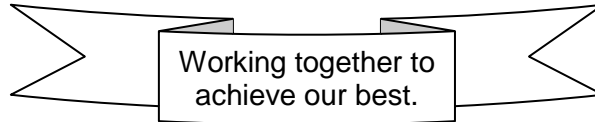




Newsletter

Issue No.7
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www.firslower.co.uk



Chair of Governors: Gareth Jones

Governors: Adam Campbell, Fran Sherry, , Louise Haigh, Annette Anderson, John Ashley, Joanna Milne and Tom Stean

Dear parents and carers,

Update on Reopening The Firs

We are so looking forward to welcoming all our children back to school next week and as the 8th March draws closer, we are very busy preparing for the day! With this newsletter you will find a letter which gives an update about many aspects of the provision we will be making for the rest of this term. Hopefully it will answer all the questions you might have but if you have any questions remaining, please just phone us or email us at office@firslower.org.

RWI 1 to 1 Tuition

We wanted to take this opportunity to congratulate our children who have been having their 1 to 1 RWI tuition sessions remotely recently. They have all worked very hard and we are very proud of them! A big thank you to Mrs Mercer for organising this and to Mrs Lacey and Mrs Eddy for delivering the sessions, which was a new experience for them too!

Chromebooks

We wanted to take this chance to let everyone know that we have managed to secure 10 laptops from the DfE and 6 from the local charity effort mentioned in our newsletter before half term. We have managed to send home 18 chromebooks and a wireless hub, to help with internet access.

This has had a really important impact on making sure all our children can access remote learning. I would like to say thank you to all the support from parents/carers for setting up and supporting children using the equipment and a very big thank you to Ellen Ashby, our ICT Administrator, for organising this project.

Teaching Assistant Vacancy - Fixed Term

As part of our Covid 19 recovery - Additional Support Programme, we have a teaching assistant vacancy to work as soon as possible, working Monday - Friday afternoon from 1.20 - 3.20pm supporting children with their learning. If you are interested in this post, please contact Sue A'Court or visit our website for more details. This is a fixed term post until 16th July, 2021 and the rate per hour is £9.62 - £9.81 depending on experience.

The closing date for this post is **Monday 8th March**.

Firs Remote Learning Survey

We were very grateful for 112 parents who contributed to our survey on remote learning and for the overwhelmingly positive feedback we received. It was also very useful to have some suggestions to improve and enhance what we were doing, in the best interests of all the children, such as expanding the very popular use of 'Community Time' in KS1 and ensuring French was included in KS2.

We were very pleased to hear that parents valued the support being offered by teachers through emails, calls and conversations on Google Classroom and that the majority of parents liked the mix of approaches:

- *'I think the mix of live, recordings and tasks set is working well, and is well structured, we know when to expect the work each day and feedback is received quickly, which is important for the children.'*
- *'I have been overwhelmed by the support and assistance offered'.*

It also came over strongly, that the Community Time sessions were of great benefit in supporting children's well being and helping them to feel connected as a group, with their teacher and importantly, with each other.

- *'--- absolutely loves seeing his classmates twice a week'.*

We realise that learning at home is not easy for many children and we were not surprised by the 15% of responses that expressed concerns regarding progress. We will be continuing to follow the additional support programme, begun in the autumn, to focus on helping children to revise missed objectives and bridge gaps in learning, as soon as children rejoin us from 8th March.

