



PORTWAY JUNIOR SCHOOL

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14th March 2016

Dear Parents and Carers,

How lovely it is to see a bit of sunshine and feel like spring is on its way! It's quite worrying, though, how quickly the year seems to be going – only two weeks until Easter. It has been a positive term and everyone at Portway has been working hard. The team point competition is very close this term – Diamond are in the lead but they are closely followed by Sapphire and Ruby. The winning team's reward will be an activity afternoon after the Easter break.

Parents' Evening – Children Invited

A reminder that Tuesday and Wednesday, the 22nd and 23rd of March, are the dates for parents' evenings. Can I suggest that you arrive ten minutes before your appointment time so that you can collect your child's books and folders from the hall and look at them before you meet with the teacher, then take them with you for your appointment. This year we want to try a new approach to the meeting you have with the teacher. We want children to attend the meeting so they can hear what the teacher has to say about their learning, behaviour, strengths and areas to improve. Please, if you are able, bring your child/children with you.

As ever, a main area for discussion at Parents' Evening will be your child's progress; teachers will be discussing starting points and the Age and Stage your child is working at. In doing this they will be sharing with you the most up to date information on how well your child is doing; how well they are progressing in school and how we can work together to best support them.

There will also be a Book Fair in the hall on both nights and the opportunity to buy school uniform.

Absence Procedures

Just a reminder of procedures if your child is absent from school. Could you please contact school before 9.30 am on the day of absence? There are several ways you can do this. You can ring and leave a message on the answering machine, please speak clearly, by email to admin@portwayj.derby.sch.uk or by sending a text message to +447786208889. Please provide the reason for absence, the child's name, class and your name. As a safeguarding procedure, if we don't hear anything, we will contact you to confirm the absence. If your child has diarrhoea and/or sickness bug, the guidelines are 48 hours after the last episode before returning to school.

Handwriting

Last half term the children in school took part in a 5 week intensive handwriting project. The senior leadership team in school last week conducted a scrutiny of teachers' books. What was very pleasing to see was the impact of the handwriting project. When we compared handwriting from before Christmas to that being produced more recently we could see improvements in most children's books. Some of the improvements were very marked. The teachers in every year group compared their 'most improved handwriter' and out of each year group one pupil was selected. These children will receive a prize in assembly on Thursday. Those who did not win a prize will have gained something very valuable, too; the ability to write in a neat, joined style for the rest of their lives. This, hopefully, will be a trait they will possess many years after leaving Portway. At parents' evening look yourself at the improvements in your child's handwriting; do a 'before and after' and compare their handwriting in the autumn to their handwriting now – I think you, too, will see a difference.

Parking Around School

This term I have received a number of complaints and concerns about parking outside school from local residents, parents and general road-users. I have made the local councillor aware of the concerns and I have contacted the police to see if there is anything else we can do to improve the situation. The main concerns relate to double parking on Woodlands Road, parking on pavements and parking which obstructs residents from getting in and out of their drives. Please avoid parking on pavements and where possible use the Woodlands Pub car park, or park a short distance away from school. If you currently pick up or drop off on Woodlands Road or nearby streets please try and park a little farther away from school. If everyone makes an effort to do this hopefully we can reduce the congestion around school and distribute the parking across a wider area – in this way we will also reduce the risk of an accident occurring. As ever, please park considerately near our neighbours' properties.

Year 3 Easter Assembly

The Year 3 Easter assembly will be held on Thursday, March the 24th. It will be held at Woodlands Church and will start at 11:00am. Parents of children in Year 3 are warmly invited – please get there a few minutes early to get your seat.

Test Week This Week

Testing is still a major part of the government's and Ofsted's means of judging junior schools' performance and our school's performance in the Year 6 SATS is still a very significant factor in judging the overall standard of the school. If we are to say our school is a good school, by Ofsted standards, the children's attainment and progress shown in the SATS results, necessarily need to be good, too. We cannot judge ourselves a good school if this is not backed up with assessment evidence. We continue to test children in a proportionate and appropriate way to measure progress but more importantly diagnose areas of learning we need to improve and support. This week all children will sit the second half term spring tests. The final decision on a child's Age and Stage will be a teacher assessment. The teacher assessment will be a summation of the standard of work a pupil has been achieving throughout the term and the test information is used to give them further information. If a reminder of the new assessment procedures would be useful follow this link to the school's website and have a look at the Assessment Booklet.

<http://www.portwayjunior.com/noticeboard.asp?Section=20&Documentpage=1>

PTFA School Disco

The Friends are organising a disco evening on Thursday 17th March. For Year 3 and Year 4 children the disco will be 6pm – 7pm, and for Year 5 and Year 6 children the times are 7.15pm – 8.15pm. Tickets cost £3.50, which includes a bag of sweets and a drink; children may bring £1 on the night to spend on other items if they wish.

Dates for your diary

Mon 11 Apr	Start Back
W.C. 9 May	SATS Week
WC 16 May	Test Week 5
Sat 21 May	Y3 to Lea Green
Thu 26 May	11.00am Year 5 Assembly at Woodlands Church
Fri 27 May	Break Up

Mon 6 Jun	Start Back (Clubs Start for 6 weeks)
Wed 15 Jun	Staff Governor Meeting
Fri 17 Jun	INSET Day
Wed 22 Jun	2.00pm Summer Musical Concert
WC 27 Jun	Year 6 to PGL
Mon 4 Jul	New Y3 Induction Evening
Tue 5 Jul	Common Transfer Day
WC 4 Jul	Test Week 6
Thu 7 Jul	9.30am Sports Day (reserve 8 Jul)
Tue 19 Jul	Reports Out
Wed 20 Jul	6.30pm Y6 Leavers' Production
Thu 21 Jul	Last swimming lesson for Year 4
Fri 21 Jul	6.00-7.30pm Y6 Leavers' BBQ and Disco
Mon 25 Jul	Parents Evening – Drop Ins
Tue 26 Jul	End of Year

Mr J Pass
Headteacher