

20 October 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Here we are at the end of a term 1 already. This term we have welcomed many new pupils and staff and they have all settled in well. We hope they will be very happy at Five Acre Wood School.

School Events

Class coffee mornings took place this term. Thank you to all who were able to attend. These are a great opportunity for parents and carers to meet the class team and to see their child's classroom.

Creepy Crawly week was held across all sites from 11th to 15th September. Creepy Claws animal sanctuary provided pupils from all sites with an opportunity to hold, touch and learn about a variety of animals including; Pigmy hedgehogs, tarantulas, snakes and geckos.



During Creepy Crawly week, Whale class enjoyed looking for creepy crawlies in their forest school session at the Palace Wood forest school area.



On 22nd September pupils and staff were invited to wear jeans to school on our 'Jeans for Genes' day to raise awareness of children and families affected by genetic disorders.

Our Autumn Festival celebrations for primary pupils took place on Wednesday of this week. There were 4 performances throughout the day. Thank you to those who organised the event and to everyone who was able to come and join us. As you can imagine, for some of our pupils, performing on stage to a room full of parents and carers is a completely new experience and we are sure you will agree that they all did really well.

This year, we collected donations for MADM Maidstone and Shepway Community Larder. MADM Maidstone is a local charity supporting the homeless, those who are in addiction, socially isolated, disadvantaged and in crisis in the Maidstone area. The charity offers support and donations of food to some of our families who are in need. The Shepway Community larder offer fresh and store cupboard food items to families in Shepway for a small contribution. A huge 'thank you' to everyone who kindly sent in donations this week.

Parent Support Groups

Details of our parent support groups for this academic year are attached. These sessions are aimed at supporting parents and carers whose children have specific needs. Reminders will be sent home nearer the time of each session, together with details of how to confirm your attendance. Please be advised that these groups will not run with fewer than 5 attendees.

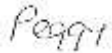
Healthcare Plans

Please can I remind all parents/carers that in the interest of your child's health and safety, it is your responsibility to ensure all information on Healthcare Plans is kept up to date and you should therefore notify us of any changes as they arise.

Please find attached the term dates with diary dates for your information. Please be aware that these may be subject to change/cancellation. We will send out information regarding individual events closer to the time.

I would like to wish everyone an enjoyable half term break. I look forward to welcoming the children back to school on Monday 30th October.

Kind regards,



Peggy Murphy
Principal

Updates from Hannah, our fundraiser:

Summer Fair

On Saturday 16th September, we held our summer fair. We could not have asked for better weather. The sun was shining and we were joined by so many pupils, families, staff and members of the community. The day consisted of delicious food (including ice cream), live music, a chair-of-plane ride, a variety of stalls and the opportunity to visit our fantastic yard.

We would like to say the biggest 'thank you' for everyone's support and for the support of the stall holders and businesses who joined us on the day, including Maidstone Fire Service. We raised an amazing £1,309.

Donations

Early in September, Leo, the son of one of our members of staff, 'braved the shave' for both Five Acre Wood and the Princess Trust. Leo raised a whopping £1,256.34 for Five Acre Wood and an incredible £857.77 for the Princess Trust, as well as donating 13 inches of hair! The event included a raffle and DJ and was a huge success, which was enjoyed by all.

The Coppice in Eastchurch generously donated a fantastic £600.00 to our charity 'Friends of Five Acre Wood' which will be used to buy equipment for our soft play bus.

A huge thank you to both Leo and The Coppice; we really appreciate your phenomenal support.

Sainsbury's – Loose Road

We have recently joined the Sainsbury's Food Donation Programme. We will receive both 'front of store' (customers donations into donation points in stores) and back of store (surplus stock) donations for the Five Acre Wood community. We are looking forward to working with Sainsbury's and would like to thank them for their continued support.

Rapid Relief Team

We continue to work with RRT (Rapid Relief Team), who supported us immensely at our Woodstock festival and have continued to support us with the Early Bird Programme and food boxes.

