



The Nodehill Newsletter

Friday, 4th September, Autumn Term 2009

Issue: 431

Dear Parents,

I am pleased to inform you that the autumn term has got off to a splendid start. The beginning of a new academic year is always a very exciting time, particularly for new fifth years and there is nothing to beat that opening assembly when we all gather together for the very first time.

WELCOME

We welcome all the children and families who have joined the school as well as new teachers Mr. Strike, Mr. Manchemat and Miss Wildon. We also welcome back Ms. Sivier from her maternity leave.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Please find attached to this newsletter several documents that I hope you will find useful and informative.

- Diary for the autumn term, including term dates for 2010 spring and summer terms
- Homework policy timetable and guidelines
- Behaviour policy
- A curriculum map for each year group
- Details of school journeys to East Dene, Wootton, London and Brittany
- Extra curricular activities
- Attendance policy and guidelines

Please note that all children will be issued with a paper newsletter every week. The weekly newsletter can also be found on our website www.nodehill.iow.sch.uk

ABILITY SETS IN YEARS 5 AND 6

Although the majority of subjects are taught in mixed ability groups, pupils are placed into ability sets for Literacy and Numeracy. This allows us to match the speed of work and approach to teaching more closely to the needs of individual pupils. Although the basis for this setting is ability, this is not the only or in some cases the most important of the criteria. For instance, some pupils work better secure at the top of a lower group whilst others of similar ability perform better under pressure at the tail end of a fast group. We try to place each child in the group that is best suited to their way of working and so to ensure the best possible progress.

At the forthcoming parents' evening, the staff will be pleased to discuss your child's new placement for the year ahead. We aim to be very flexible with setting and do of course keep you fully informed when we feel it necessary to change sets during the course of an academic year. Fifth year pupils will be placed into sets after they have completed a series of baseline assessments.

ABILITY BANDS IN YEARS 7 AND 8

In years 7 and 8, we organise our pupils into three broad ability bands for many of their studies. Once again, we aim to place pupils in groups where we feel they will make maximum progress and keep parents fully informed if and when placements are changed during the course of the academic year. The pupils are also set for mathematics in both year groups.

PUPIL PLANNERS

Your child has been issued with a personal planner. Although it's main purpose is to record homework, it also contains other information that should be useful for pupils and parents e.g. the home school agreement, times of the day, school expectations, our code of conduct, anti bullying policy, and records for rewards and sanctions.

PARKING PERMITS

Once again, as part of the School Travel Plan, and in keeping with the Healthy Schools award, we offer parking permits to parents. The scheme allows the permit holder to park free of charge in Chapel Street car park from 0800 – 0830 and 1500 – 1540 each weekday. The benefits of this scheme are that pupils can get their daily exercise walking in from Chapel Street, congestion and pollution is reduced outside Nodehill at peak times of the day and pupil safety is therefore increased.

If you would like one of these permits, please collect from the school office.

CYCLING TO SCHOOL

As part of policy on sustainable travel, we actively encourage our pupils to cycle to school, on the basis that parents deem they have the required cycle skills. We provide secure, covered cycle racks in the Orchard Street playground for cyclists and we will continue to provide cycle training in the autumn and summer terms to develop cycling skills.

MUSIC TUITION

The school is able to offer music lessons from our team of peripatetic teachers at a cost of £25 per instrument per term. In summary

- Pupils receive a twenty minute lesson every week and the lesson time changes each week. Teaching groups consist of a minimum of three and a maximum of five pupils although in some cases, individual lessons are offered to more advanced players.
- The school loans instruments free of charge wherever possible, but this does not include the cello, double bass or percussion instruments.
- Tuition is available for brass, woodwind, strings and percussion but not for piano, keyboards or recorders.
- Pupils who are members of the brass band are provided with an instrument and receive an ensemble practice and a full band rehearsal every week free of charge. Should parents also require lessons for their children from a peripatetic teacher, termly fees then apply.

If you would like your son/daughter to receive lessons or join the beginners brass band (no previous experience required), please complete the pro-forma at the end of this newsletter and return to the school via your child's form teacher as soon as possible. Please **DO NOT** send any money as invoices will be issued when lesson arrangements have been finalised.

SCHOOL MEALS

Pabulum, our caterers, have informed me that the cost of a school meal for the forthcoming year will be £1.95. To apply for free school meals please contact the Isle of Wight Council on 823455. Free meals are available to children of families in receipt of Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are not required for use whilst at school. If, however, it is absolutely necessary for a mobile phone to be brought into school, it **MUST** be clearly named and handed into the school office before the start of the school day and then collected at the end of the day. Mobile phones will be confiscated from pupils who do not follow this procedure and their parents will be expected to collect the phone in person from the school office. **We ask parents to actively discourage their children from bringing mobile phones to school.**

PTA

The PTA will be having their AGM on Wednesday, 16th September at 6.00pm in the library. Do please come along and support the work of the PTA who discuss matters of interest concerning the school and education generally; organise events to raise money to purchase equipment for the school; and meet socially to provide a link between home and school.

No. 7 BUS

I have been informed that there has been a change to the timetable for the No. 7 bus that serves Shorwell, Brighstone and the West Wight. The bus will depart from the bus station at 3.25 pm each day which of course makes it quite impossible for our children as our school day does not end until 3.20 pm. Therefore, as a temporary arrangement, I have instructed the children concerned to leave the school at 3.15 pm each day to ensure that they catch their bus home. Should they miss the bus they will have to wait for another hour! Needless to say, this unsatisfactory situation needs to be quickly resolved by Southern Vectis in consultation with the Isle of Wight Council as your child is missing valuable curriculum time and the school has a duty of care until 3.20 pm. I have suggested to the Chief Executive of the Council that either the departure time from the bus station is rescheduled to 3.30 pm or a Wightbus is provided for Nodehill children. (I understand that a neighbouring school that has pupils living in the West Wight area is served by a Wightbus.)

Finally, I have been advised that there is likely to be further industrial action on Friday, 11th September when there will be no bus services available on the Island.

CONGRATULATIONS

Our congratulations go this week to

- Mrs. Green – who gave birth to her daughter, Rose, two days after the end of the summer term.
- Mr. Lashley and his son Daniel who completed their cycle ride from Lands End to John O’Groats.
- Daniel Poole (year 7) who won the Nodehill summer photo competition.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. D.R. Morris
Headmaster.