Below is a simplified break down of the results by question:

ICT Access					
1. Does your child have access to a suitable device?	Own device 61.1%	Shared 33.6%	Shared with several 2.7%	No regular access 0.9%	Other 1.8%
2. How reliable is home broadband?	Very reliable 46%	Occasional issues 48.7%	Daily issues 5.3%	No broadband 0%	
Academic Provision					
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree/Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
3. Current provision meets children's needs better than 1st lockdown?	56.6%	36.3%	92.9%	6.2%	0.9%
4. English supported well?	32.7%	58.4%	91.1%	7.1%	1.8%
5. Maths supported well?	43.4%	48.7%	92%	6.2%	1.8%
6. Good balance across curriculum?	38.9%	49.6%	88.5%	9.7%	1.8%
7. GC accessible & used successfully?	51.3%	41.6%	92.9%	3.5%	3.5%
8. Learning delivery working?	48.7%	33.6%	82.3%	15%	2.7%
9. My child is making good progress	14.2%	65.5%	79.7%	15.9%	4.4%
Well being & Pastoral Provision					
10. How many hours a day undertaking school work?	None 1.8%	Up to 1 hour 5.3%	1-3 hours 42.5%	3-4 hours 34.5%	4 hours+ 15.9%
11. How is your child feeling?	Very happy 27.4%	Generally ok 46.9%	Vh + Gen ok 74.3%	As well as expected 23%	Very concerned 2.7%

Central Bedfordshire Parental survey – Remote learning

The COVID-19 pandemic and periods of lockdown have been challenging for us all and like us here at The Firs, Central Bedfordshire want to find out how the resulting home learning has impacted children. Central Bedfordshire Children's Services team has produced a survey for parents that will help them understand more about how children in Central Bedfordshire have coped during the latest lockdown.

The survey will run until 11 March 2021 and they would really value input from as many people as possible, therefore, they are asking all schools to share the link with parents:

centralbedfordshire.research

Kids' Club

With The Firs Lower School reopening on 8th March 2021, we are very excited to announce the reopening of Kids' Club to all children, operating as it was before the end of Autumn term, with caps on numbers and continued separation into Year group bubbles.

Today, we sent out a Google form to every parent asking you to confirm your intention to continue with your previous Kids' Club sessions, in place from Autumn 2020. Any sessions that are not confirmed by **Wednesday 3rd March at 1pm** will be considered as cancellations, and reallocated to parents on our waiting list. Thank you for your support with this.

Comic Relief - Friday 19th March

Attached is a letter giving you information about how the school is supporting 'Red Nose Day' this year. It is on Friday 19th March and the children will be coming to school in non-uniform, dressed in something red. A ParentPay donation page is being set up and a link will be sent out to you beforehand - thank you for your continued support.

Tolerance - our value for March

In school, we will be talking to the children that tolerance is about accepting themselves and others, realising we are all different, valuing those differences and being understanding, caring to others and open-minded.

We are asking parents/carers at home to email the class teacher if they think their child has demonstrated tolerance, describing how they demonstrated this value. We will celebrate some of their achievements (if they are happy with this) in our weekly virtual Merit assemblies, which will start again after 8th March. Examples of tolerance might be:

- Listening to, and taking on board a different point of view from their own.
- Treating everyone the same/not showing favouritism, despite any differences that might exist.
- Being patient with others.
- Respecting and valuing the differences between people around them.

What people have said about tolerance:

- Tolerance implies no lack of commitment to one's own beliefs. Rather it condemns the oppression or persecution of others. **John F. Kennedy**
- Tolerance and acceptance and love are things that feed every community. **Lady Gaga**
- The highest result of education is tolerance. **Helen Keller**
- Tolerance is giving to every other human being, every right that you claim for yourself. **Robert Green Ingersoll**

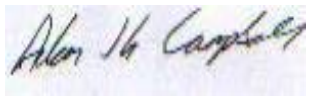
World Book Day 2021

Despite the unprecedented circumstances, we would still like the children to celebrate World Book Day this year, which is on Thursday 4th March.

You will be sent a whole school list of activities which the children can access, as well as specific ones for each class. Class teachers will let you know when their community time will be next week (which may be on a different day from usual) and will be World Book Day themed. Children at home and at school will be welcome to dress up as a favourite book character; wear something that represents them or simply show

one of their favourite books. Children attending school, please do not bring props due to covid hygiene reasons. It will be lovely to celebrate books and reading -even in a slightly different way this year. Many thanks in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam J G Campbell". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Adam J G Campbell