

# The Forest Weekly News

## **THIS WEEK**

**Monday 5 July** Children in Pre-Prep brought in their Teddy Bears to join in and have fun at a morning picnic. Years 1 and 2 had a lovely day in Llandudno, packing in many activities, including a Punch & Judy Show, and a fish and chips lunch! Year 6 had a fun-filled day at The Trafford Centre.

**Tuesday 6 July** Reception and Year 1 held their own Teddy Bears' Picnic in the morning. Year 6 had a very tasty French picnic at lunchtime, courtesy of Mrs Cotton. Meeting for Year 5 parents.

**Wednesday 7 July** Mr and Mrs Askew visited. Speech Night at The Citadel.

**Thursday 8 July** An emotional Leavers' Service was given by Year 6 for their parents. School closed for the summer holiday at 12 noon.

## **FIRST WEEK BACK IN SEPTEMBER**

**Tuesday 31 August** Staff Inset

**Wednesday 1 September** (Choice of sandwiches, crisps/chocolate bar/orange juice/apple or banana) 8.40 School re-opens after the summer break and PA Welcome Back Coffee Morning in the school hall. *There will be no swimming.*

**Thursday 2 September** (Chicken tikka masala and rice/apple crumble and custard)

**Friday 3 September** (Fish fingers, chips, garden peas, brown bread/choc. ice)

Unfortunately the company that takes the DVD of the summer show has this morning telephoned to say that they have had a break-in and therefore the DVDs will not be ready for some time. These will now be given out at the start of next term and Year 6 copies will be posted.

We now have a new stock of pump bags, which are available in the school office priced at £4.50.

There is a copy of the minutes of the Parents' Forum in the entrance porch to the main house. There is also a copy on the website (attached to this copy of the Forest Weekly News). If you have any queries on the subjects that were raised at the Forum, please do not hesitate to speak to me.

Although the first few days back in September appear quiet, I am sure this situation will change very quickly once we return to school! There will be no after school clubs during the first week.

I am delighted that so many of you were able to attend Speech Night on Wednesday. This is the culmination of the school year and a grand finale for Year 6. I am sure you will all join with me in giving them our best wishes for the future. I hope that, as in previous years, they will return to let us know how they have settled in to their new schools.

The PA House Cup was awarded at Speech Night for the first time, so this is a reminder for children to start collecting ink cartridges and stamps, which can be donated to the school in exchange for house points. This is in addition to the points awarded for assisting at PA school events and winning PA competitions.

It has been a pleasure to welcome no less than three ex Foresters for work experience during the past few weeks.

Finally, I wish you all a very enjoyable summer holiday, and let us hope for good weather!

# FOREST PREPARATORY SCHOOL

## Parents' Forum

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2010

### Welcome

Mr Hyde opened the meeting by welcoming all parents and thanking them for taking the time to attend the Parents' Forum.

### Parents' Association

Mrs Bold thanked everyone for the support given to the PA. The money raised for the Summer Ball had been fantastic. The PA had funded many things during the school year, including visits to the school by three theatre productions; £5 per child contribution towards school trips; a donation towards the cost of a greenhouse; clothes hanger for the uniform sales; paper drier for Year 1; television for Nursery; sports equipment etc. A projector and screen are going to be purchased for the hall.

The PA had found it quite hard to sell tickets for the Ball but hopefully there will be more support next year. It was appreciated that, while not all parents would wish to go to the Ball, there were many other events that they could support. A questionnaire had been sent to parents a few years ago to see what events would be popular and something similar could be sent out again.

The PA had ordered Forest mugs, which would be sold for £4 at the forthcoming coffee afternoon and other events.

The new water bottles will be sold when the stock of old ones has been used.

Although the PA already offers support to new parents, it was suggested that a 'buddy' system, similar to the one operated for children, could be used for parents too. It was generally agreed that if a child was starting in Pre-Prep then the support was automatic but this was not always in place when a child started further up the school. Some parents volunteered to act as contacts for new parents. Mrs Bold suggested that children could start their first day at school at staggered times, which would enable the PA to give more time to new parents when they attended the PA coffee morning. A School Handbook is issued to all new parents and a Pre-Prep Handbook is also issued to that age group.

The PA are hoping to set up a 100 Club from September, where parents and staff can join for £12 a year. Winners would be drawn every month, with prizes of between, say, £15-£40 being given. Information will be sent out after half term.

