



Parent Newsletter

Friday 14th January 2022

School Clubs and School Tuition resume this coming week. Please note that Tuition is by invitation only as resources are limited and funding ring-fenced.

Ms Robinson has prepared a presentation on Literacy at Coombe Hill and includes information on how you might support your child. It can be found here.

<https://www.coombehilljuniors.com/parents/supporting-your-child/literacy>

Does your child suffer from separation anxiety?

Please see below (page 3) for details of sessions on how to support your child with this issue.

I noticed today how many pupils were late for the start of school - lateness really does affect their learning and often disrupts learning for others too. Please could children be lining up to go in at the following times:

Year 3 - 8.30
Year 4 - 8.35
Year 5 - 8.40
Year 6 - 8.45

In today's newsletter

- **Pandemic and staffing issues**
- **Trips and visitors fund - crisis**
- **The parent survey - early response to feedback - communication**
- **The return of Strictly Coombe Dancing**
- **Rights Respecting Schools**
- **Green Team poster competition**
- **Why your child might not be writing at national standard - YET!**
- **The school story**
- **Details of separation anxiety workshops**
- **Learners of the Week**

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the news of parties in the higher echelons of government during the pandemic seem to make the headlines every day, I should like to thank my staff for the incredibly professional way that they continue to carry out their work - and the sacrifices that they make to ensure that they are in school and working. I am so grateful to what is a fantastic team.

This second week back has been hard and we have been a thread away from having to make some very difficult decisions as the **virus continues to bite staffing levels** and create

a shortage of supply staff. Mrs Carlton has been brilliant at looking at timetabling solutions but even she is running short of ideas! My huge thanks to members of the senior management team who have had to cover lessons so much this week and for whom it has been hard to balance this with their other duties of keeping the school running - but actually that thanks spreads out to everyone in the school who continue to be so flexible and focused on doing the best for children.

Our **Trips and Visitors Fund** is in a sorry state and this means that any planned trips, visitors or indeed DT project work are in danger of not happening - with the extreme pressures on our budget exacerbated by the pandemic, it will be impossible for us to offer the additional activities - that I know year teams wish to organise - without your support. This fund pays only for events in your child's year group and any funds unspent follow them up through the school - it is the only way I have been able to manage to provide a budget for such visits like the Hobgoblin Theatre or trips out of school. Please go to your Parent Pay account and support this fund if you possibly can. Thank you - and thank you to the small number of parents who have already supported this fund.

Thank you so much for all the positive and kind comments that you submitted into the **parent survey** which closes at the end of the weekend. It is not quite too late if you wish to respond.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRyBm6QTcfqgA9vdF62Dgqpcp6iCLC2ztmzHY6KEVbQMt9DA/viewform?usp=sf_link

I am particularly grateful for the thoughtful feedback on areas where you think we need to improve - that is the point of this process after all. There were in addition, I think, two particular comments that suggested parents were frustrated or unhappy about something unspecified that involved their child. All I can do is ask that you contact me directly with details so that I can put it right - if we do not know that a parent or child is unhappy, we can not do anything about it. One of the reasons why as school leaders we try to make ourselves visible at the start and end of the day is to facilitate such early communication (perhaps a little less so this week as staff have been so busy covering lessons).

One thing I have known for certain as a Head is that you will never please everyone - one example of that, is my initial look at the responses tells me that many of you regard communication as a strength of the school while a couple of other parents felt there is too much communication - one going so far as to say it is affecting people's mental health. While I know that many parents appreciate receiving Parent Pay reminders, I will look closely at how we might rationalise them further.

Those of you who are missing Strictly Come Dancing on TV might be delighted to hear that its better and more glamorous sister show, **Strictly Coombe Dancing** is returning to screens (well a screen) later in the year. Children are learning their dances now in PE lessons, and will eventually put together a routine that the class will vote on to choose their class couple for our finals. It is too early to say how big an audience we will be able to accommodate for this event at the end of term but if necessary, Mr Held has his usual creative range of ideas on how we could record this so as many people get to see it as possible.

My thanks to Ms Lucioni and the **Rights Respecting Schools** Ambassadors for their lovely assembly on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and our bid to receive a silver award as a Rights Respecting School. It is important to give the message that all children have rights across the world but also I have reminded children that they have a part to play in respecting each other's rights - the right to an education (not distracting someone

else from their learning) and the right to play (not stopping someone from joining in), for example. This is where I took the opportunity to remind pupils that we are ALL Coombe Hill!

Well done to Evie Jones who won our **competition to design a poster to promote the Green Team's** message about being environmentally friendly and safe when travelling to school. The winning poster was chosen by the Green Team. Mr Held has invested in a giant copy of this poster to be displayed where drivers and pedestrians might see it. I doubt you will be able to miss it!

