in stating the reason for lateness.
- A record of lateness is recorded in the 'late' book. This is monitored and parents will receive communication from the school if there are more than 2 entries per term. The expectation is that this will be addressed by parents with a rapid improvement in punctuality.

The importance of being on time:

- gets your day off to a good start and puts you in a positive frame of mind, so that you can make the most of your learning opportunities.
- sets positive patterns for the future. Habits are formed very early in life and in the long term you can't expect to keep a job if you're always coming in late;
- leads to a good attendance record and means you don't miss vital early morning opportunities
- leads to better achievement because you attend the WHOLE of all of your lessons

- leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable;
- helps you develop a sense of responsibility for yourself and towards others and is a sign of good character.

Healthy Packed Lunches

We know that it quite a challenge to be inspired when providing packed lunches every day. However, the school council reps worked hard last year to teach the children about healthy swaps to encourage less salt and sugar in lunches.

Children are not permitted to have sugary drinks, crisps and sweets in their packed lunches. If you require any guidance on what you could include in order to provide a healthy packed lunch, please contact Sian Mills our Family Support Worker.



Workshops

Workshops are designed to help you to support your children at home. The aim is to share information about what is being taught and how it is delivered plus share some tips on how to keep children engaged. All of our workshops are designed using previous feedback from parents.

Phonic skills are vital to children’s reading and writing development therefore support from home is clearly advantageous.

The phonic/Reading/handwriting workshops for parents take place on the following dates:

Reception	15 th September 2017 - Infant Hall 2.30pm
Year 1	20 th September 2017 - Infant Hall 2.30pm

Appointments with Teachers

If you would like a message to get to the class teacher before school please contact the school admin team who will pass on any urgent messages. If you would like to speak with the class teacher please call the office to make an appointment.

Secondary School Applications

Parents of Year 6 pupils will have received the ‘Moving on 2018’ booklet. The online system is now open for September 2018 secondary school applications. Further details and details for open evenings can be found online at www.hertsdirect.org/admissions. All applications need to be made online and received by 31st October 2017.

Traffic

The school operates a VOLUNTARY one way system in the Commons (keeping the school on the left hand side) at drop off and pick up times. Please be aware that strangers to the road may not be aware of this.



School Councillors

At this time of year, pupils across the school will be setting their own classroom rules. They also go over the playground rules and wet playtime rules and take responsibility for sticking to them. They also choose their school councillors, who pass on any concerns, ideas for school improvements and organise and run community events.

This week classes from Year 2 to Year 6 will be electing their school councillors who will meet for the first time to plan events for the coming year.

Parking on the Commons

Please do not block driveways and garages as this can be a major inconvenience to our neighbours.

Parking at the Woodside Centre is prohibited and could lead to vehicles being clamped.

Skern Lodge

Year 6 children will be heading off to Devon on 9th October when they will be taking part in climbing, abseiling, canoeing, surfing, high ropes, and mammoth zip wires archery tunnelling.... The list could go on and on. It's a very intense but extremely rewarding experience which this year virtually every child in the year group will be taking part.

Please note that the deadline for handing in pocket money, medical information and orders for Skern Lodge hooded tops is 22nd September.



Clubs

Not only are these after-school clubs fun, but they also help boost children's self-esteem and self-confidence. We all want happy, self-confident children therefore we aim for all children from Y1-6 to join at least one club in each academic year. We do have many children who have attended as many as 5 or six clubs over the last year which is fantastic!

By offering after-school activities our children get the chance to succeed in a range of different areas. Please encourage your child to join up to at least one club this year.

Clubs can be booked via School Interviews, online bookings will go live on 12th September at 4.00pm. If your child is in receipt of pupil premium funding, we can pay for one club for the duration of one term this academic year. Club providers will invoice the office for the payment.

Autumn Term 2017 Clubs

Year 1	Multi Skills, Tetra Football, Street Dance
Year 2	Multi Skills, Tetra Football, Street Dance
Year 3	Speedstacking, Street Dance, Tetra Football, Choir
Year 4	Speedstacking, Street Dance, Tag Rugby, Badminton, Tetra Football, Choir
Year 5	Street Dance, Tag Rugby, Tetra Football, Choir, Netball, Adventure Activities
Year 6	Street Dance, Tag Rugby, Tetra Football, Choir, Netball, Adventure Activities

Homework

Governors have recently approved the homework policy (available on our school website). It is very important for children to complete their homework set each week. Homework will be **sent home on Fridays** and collected in on **Tuesdays**. This provides children with plenty of opportunity to speak with

their teacher if they are unsure of any aspect of the work. Teachers will keep records of homework and contact parents if homework is not completed.