Mr Hyde thanked the PA for all their hard work and Mrs Bold for her update. He then invited the audience to put forward any ideas that they may have to improve any aspect of school life, e.g. a previous issue had been the lack of communication but this had been satisfactorily addressed with the Weekly News, School Magazine, website, etc.

Has the school considered updating the current telephone equipment to allow different options, e.g. updates of school events, cancellations, the ability to report a child's absence, details of what activities are on a particular day, what PE equipment or kit is needed etc?

The school has been looking at a texting system that would enable parents to be contacted if an event is cancelled, children are returning late from a trip etc. It is hoped this can be set up soon. In addition, the website has been upgraded and any urgent messages, e.g. the school is closed due to inclement weather, are available instantly. As far as PE etc. is concerned, there are too many events to notify individual parents of specific kit requirements, but this information is always contained in the letters sent out with details of each event.

Why will parents who wish to pay by standing order have to do so through an outside agency from September and what will the cost be?

The Office of Fair Trading has introduced legislation to prevent money laundering, which prevents the school from accepting the payment of fees by instalments. A letter giving more detailed information will be sent home soon.

Could there be more variety with school lunches?

The school tries to make meals that are healthy and appeal to everyone. The Cook has attended School Council meetings to listen to children's requests and respond positively if possible. Children are able to decide what sandwich filling they would like. Halal meat is now an option. Fruit is available every day. Through surveys conducted by the School Council, 65-70% of children gave positive opinions on the meals. As there is limited time and catering facilities it is difficult to introduce more choice each day, however it is hoped to have themed days, e.g. French or Italian. It might also be possible to have a salad bar.

Could more hot meals be served in winter?

It is always necessary to serve sandwiches on Wednesdays, as children from Years 1-6 go swimming around lunchtime. Most meals are hot in the winter, or a hot pudding is available.

What happens if a child does not eat much?

There is good communication between the kitchen staff and teaching staff, and if it is felt that a child is not eating enough then the parents are informed.

Are children allowed to eat outside?

Older children are allowed to take fruit outside.

Would it be possible to have packed lunches?

It is felt that school meals are better for children: in winter they can eat something hot; new foods can be tried; good table manners are promoted; children can be helped to use knives and forks correctly; it helps children to be sociable. Several parents stated they would not like packed lunches as an option.

When children go on the residential visit to France, why do they travel by coach and not plane or train?

The school prefers to use a coach: it would cost more to fly and this might prevent some children taking part; it is safer to take children on a coach through the Eurotunnel rather than take them through an airport; children are able to watch DVDs on the coach. In addition, a rapport can be built up with the English coach driver who stays with the group for the whole visit, rather than different French coach drivers when there.

Can anything be done about the cost of school uniform, particularly the girls' dresses which are not as good quality as the old style?

The uniform tends to be more expensive, as not many manufacturers use the colour purple. Regular reviews are carried out and changes made when possible, e.g. the swimwear is going to be changed from purple to black. A new blazer sample is currently being made up which, if satisfactory, will be introduced. This should be cheaper and more easily laundered. Enquiries will be made to see if a cheaper and better quality dress can be found.

Can parents be asked for help when items need procuring, e.g. sources of purple material?

This is something that can be considered.

Is it possible to change from briefcases to bags carried on the back?

The current school bag can be used up to Year 5. It might be possible to improve on this and get one that also accommodates the water bottle.

When costumes are acquired for school events, could parents be asked to donate them back to school for future occasions?

Some parents like to keep costumes for sentimental reasons and it is therefore felt inappropriate to have a formal system but some outfits have been donated. Some parents make loans back to the school, e.g. Roman or Egyptian costumes.

What has happened to the picnic table outside Reception?

All four tables have been disposed of for safety reasons and will be replaced with two new ones. It is felt that only two tables are used.

Can House Points be given for helping on Garden Day?

10 House Points will be given for every family member who attended.

Year 6 parents are buying a leaving gift for the school – parents are thinking about a clock but would a bench be better?

A bench would be preferable.

Why is a tree in the garden cordoned off?

A tree surgeon regularly inspects the trees and during his last visit he recommended this course of action as a safety precaution prior to the removal of some branches.

(Note: Since the meeting, the tree surgeons have carried out the necessary work on four trees. There is an ongoing programme of tree maintenance.)

RHS Show, Tatton Park

Mrs Crouch requested that any parents going to the Show look at the school's competition entry and complete a slip to say it is the best! There is no charge this year for children.