Work experience in the community

On 28th September, our sixth form pupils who are working towards their level 1 (GCSE Grade 4 equivalent) in Land-based Studies (developing estate maintenance skills) started their fantastic journey of work experience at Harmony. Harmony are a charity dedicated to offering community arts, theatre, music and activities. The pupils will be visiting Harmony on a weekly basis to carry out a variety of tasks including; fitting vinyl, grounds work, fixing guttering, cleaning and fixing decking. We are so grateful to Harmony for this opportunity and we are very excited to be both working with and supporting a local charity.

Do you know or work for a company that could offer our sixth form pupils work experience opportunities? If so, or if you would like more information, please get in touch by emailing fundraising@five-acre.kent.sch.uk and a member of the team will get back to you.

Walk and Talk

Saturday 30th of September was our first 'Walk and Talk' event at Mote Park and we hope it was the first of many. Our aim is to bring families and our community together, to support one another, share knowledge and provide an opportunity to meet new people who are on the same journey. We meet on the last Sunday of each month. Please put those dates in your diary. We do exactly what it says on the tin.... walk and talk. Please feel free to share the details with anyone you know who might benefit from our monthly walks. We look forward to welcoming you on our next 'Walk and Talk' which is taking place at 2pm on Sunday 29th October, at Mote Park, Maidstone.

If you have any questions and/or for more information, please contact Hannah via the Five Acre Wood School Facebook page.



Soft play bus

You may have seen on our social media channels the marvellous news that Nu-Venture are supporting us on our journey to create a soft play bus for our amazing pupils. We are over the

moon, to share news of the safe arrival of our new bus, which reached its final destination on Wednesday 18th October. Further details will follow soon.

A date for your diary

On 10th November, parents/carers will be able to purchase tickets for our 'Winter Wonderland', which will take place on Saturday 2nd December.



PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS 2023-2024



Five Acre Wood will be offering 8 parent support groups this academic year, which are aimed at supporting parents and carers whose children have specific needs. All sessions will be held in person at Five Acre Wood School on the Loose site.

Please see below a list of dates and subjects.

Any updates or changes will be listed on the school website and sent via email.

Dates	Time	Subject
Thursday 9 th November 2023	9.45am – 10.45am	PECS – alternative communication system that uses visual symbols
Thursday 7 th December 2023	9.45am – 10.45am	Reluctant Eaters - we'll provide top tips to support your child to explore a wider range of foods.
Wednesday 10 th January 2024	9.45am – 10.45am	Introduction to AAC and Colourful Semantics - AAC describes ways to support a young person to communicate with you by using a range of visual supports. Colourful semantics is a visual system intended to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.
Thursday 22 nd February 2024	9.45am – 10.45am	Sensory Processing & Sensory Circuits – an opportunity to learn more about your child's sensory needs and how to support this at home.
Wednesday 20 th March 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	PECS – alternative communication system that uses visual symbols
Wednesday 24 th April 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Reluctant Eaters - we'll provide top tips to support your child to explore a wider range of foods.
Wednesday 8 th May 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Sensory Processing & Sensory Circuits – an opportunity to learn more about your child's sensory needs and how to support this at home.
Thursday 6 th June 2024	2.00pm – 3.00pm	Introduction to AAC and Colourful Semantics - AAC describes ways to support a young person to communicate with you by using a range of visual supports. Colourful semantics is a visual system intended to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- Please can you inform us of your attendance at least 1 week in advance of a Support Group and if there are less than 5 attendees for any one session then unfortunately it will not go ahead. Please confirm your attendance by emailing vgeylani@five-acre.kent.sch.uk or phoning us on 01622 743925.
- If a session must be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, or insufficient take up (less than 5 attendees) then we will endeavour to provide parents/carers with as much notice as possible.
- During a session, if there are other issues that you would like advice on, please feel free to raise them and we will do our best to address them at the time.

