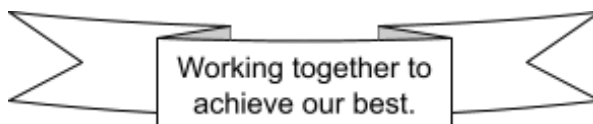




Newsletter

Issue No. 13
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www.firslower.co.uk



Chair of Governors: Gareth Jones

Governors: Annette Anderson, John Ashley, Franco Cameli, Adam Campbell, Louise Haigh, Kerry Mercer, Fran Sherry and Tom Stean

Dear parents/carers,

Sports Days this Week

The children in Pine, Y1 and Y4 have had a fantastic time taking part in their sports days this week. It is lovely to have this opportunity to congratulate them all for their really positive effort and the spirit of 'friendly competitiveness' that marked all the events. Well done to everyone. Below are a few pictures taken of the events that happened this week:



Sports Day videos

The YR, Y1, Y2, Y3 and Y4 sports day videos are now available on our YouTube page. You can access them by following the links below:

Pine	https://youtu.be/M6NDhqgqg0Q
Year 1	https://youtu.be/4rareBdzdcQ
Year 2	https://youtu.be/bpFRlQwUUhc
Year 3	https://youtu.be/bfyp-aDxJTk
Year 4	https://youtu.be/u9T_mkGxlrY

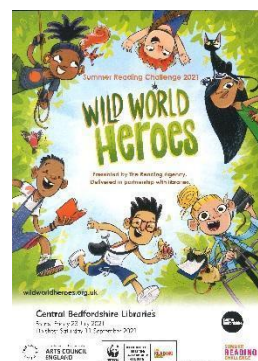
I would like to say a big thank you to the YR, Y1 and Y4 teams for organising and running the events this week and to Alanah Hamilton, the teacher in Hazel class, for working very hard to put together the final videos for us.

In case you missed it last week - Annual Summer Reading Challenge - Message from Ampthill Library

The annual Summer Reading Challenge, organised by The Reading Agency and delivered by public libraries, starts on Friday 23 July in Central Bedfordshire libraries and runs throughout the summer. Families may join at any stage during the summer.

We know you will be especially keen to encourage children to keep reading this summer and to support this please click on the link below to watch a video to share with your child:

[Summer Reading Challenge.](#)



ParentPay - Wraparound Care and Lunch Balances

We ask that parents check their ParentPay accounts to ensure all balances have been cleared by Thursday 22nd July, ie. Lunches, Wraparound Care, WOW Days etc. Emails will be sent out as reminders to any accounts that have outstanding balances.

July's invoices for Wraparound care have already been applied to ParentPay to allow for payments to be made by 22nd July 2019. If paying by childcare vouchers, please keep in mind that these can take up to 5 days to be received by us, so please action your payment by the start of the week beginning 19th July, to allow for time for the funds to be cleared into our accounts.

Any credit balances for pupils leaving us this summer will be refunded to the 'Parent Account' within ParentPay, by accessing your 'Parent Account', a withdrawal can be requested and a refund issued to the card used to make the original payment.

Media Permissions

We want everyone to be happy with the media permissions that are in place and so, as we explained in the last newsletter we are repeating the survey with a greater range of options. The link to the survey is below and we would ask that all our YR-Y3 parents please complete it so we know your preferences:

[Consent for use of photos and Videos](#)

I am sorry if you are one of the parents who have to do it twice but we are very grateful for your support in helping us to collect this very important information in the way most parents would like it. Thank you

Update on the Fun Run sponsored event

Thank you to everyone who has sponsored the Fun Run event which was held last week. We have had lots of sponsor money brought in which is being collected today, so we will be able to tell you next week, how much money we have raised. Thank you also to all the children who took part in this fun event, which is so special for our school and the money raised will be for the benefit of all our children at The Firs.



Organising collective efforts to provide gifts for teachers via WhatsApp

I know that staff always greatly appreciate the thank you cards and gifts that parents / carers give at the end of term. There has been a concern raised by a parent however, that some parents feel uncomfortable when they are asked to contribute specific sums as part of the conversations on year group WhatsApp groups. We have explained that these WhatsApp groups are not run by the school and such matters are not for us to 'organise'. We promised however, that we would pass this concern on and perhaps suggest that such arrangements are clearly presented as being voluntary. Thank you.

Holiday Activities and Food Programme

Central Bedfordshire Council have asked us to pass on information regarding the [Holiday Activities and Food Programme](#) that will be running over the summer holidays.

The programme is for children aged 5 – 16 eligible for benefits related, free school meals.