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

It is a parents' responsibility to look after children while on site. Please keep young children with you. They are not permitted to be on the field or play on the play equipment before or after school. Children are not permitted to play on the main entrance railings or climb any fences or trees.
Gates open at 8.30am unless

Polite Reminders

Smoking - it is against the law to smoke on any part of the school site, so please avoid doing so here or in the immediate vicinity of our gates where young children can suffer harm from passive smoking.

Dogs – are not permitted on the school site.

Cycles/Scooters - please dismount before entering the school site and leave cycles securely in the bike sheds and scooters in the scooter pods.

One way system; - a voluntary one way traffic system operates in the commons at the start and end of the school day. If possible please avoid bringing vehicles into the Commons but if this is essential please keep the school on your left.

Photos - it is not possible to take photographs on the school site whether inside or outside the buildings. This is designed to protect the small number of families affected by domestic violence or child protection concerns. This includes the use of **mobile phones** which is prohibited on site.



The Fox Club

We are delighted with our newly refurbished Community building which is home to our Breakfast, Lunch (Nursery pupils) and After School Clubs! Our children absolutely love it! We will be emailing home details of The Fox club which will also include the menu options

Family Portraits

Our school photographer will be in school on Thursday 5th October to take family portraits. A proof system will operate once again this year and will be possible to order copies that will arrive in good time for Christmas when many parents use these as gifts for other family members.

Harvest festival

Once again, the children will be taking part in our annual Harvest festival assembly. On Monday 2nd October, we will be celebrating seasonality and recognising how fortunate we are to have such varied and nutritious foods.

We will be building a mountain of donations with the children bringing their contributions into the assembly ready to be collected by the local food bank. If you are able to contribute, children will need to bring their food donation to their classroom first thing in the morning.

Some examples of donations are:

Dried foods such as pasta and rice, tea, coffee, tinned food – please ensure all food is within the best before date.



Friends of Commonswood

A huge thank you to the Friends of Commonswood for all their hard work in raising additional funds for the children last year. Thank you to all the parents who attended the fund raising events.

If you would like to join the Parent/Teacher Association, please contact Mrs Manning via the school office.

Vacancies

Could you be a Mid-Day Supervisor?



We are looking for a friendly, enthusiastic, and sociable person with a sense of humour to engage with our children while they eat & play at lunchtimes.

If you are reliable, patient and able to work well as part of a team please call into the office for an application form.

Hours of work are from 11.30am – 12.50pm Monday – Friday

All appointments are subject to a full Disclosure and Barring service and ISA clearance

School Cleaner Vacancy

A friendly and reliable cleaner is wanted at Commonswood School Hours of work 4pm – 6PM

Monday to Friday. Please call 01707 880420 for an application form.

Appointments are subject to Disclosure & Barring Service clearance.



'Commonswood Primary & Nursery School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Diary Dates

September	
15th	Swimming starts for Laurel and Beech Classes
12 th 2.30pm	Reception Phonics workshop
20 th 2.30pm	Year 1 phonics/reading/writing workshop
October	
2 nd	Harvest assembly –collection for the WGC food bank
5 th	School Photos
9 th – 13 th	Year 6 Skern Lodge residential trip
10 th	Parent Forum 2.30pm
17 th	Parents’ evening 3.30pm – 5.30pm Nursery to Year 6
18 th	Parents’ evening 3.30-5.30pm Nursery Parent’s Evening
19 th	Parents’ evening 3.30pm – 7.30pm Nursery to Year 6
20 th	INSET staff training day – children do not attend
23 rd – 27 th	Half term
November	
10 th	Remembrance Assembly – children are permitted to wear their youth organisation uniforms for the day.
December	
19th	End of term 12.30pm
January	
4 th	Term commences



Commonswood Primary & Nursery School is a Safeguarding School

‘All schools have a clear responsibility placed on them by the Children Act 1989 and by guidance from the Department of Education to safeguard the welfare of all their pupils. In doing so schools are expected to consult with Social Services if they believe there is a possibility that a child may be suffering from abuse or neglect.’ If you have any concerns about children please contact Mrs Seymour, Mrs Manning or Mrs Scatchard via the school office.

**Mrs G Seymour (Designated Senior Person), Mrs S Manning (Deputy Designated Person),
Mrs N Scatchard (Deputy Designated Person) & Mr S Burt (Deputy Designated Person for eSafety)**