Term Dates with Diary Dates 2023/24

Date	Time	Event
<u>Term 2</u>		
Monday 30th October 2023	N/A	First day of term 2
Friday 17 th November 2023	All day	Children in Need
Saturday 2 nd December 2023	TBC	Winter Wonderland
Monday 4 th December 2023	TBC	Winter performance
Tuesday 5 th December 2023	TBC	Winter performance
Friday 8 th December 2023	All day	Christmas jumper day
Tuesday 12 th December 2023	10.00-11.30am	Winter Fair – Session 1
	1.30-3.00pm	Winter Fair – Session 2
Wednesday 13 th December 2023	Lunchtime	Christmas dinner
Thursday 14 th December 2023	Various	Class Christmas parties and Christmas clothes day
Friday 15 th December 2023	N/A	Last day of term
<u>Term 3</u>		
Tuesday 2nd January 2024	N/A	First day of term 3
Friday 9th February 2024	N/A	Last day of term

<u>Term 4</u>		
Monday 19th February 2024	N/A	First day of term 4
Thursday 7 th March 2024	All day	World Book Day
Monday 11th March 2024	N/A	Staff training day (pupils not in school)
Tuesday 12th March 2024	N/A	Staff training day (pupils not in school)
Friday 15 th March 2024	All day	Comic Relief Day
Thursday 21 st March 2024	All day	Socks for World Down Syndrome Day
Wednesday 27 th March 2024	TBC	Spring Fair
Thursday 28th March 2024	N/A	Last day of term

<u>Term 5</u>		
Monday 15th April 2024	N/A	First day of term 5
Monday 6th May 2024	N/A	Bank holiday (pupils and staff not in school)
Friday 17 th May 2024	TBC	FAW charity football match
Friday 24th May 2024	N/A	Last day of term

<u>Term 6</u>		
Monday 3rd June 2024	N/A	First day of term 6 for pupils
June 2024	TBC	Sports days

July 2024	TBC	Sports day – FAW Snodland
Friday 5 th July 2024	All day	Transition day
Monday 8 th July 2024	3.45-6.45pm	'Meet the new teacher' parents evening
July 2024	TBC	Secondary summer performance
July 2024	TBC	Secondary prize giving
Tuesday 23rd July 2024	N/A	Last day of term

NOTE TO PARENTS/CARERS REGARDING MEDICATION

To ensure that your child is given the most current prescribed medication of the correct dose and at the right time, please read these guidelines:

1. Please ensure that all medicines sent into school are in the ORIGINAL pharmacy containers/packaging clearly labelled with:

- Your child's name
- Name of prescribed medication
- The dosage and frequency of administration
- How medicine should be given, e.g. by mouth, via feeding tube
- Date medicine was dispensed
- Expiry Date

Any nurse will have the right to refuse the administration of medication to your child if this information is not clearly shown on the label.

2. Please inform the school nurse of any change to your child's regular medication, including alterations to dose, frequency or medication being stopped as advised by a doctor. These alterations need to be confirmed in writing by the prescriber. **We cannot accept verbal alterations and will be unable to give an amended dose unless we have the medication in its original contained with the correct information printed on the label or receive the changes in writing from the prescriber.**

3. If your child is prescribed emergency medication (Diazepam/Midazolam for epilepsy or Anapen/Epipen for allergy) please inform the school nurse immediately. Further information from your child's doctor will be needed regarding when the emergency medication should be given and this will be kept in school so all staff are aware of what care your child needs in an emergency.

4. Please ensure there is a sufficient supply of all the medicines your child needs whilst in school. We will contact you to advise when we are running low.

5. When sending in medication, it must not be put in your child's bag. Instead, it should be handed directly to a member of the class staff. If your child comes into school by taxi, the medication should be given to the escort who will then hand it to a member of the class staff when they arrive at school.