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Heather Herald

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Issue 5 3rd December 2019

Dear Parents/Carers of Samuel A Obama

Sadly, due to exceptional staff illness, Science week this week has had to go on hold. Likewise, the open afternoon we were intending to have on Friday 6th December will also be cancelled. The children, where possible, will continue to work on their Christmas productions and as mentioned in the WEDUC message yesterday if we need to alter any of the performance dates we will let you know. Please be assured we are doing all that we can to ensure that we have enough staff in school, prioritising children's safety as well as their education. Schools do not take the decision to close lightly and if we feel, after seeking advice, that closing the school is in the best interests of the children, we will of course let you know as soon as possible. Illness and, more sadly, close family bereavements are not predictable nor planned and all staff appreciate your understanding during this challenging time.

Your child may not have their class teacher for some days this week, but support staff, at the moment, are well and firing on all cylinders. They will be doing their usual fantastic job supporting in all the classes as normal but please be patient if reading books aren't changed, spellings not stuck in diaries, homework books are not returned – as these will not be the priorities of the support staff or the supply teachers that are in school at the moment. When staff are well enough to return to school, they will gradually, over the following days be able to sort out these things for you.

I will endeavour to be around, as I usually am, at the end of the school day to support the supply teachers in dismissing the children and in the mornings to welcome the children into school. Your child's safety is paramount to us and I thank all of you for your support over the next few days until hopefully most staff will be feeling better and are fully fit and able to return to work.

Many thanks for your continued support

Best wishes,
Maxine Michalowski

Wintery weather

Over the past few days, the wet weather seems to have been superseded by some chilly days. It is important that the children have a coat—not a fleece or a gilet—to wear at play and lunch times. We like the children to enjoy the fresh air as much as possible—even if it is cold or there is a slight drizzle, so the right clothing to keep them as warm and as dry as possible, is essential. Lots of children would benefit from a couple of pairs of spare socks in bags in case their socks get wet if we are using the field during playtimes.

For most classes, the children have one outdoor PE lesson a week. At this time of year, an outdoor PE kit, a long-sleeved jumper, tracksuit bottoms and trainers, are essential. Shorts, T-shirts and plimsolls are required for the indoor PE session. Please see your child's class teacher if you are unsure which days your child has PE. Mrs Riley-Lowndes has a few school track suit bottoms and hoodies still available if you would like to buy one.

It seems prudent now to remind ourselves of our severe weather guidance. As already mentioned, the decision to close a school is never taken lightly. The safety of everyone is paramount—both in school and travelling to and from school. If there is a large amount of snow fall over night, we will send you a WEDUC message as early as possible. Also listen out for the announcement on Radio Leicester 104.9fm, we will also aim to get a notification on our Twitter feed and PTA Facebook page too.

Questionnaires

Thank you to all the parents who attended our Parents' Evening and completed the questionnaires – the full results of which will be found on our website shortly. It is a delight to see that so many families are very supportive of school and appreciate the hard work and the dedication of all the staff. As always, these questionnaires provide us with time to reflect and take on board your comments and suggestions as to how we can make further improvements to Heather school.

Some parents commented that they felt that they do not receive valuable information about their child's progress. Over the school year we offer two formal parents' evenings as well as a full school report at the end of the school year. Throughout the year we have open afternoons where parents are invited to come in to join their children in their learning and look through their books. This year we have trialled a slightly later parents' evening enabling us to share information from our termly maths and reading assessments – which I know lots of you have found useful. We are considering introducing a very simple settling in/how am I getting on report during the first few weeks in the Autumn term which will hopefully provide information early on in the school year rather than waiting until the parents' evening after half term. As always, if you have any concerns with your child's progress, please arrange to see their teacher as soon as possible rather than letting things build up over time. Staff are generally on the playground daily and will gladly arrange a convenient time to meet and discuss your concerns, alternatively you could always pop a note in the diary.

A few families expressed concern with regarding to behaviour and bullying. Thankfully the majority for children in school behave very well and when some children do make the wrong behaviour choices we find that most parents are very supportive and work closely with the teacher/school to help their child to make better informed choices next time. Towards the end of this term staff will be completing the annual review of our behaviour policy, and are always looking for ways to improve behaviour throughout the school day. Bullying is taken very seriously by all staff at Heather and if you have any concerns then it is important that staff are informed quickly so that incidents can be investigated, and support put in place as soon as possible. We have more recently had to deal with excessive pushing, shoving and kicking all of which seem to be part of a 'game'. Staff are clamping down firmly on this and your support in this matter is very much appreciated.