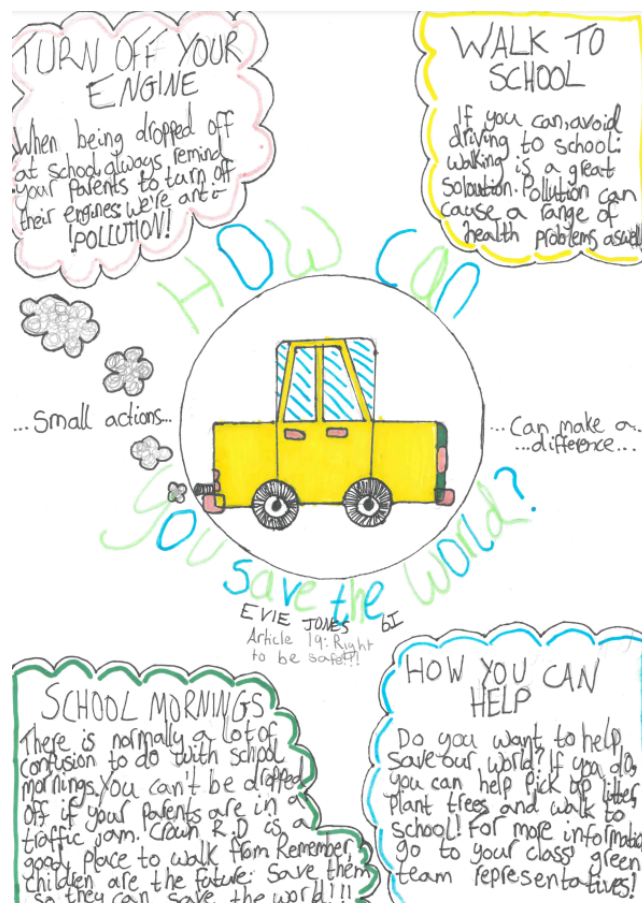
I stopped an older child today and spoke to him about his lovely writing, great vocabulary and wonderful ideas but told him that, at present, his work simply could not be at **national standard**. Staff in school are hammering home the message to children at the moment about the use of capital letters and full stops as a basic expectation. Without it, pupils simply cannot reach national standard and this is equally true for Year 3 as it is for Year 6 (even Year 2 pupils are expected to regularly use full stops and capital letters accurately). Clearly there are many other facets of writing for children to include as they get older but the pandemic has taken its toll on even basic punctuation - I

suspect auto-correct has not helped - and this must be the focus for all of us if we are to maintain standards. I am asking parents to support us and to keep reminding children about this and to create opportunities to practise accurate writing at home in addition to what we are doing inside school. At the top of the newsletter is a link to Ms Robinson's presentation on Literacy at Coombe Hill and includes further information on how you might support your child. There is information on the website about other subjects too.

Well done to class 4A on their wonderful first chapter of the **school story** (complete with full stops and capital letters - mostly!) following Rania's winning opening - the next class to take on the story will be 6L who submitted some great ideas. If you want to see how the story is going it can be seen on the school website:

<https://www.coombehilljuniors.com/pupil-pages/our-school-story>

We have a number of children who are clearly suffering anxiety and in particular around separation from the parents - we have arranged with our mental health support team for two workshops to take place for parents that might help with this. These are online sessions led by an education wellbeing practitioner just for Coombe Hill parents. Please see more information in [this flyer](#) and if you are interested in attending, [complete this form](#) in order to secure your place on the workshop - a link for it will be sent out to participants nearer the time along with some additional resources. The sessions are taking place on Friday 21st January at 9.30 am to 11 am and Friday 28th January at 6.30 pm to 8pm. You only need to sign up for one.



Well done to our Learners of the Week who were nominated for the disposition, “I am polite, kind and encourage others”. As I tell pupils regularly, kindness is one of the qualities that society needs and we should all value the most.

3P	Amelia C	5D	Eva
3C	Zayd	5C	Ollie
3R	Sienna	5H	Kevin
4R	Marie	6I	Tobias
4A	Peter	6L	Jabiyah
4BC	Angelina	6C	Divik
4M	Art	6S	Yaseen

And to our Writers of the Week

3C - Ibrahim for writing a fantastic diary entry.	4M - Aadit for being more ambitious with his sentence structure and use of conjunctions	5C - Karina for improving her written work and writing an impressive ghost story introduction.	6I - Thea for her amazing balanced argument in literacy.
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And our Maths Mountaineers

Year 3 - Jack (3R) for trying hard and persevering when things get tricky.	Year 4 - Fatima Al (4M) for her perseverance and taking charge of her learning.	Year 5 - Amir Z (5H) for always showing great perseverance in lessons and making valuable contributions to class discussions.	Year 6 - Poppy (6I) for her fantastic progress and improved resilience during Maths. You are now an independent mathematician!
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Attendance for the week

The whole school attendance this week is 93.4% The class with the highest attendance is 4BC, who achieved attendance of 100%. [Really well done to the pupils of 4BC.](#)









Advice to parents/carers about sharing images of children on social media

We ask parents/carers not to share any of these pictures/videos on social media, where other people's children can be identified, as sharing images in this way could place some children and families at risk.

We ask that parents/carers who do want to share pictures/videos of their own children on social media to make sure they understand who else will be able to view these images. We suggest the use of privacy settings to make sure only friends can see your profile and photos, and that geo-location settings are not shared.