Please see link below:

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/xfp/form/249>

This link will take you through to a registration page and once registered and in receipt of a HAF number, you will be able to progress to a booking page, where you can find out about the range of activities on offer and book activities with providers direct.

All activities are free for children eligible for FSM.

Partners in the programme this year include 4YP, Barton Kids Club, Bedford Blues, Bedford Creative Arts, Dawn to Dusk, Grand Union Housing, Full House Theatre, FUN, Holiday Active, Kids in Action, Kidz Zone, Inspiring Music Service, Leighton Buzzard Sports Partnership, Woburn Safari Park and Youth Offending Service.

There is a wide range of activities on offer from holiday and youth clubs to creative arts and music activities and sports. Children can take part in a range of different activities, have fun and make friends and have a healthy lunch. This summer, all children attending will be able to pick up a free Disney Activity pack from the providers and those who attend a week of activities will be able to obtain a free back to school pack before they start back at school. Activities will be booked on a first come, first served basis so please ensure you let your families know about this opportunity.

For any questions please get in contact with Michelle Hart on 0300 300 5762 or via email michelle.hart@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

With this newsletter, there is a letter from **Marcus Rashford and Henry Dimbleby** on the HAF Programme.

French After School Club returns to The Firs

Information about French after school Club starting in September is attached to this newsletter. Please get in touch with Catherine Tobin on 07568154087 or email icfbedfordshire@gmail.com if you are interested in your child joining this club - thank you.



School Lunches

Thank you to all our parents / carers for your patience and support as we managed the temporary closure of our kitchen due to Covid 19.

As the kitchen was closed for two days this week, all pre booked lunches for this Thursday and Friday have been cancelled, along with pre-booked lunches for any children who have had to self isolate. For our Saplings and Year 3 children, any funds paid will show as a credit on the children's ParentPay lunch accounts and will be rolled over to next school year, unless a refund is requested. All school leavers, Year 4s and Saplings children moving into Reception, will receive a refund to the Parent Account within ParentPay, which then can be withdrawn, or saved for future use.

Caterlink have worked with us to organise the appropriate cleaning of the kitchen area and arranged the necessary staff cover, so that **our normal school lunch provision can resume from Monday 19th.**

Saying goodbye

I wanted to take this opportunity to say a public thank you and goodbye to two members of the teaching staff.

- Mrs Haddon

Mrs Haddon will be retiring from teaching at the end of this term. She has worked at The Firs for 18 years and in that time, she has taught children across the school, working in Year R, Year 2, Year 3 and now in Year 4. In that time she has always worked extremely hard to ensure that all her children receive the highest quality planned learning experiences. She has made a great contribution in her time at the school and will be greatly missed by everyone. On behalf of everyone at The Firs, I would like to thank her for her many years of service to the school and its children and wish her the very best of luck as she begins her retirement.



- Miss Blake

Miss Blake will also be leaving us at the end of this term, as she moves on to a new challenge, working in the private sector. Miss Blake has made a fantastic contribution in her time at The Firs and I know that everyone will greatly miss her calm positivity and her enthusiasm for her professional role. I know that all her colleagues and the children she has taught, will have warm memories of their time spent working with Miss Blake and I would like to take this opportunity, firstly to say how much we will all miss her and to wish her the very best of luck in her new venture in September.



Self Isolation

We would like to remind parents / carers that when Test And Trace request that individual children should self isolate or we need to ask a class bubble to do so, it is really important that everyone follows the guidance and avoids going out and making contact with others for the 10 day period. Thank you for your cooperation which helps to keep us all safe.

KS2 playground Pirate Ship

Thank you to the children for all the thought and hard work they put into suggesting names for our new pirate ship. There were many fantastic and very inventive names and you raised £122 for our PTA. The PTA and school staff have voted for their favourite pirate ship name from the many fantastic names the children thought of and a winner has been selected.

The pupil that chose the winning name will become captain of the ship on opening day! We can confirm that the winner is not a year 4 pupil. Due to supply issues with the timber, the pirate ship will not be installed as soon as we had hoped, however we are working with the playground equipment company to have it

installed as soon as possible. We will announce the winning pupil and pirate ship name after the summer holidays.

Teaching Talons visit Pine!

The YR children were enthralled by the amazing range of animals brought in by Teaching Talons today. There were many moments of awe and wonder as children had the opportunity to hold a giant African Land Snail in their hands, stroke a ferret, watch and learn about an owl and meet 'Chip' the dog. In fact Chip was perhaps one of the highlights of the experience, he certainly won out in terms of the 'ahhhh' factor!



Have a great weekend everyone!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Adam J G Campbell'.

Adam J G Campbell
Headteacher