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Friday 4th September 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The year has got off to a great start in Otter Class with all the children enjoying being back after such an unusual break. It is lovely for us to have a full class back as well even though we have new protocols in terms of maintaining class 'bubbles' which involve lunchtimes in the classroom, separate break-times from other classes, no whole school assemblies and a lot of cleaning and handwashing for all.

Below, I have outlined a few things you need to know in terms of arrangements for Otter Class in particular.

READING

All children have been given a reading book today suitable for their book band colour/ability. We are still waiting for the arrival of new Reading Records so for the time being there are some copies on paper on which to record their reading. We will change the reading book as often as we can – at least once a week, and more often than this we hope. Re-reading the same book a number of times is good for the children's reading progress. Learning a story thoroughly helps them gain familiarity with new words and phrases and deepens understanding. Moving on rapidly is not necessarily considered to be beneficial. So, reading regularly (every day) with an adult, accurately and carefully is one of the most important things in making progress. It is also very important that the story is discussed with the child – this discussion helps them with their understanding and comprehension which is just as important as accurate word reading.

We will try to ensure that all children read with an adult in school at least once a week but it is the regular, focussed input at home that makes the biggest difference – there is no doubt about this. Unfortunately, we are not able to have adult reading helper volunteers in the school building at the moment which does mean that the children will not have as many opportunities to read with an adult in school as often as we'd like.

DRAGONS TOPIC

Our topic for this term will be 'Dragons'. This topic has a lot to think about for our literacy including non-fiction, fiction and poetry. We will be looking at non-fiction texts and the book *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* to explore the origins of dragons and thinking about using new words across our writing. We will also be using this topic as a stimulus to our work in art, DT and history.

SPELLINGS

Spellings will be introduced in school on Fridays and posted on Seesaw to be practised for assessment on the Thursday of the next week. Paper copies will be available if access to Seesaw is difficult at home. The children should be able to log in as before but let us know if you have any problems. Thanks for your and the children's efforts with this – it really makes a difference!

TIMES TABLES ROCKSTARS

A new one for our Y3 children but something our Y4 should be very adept at still. All the children have a username and password which has been attached to their reading records so that they can access this

system of practising times tables at home and at school. We will endeavour to practise these every day in school but any additional practice the children do at home would be very useful. The children can log on at:

<https://trockstars.com/>

Alternatively, there is an app that is available to download.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Otter Class will be having outdoor learning sessions on Tuesdays, starting next week on Tuesday 8th Sept. For this reason, they can come into school on Tuesdays in their outdoor clothes. The outdoor sessions may be quite muddy - especially when they play with the mud kitchen etc. We will be learning and practising many outdoor skills as well as using the outdoors to further our core curricular learning objectives (maths and English). The skills and outdoor activities we will be doing are all risk assessed, and no activity will be undertaken unless this is in place. The children, as I'm sure I don't need to tell you, absolutely love these outdoor learning sessions and the benefits are clear to see.

It would be very helpful if children have a pair of wellies in school permanently although I realise that this may be difficult. We have a small stock of spare wellies in school which we can use if a child does not have suitable footwear in school. Obviously at this time of year and as we move towards colder, wetter weather, a warm waterproof coat is important.

PE

PE and sports will again take place on a Wednesday morning with Adriano. ALL children should come into school wearing PE kit on Wednesdays for these sessions which are an important part of their curricular learning. The kit should consist of:

Indoor footwear (daps)

Outdoor footwear (trainers)

Dark blue or black shorts/sports trousers

White sports t-shirt

Hoodie or sports sweatshirt

Please DO make sure that all items of clothing including footwear is clearly name-labelled. Please do not send in any team strips or team logo shirts/shorts.

LABELLING CLOTHING

PLEASE make sure that all items of clothing your child wears/brings into school is clearly labelled - PARTICULARLY SWEATSHIRTS – it makes such a difference. This includes coats and footwear.

Please do get in touch via email (address at top) with any concerns or questions you may have – we are always happy to help.

Miss Owen and Mr Evans