

Dear Parent/Carers,
Happy New Year and welcome back to the Spring term.

'There are far better things ahead than any we leave behind' – C.S. Lewis

What a wonderful positive start to the term when I was meeting/greeting families at the front gate on Monday morning. We are fortunate to have such lovely children and lovely families so thank you for all your Happy New Year wishes.

It was good to see all the children back in Assembly and hearing all about their Christmas presents. It seems that they were all on the good list! (as I would expect).

Internet Safety

At school we teach our children about being safe online but we also want to ensure they are being kind to each other online. If your child has been given a new internet device i.e. tablet, laptop, computer or mobile phone then you may want to look at the information on the links below to help your child.

<https://www.bbc.com/ownit/take-control/own-it-app>

https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_uk

School Development

As you may be aware the school has reduced in the number of children with Physical and Medical learning difficulties accessing a place at the school. As we are no longer an ARP (since September 2017) we have had a significant cut in our school budget. This in turn has led to a reduction in the number of Leadership and Support staff we have at school and at the end of the summer term we had 5 posts that were made redundant. However we are a hard-working and dedicated team of people at Whitehouse and will always try to support our children to the highest standard we can. On a positive note we do have some volunteers and students on placements which provide great support for the children and are always looking for further volunteers to help in school. The school office is particularly busy and cannot always answer the telephone or the door immediately, so please be patient if you are telephoning school or visiting the office. Thank you.

Like other schools nationally, we are reviewing our Curriculum at Whitehouse in-line with the new Ofsted inspections. We already have a vibrant and rich curriculum which we are refining to ensure it meets the needs of all of our children and ensures success for them in the future. We have our new long-term plans on the school website and we enhance the curriculum with our; Challenge Days, Special events, International, Cultural Studies, Music and Science weeks and after-school/lunchtime clubs.

Please find the school Spring Term calendar with this letter. We do try to give as much advanced warning as possible of the events but please remember that occasionally events have to be changed due to circumstances beyond our control.

This academic year we are continuing to focus on:

- Improving children's skills in Reading and Writing,
- Improving children's fluency, reasoning and problem solving in Maths
- Enabling children to use and apply Maths and English across other areas of the curriculum such as History and Geography
- Improve children's knowledge of the natural world and environment
- Continue to develop a good Growth Mindset and positive attitude to learning....and life!

You may be aware of the activities and opportunities for families in the local area but if not and you are looking for something new this link may help;

<https://www.stocktoninformationdirectory.org/kb5/stockton/directory/family.page?familychanelnew=0>

Absence/Illness of Children

It is very important that parents report any absences of children to the office on the first day and every day after. This can be done through a telephone call, leaving a message 01642 678212 or texting through the school coms 01642688199. If school has not been informed about an absence the office staff will follow up with a phone call as part of our safeguarding procedures. The local authority requires that these absences be followed up in writing when your child returns to school.

Adverse Weather Conditions

We will always try our best to remain open (and warm) for the children to attend school. However if there are severe weather conditions which affect the school and a decision is taken to close the school, parent/carers will be notified through our school comms texting service, a notice on the school website, Stockton Borough Council website and publication on local radio stations.

Park and Stride

Thank you for your continued support in parking away from school and walking the children to school. This helps to ensure the safety of all our children. Parking is available at Sainsbury's and behind the Elm Tree Shops.

Class Assemblies

We will be starting our Class Assemblies this term. This is a valuable experience for the children to develop their speaking skills in front of an audience. It also gives parents and visitors an opportunity to see all the hard work the children are doing in class. Thank you for your continued support at these and all our school events.

We try to keep parents and the community informed about all the great learning opportunities happening at Whitehouse through our school website which can be found at: www.whitehousepri.org.uk/

With best wishes for another busy and successful Spring term,

Mrs S Randle
Head Teacher