

The Swanmead Pen

Parents' Newsletter – Term 1.3

DATE: Thursday 12th November 2020

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Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back to all our school community following the half term break. I trust that you all had some good opportunities to spend some time with your children.

So, as we know, it has been an interesting week for us. With the significant increase in testing across the country for Covid-19, this has inevitably led to an increase in the number of people testing positive. With approximately 300 children, 40 staff, 600 parents, 1200 grandparents in the school community, we have felt quite fortunate that, until the weekend, we have not needed to take action by asking people to self-isolate. I have heard of my colleagues in other schools across the county having to ask children to not attend for 14 days for the past three months – in all truth, I thought we'd potentially get something at some stage and I am pleased with our quick response. We currently have 29 children and five staff not in school and they will remain absent until Thursday 19th November. I have been overwhelmed by the level of support and understanding by parents and staff. In short, we have to follow rules and that is the course of action we were instructed to take in order to continue to keep the school safe.

A positive to this is that we have been inspired by the fact that the children of Miss Cox's class have been able to all continue their learning. Look at this picture and try not to shed a tear! Despite the challenge of having to self-isolate, the wonderful children of 5RC tuned in to their virtual lessons and carried on doing their thing. This is them on Wednesday during their PJ lesson on Maths with Miss Cox. I couldn't be prouder of this teacher and all these children and it has taught us that, if the time comes where we need to move to virtual lessons, then we are ready and prepared to do so.



This week you were sent a copy of our virtual tour of the school hosted by our Year 7 students Grace and Harry. A reminder that, if you know of parents and families from around the area that might be interested in sending their children to Swanmead, then please feel free to forward this onto them.

Finally, we had 31 parents and community members tuned in to our Parent Forum on Tuesday evening. I was massively humbled by that and felt a huge sense of support and togetherness through that meeting. I very much recognise all of your concerns and will email to all parents some brief minutes of that event along with a letter from our parent governors. We will have a second Parent Forum meeting in December.

So times continue to be challenging but the resilience of everyone involved in the Swanmead community is very much what is keeping me and my staff going. It is, without question, tough but I thank you for continuing to send your children to school and be within our care. They are all doing fantastically well and making us proud each day.

I look forward to writing to you later in the month with more good news about all the positive things that are happening in the school.

Do all take care and my best wishes to you.

Mark Walker
Headteacher

Success Cups – Autumn Term 2020 – Half Term 1

Congratulations to the following pupils for winning the Success Cups at the end of last half term. This award is made each half-term to a pupil in each year group who makes significant progress:



Year 5 – Oscar

Year 6 - William

Year 7 - Kacie

Year 8 - Skott

Numeracy Ninjas

Numeracy Ninjas – Grand Master - (3 x Black Belts) - Rhys D

Bake Off at Swanmead!?

On arrival back after half term, a wonderful Year 5 pupil came to see me to enquire, 'Mr Walker, is the Bake Off happening here?' I am unsure whether or not they were joking but I could certainly see their point! Indeed, with a need to sometimes get children out of their learning spaces so that we are able to do some midday cleaning, we created a new indoor space outdoors with the purchase of a marquee in the Quad. It took a team of local people a good four hours to put our marquee up but we are delighted with the result and the space is certainly coming in useful. This may be something we keep up for a little while, although hosting weddings and parties is something we will delay for the time being!



Coaching training for teachers

On our training day on November 2nd, teachers from across the school took part in a session on coaching. Coaching very much plays an increasingly significant part in the development of professionals and people in the work place. Part of our session was looking at where, on the Energies Wheel, we felt that as teachers and people we sat. All was dependent on looking at personality and whether or not we were introvert or extrovert and task based or people based. Have a look at the Energies Wheel, I wonder where you feel you would sit on this?



Crossing Patrol – Top of North Street, Ilminster

There will be no Crossing Patrol at the top of North Street, Ilminster until Wednesday 2nd December. Please could you make your children aware if they walk to and from school this way.

Diary Dates

Awards Week	Tuesday 17 th November to Thursday 19 th November during Assembly Time
Governors Meeting	Thursday 26 th November at 5.30 p.m.
Final Day of Autumn Term	Friday 18 th December
Christmas Holiday	Monday 21 st December to Friday 1 st January 2021