With regards to communication – all our communication is now done through WEDUC which an overwhelming majority of you say is great way of keeping up to date with what is happening in school. Additional information about school including a range of policies including the school's procedure for dealing with complaints can be found on the school website. If you haven't downloaded the app or have not set up your notifications for WEDUC then please do so as over the next few months we will be gradually reducing the amount of letters/permission forms that we are sending home as these documents will be sent via WEDUC, which will hopefully save a few trees too!

Finally, there were several families who do not feel that their child receives an appropriate amount of homework. Homework is always a contentious issue for both parents and teachers – one person's too much is another's too little. Staff are in the process of compiling a questionnaire regarding homework which you will receive shortly.

Gareth Metcalf – Build a Mathematician

Just a reminder that the rearranged workshop with the well-regarded Teacher and Mathematician, Gareth Metcalf, is now on Monday 16th December. This workshop is after school and is promising to be a very informative session. To support your attendance, we will be showing a film in one of the classrooms for the pupils. Please check your WEDUC for your invitation message where you are able to accept or decline to indicate if you are able to attend.

Lunchtimes

Please consider what you put in your child's lunch boxes – a gentle reminder that sweets and fizzy drinks are not to be included in children's lunch boxes or given to the children to eat as snacks at playtimes. Large bars of chocolate are not ideal either. At playtime snacks should be of a healthy nature such as fruit. Recently we have had quite a bit of litter on the playground. Please talk to your child about litter and that it is their responsibility to put their rubbish in the bin – particularly the children in Donaldson class, some of whom seem to be throwing their milk cartons into our butterfly garden.

Biting

Some of the younger children in school have been biting other children. This behavior is not accepted in school. Any incidents of biting will result in sanctions for the child concerned and parents will be contacted. We hope that in contacting parents, you can speak to your child to clarify that biting is not acceptable.

Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Dates for the Diary

Monday 2nd Friday 6th December
Tuesday 3rd December
Saturday 7th December

Monday 9th December
Tuesday 10th December
Wednesday 11th December
Thursday 12th December
Friday 13th December
Monday 16th December

Tuesday 17th December
Wednesday 18th December

Thursday 19th December
Friday 20th December

Monday 6th January
Tuesday 7th January
Thursday 9th January
Thursday 16th January
Saturday 18th January
Friday 24th January

Friday 7th February
Friday 14th February

Monday 24th February
Wednesday 4th March
Thursday 5th March
Saturday 21st March
Friday 3rd April

Monday 20th April
Saturday 25th April
Friday 8th May

Month of May
Monday 11th - Thursday 14th May

Thursday 21st May
Friday 22nd May

Monday 1st June
Monday 8th June
Monday 15th - Friday 18th June
Monday 8th June

Friday 10th July

Science Week - we will reschedule and let you know when
Flu Vaccinations

Cross Country @Viscount Beaumont 10:30am start - still on at the moment

Donaldson Christmas Production 2pm

Donaldson Christmas Production 9:30am

Churchill Sharing Assembly 2:30pm start

Year 1/2 Rowling Christmas Production 4pm

Year 1/2 Rowling Christmas Production 2pm

Gareth Metcalf Parent Workshop- Build a Mathematician - 3:30pm

Christmas Jumper and Christmas Dinner Day

Carol Service at the church involving all children but led by Year 3/4 Churchill Class

Judo workshops for 3/4 and 5/6 - PE kits in school

Break up for Christmas

Christmas Holidays Monday 23rd Dec- Friday 3rd January

INSET DAY - STAFF ONLY

School open for children

Whole School Theatre trip to Peter Pan at the Rep in Birmingham

Young Voices

Cross Country @Woodstone

Bangra Workshop for all classes - **NO CELEBRATION ASSEMBLY**

PTA Film Night - details to follow

Children break up for half term

Mon 17th Feb - Fri 21st Feb HALF TERM

School open - back from half term

Parents' Evening 3:30-6:50pm

Parents' Evening 3:30-5:00pm

Cross Country @Snarestone

School Breaks up for Easter

Easter Holidays Mon 6th April - Friday 17th April

School open for children

Cross Country @Griffydam

Spring Bank Holiday (change of date to coincide with VE Day celebrations)

Key Stage 1 Assessments take place across this month

Key Stage 2 SATS week

Unity Netball Tournament @Woodstone 4-6pm

Break up for Half term

Mon 25th May - Fri 29th May HALF TERM

School open - back from half term

Year 1 Phonic Screen Week

Sports and Health Week

Year 4 Multiplication Check over the following 3 weeks

School Closes for the Summer Holidays