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Headteacher: Mrs. H. Lee

22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

Dear Parents,

We have got through the first half term of this unprecedented academic year and we hope we can finish the half term with all bubbles still intact!

Thank you so much for all your support with all the changes this term. We have had to cope with many different situations and I appreciate everything that everyone is doing to keep our school safe - from reminding children that they cannot go to other children's homes to staying socially distanced on the playground; from not having to drop things off at the office to being vigilant about hand washing at home; from dealing with your child's anxieties to alerting school if there are any issues - THANK YOU. We know you are supporting us in any way you can. All the staff at Oakdene have been amazing in putting in all the extra cleaning and caring routines and we know we have a very safe school here.

One of the good things (there are some!) about this situation is that we have noticed the children are a lot more independent in coming into school and settle well in class. We just need to work on them carrying their own bags to school now! Many Reception children do this so I hope the older children can take the lead from our youngest children and let the adults come into school not looking like a pack horse! Another good thing is our attendance. Without self-isolation cases we are currently running at over 98% which is wonderful. Thank you so much for ensuring that your child is in school when at all possible.

#### Coronavirus symptoms and tests

Thank you to all those people who are, and have been, self-isolating for keeping us informed of where you are up to with the testing process etc. We are very grateful to you and we hope that the work we have sent home has been manageable for your children. We do send work home for all children who are self-isolating to complete but if your child was to develop symptoms and was unwell we would not expect all the work to be carried out. Fortunately, we have not been in this position yet and let's hope this continues.

If there was a positive case in a bubble, the children will be set work for 2 weeks which will be sent home so that your child can continue with school work whilst self-isolating. Those of you who have had packs this half term due to self-isolation will know how this works and there will be a new set next half term. This will be sent via email or put on the school website. If a bubble were to close all details will be sent via text and email and, if the teacher is still well, video messages will be sent to the children for them to continue their remote learning. Please make sure we have your up to date details of mobile phone number and email address so we can get this information out to you very quickly.

Can I remind Parents that if you are having to self-isolate, if someone in your household has symptoms or there is a positive test from one of our children, please do not post anything on social media (including WhatsApp)? This can cause a lot of distress for other people. If a positive case is confirmed in school we seek advice from the NHS Test and Trace service and they provide us with the details of who needs to isolate. I would not want people worrying unnecessarily about what will happen, especially over the half term holiday. We all have enough to worry



about taking care of our families and I would not want an unnecessary burden on anyone. Rest assured, we will contact you if there is a need to do so. Thank you.

Can I also remind Parents that if anyone in your household is waiting for a test, or result, or you know of anyone waiting for a test or result that your child has come into contact with, you should wait until the test results are back and negative before sending your child back to school? We cannot have children in school if a "household/support bubble member" is awaiting test results.

### Uniform after Half Term

As many of you will know, all children are expected to wear 'winter uniform' from the beginning of next half term until the Easter holidays. The polo shirts and dresses will need to be replaced with shirts, blouses, ties and pinafores / skirts. All children will be expected to wear a school tie (elasticated for Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and a normal tie for Years 3,4,5 and 6). We do have ties in stock (normal ties are £3.50 and elasticated ones are £3.25). If you need a new tie please send in the money in a NAMED ENVELOPE via the 'Office post box' on the playground in the morning. We will get a tie to your child tomorrow ready for the new half term then.

Please be aware that we don't hold stock of sized uniform; most is ordered specifically for your child when you pay for it. Historically orders have taken about 2 weeks to be delivered into school, but currently it is taking up to 4 weeks because of the impact of the pandemic. Please bear these timescales in mind when you are considering your child's uniform needs. Once your garments arrive, you will be sent a text so arrangements can be made for you to collect the goods.

### New Intake for September 2021

As you will be aware, we will be unable to have our lovely Open Afternoon this year where our children show parents around school and we are able to answer any queries. We are very sorry that we cannot do this as we love to see all the new parents and introduce them to our school. If you know of anyone with Nursery aged children who is looking for a school for September 2021 please let them know that the online application process is now open at <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/school-admissions/primary-schools/>. We have our website that anyone can visit and we will be posting a virtual tour of the school after the half term holiday. If you know anyone who has any concerns about their child, their future school or any other questions then please ask them to ring school from 3<sup>rd</sup> November onwards and we will endeavour to answer any queries.

### Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November is Remembrance Sunday this year. On Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November we will be holding a minute's silence in classes or outside to remember all those who have lost their lives to help others. In order for you to support the 'Poppy Appeal' the British Legion have provided us with some items with suggested donations. Unfortunately they have not left any 'normal' poppies this year. These items will be distributed to classes from 3<sup>rd</sup> November and children will be able to donate to this worthy cause; there will be a collection box for your donations. Unfortunately we do not have enough items for each child but we know that you will talk to your child about supporting this good cause in other ways too (there is a poppy to download and colour in on the website). [https://storage.rblcdn.co.uk/sitefinity/docs/default-source/fundraising/royal-british-legion-downloadable-colour-in-poppy-1742170758.pdf?sfvrsn=9f92ca83\\_2](https://storage.rblcdn.co.uk/sitefinity/docs/default-source/fundraising/royal-british-legion-downloadable-colour-in-poppy-1742170758.pdf?sfvrsn=9f92ca83_2)

Suggested donations for the Poppy items are:

Zip Pull - 50p

Reflector for clothes - 50p

Silicon Wristband - £1.00

Snap band - £1.50

Thank you.



### Snacks & bags in School

Please can I remind Parents that only bags that are the same size as our Oakdene 'book bags' are allowed in school as any other bags cause a safety risk in the cloakrooms? These bags are slimline and fit on pegs easily. If we have a number of larger bags in the cloakroom this leads to a cloakroom floor covered in coats and bags. If you need to buy an Oakdene book bag they are available in school for £9.30.

As we are not providing toast for the children at morning playtime, we have allowed the children to bring in a healthy snack. This should be one piece of fruit or a cereal bar (no nut ingredients). We are still having some weird and wonderful 'picnics' coming in. Please only send in one piece of fruit or one cereal bar. This needs to be in their book bag and not in their packed lunch bag as it takes a lot of time for children to sort through all the bags when they should be outside. If your child normally has a snack and they forget it we can supply them with a piece of fruit. Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 all get a piece of fruit each day so they do not go hungry 😊.

### Over the counter medicines

As the season of snuffles and colds approaches I thought it was worth reminding everyone that one of the key changes in our latest medicine policy is that any medicines coming into school must be **clearly labelled with the child's name and accompanied by the original "patient information leaflet" (PIL)**. So often, we keep familiar medicines in our cupboards at home but toss the boxes and leaflets away. However, if you bring one like that to school, we won't be able to administer it, so keep hold of those PILs! (You'll also need to complete a detailed medication form which you can do at home - see our website "*information for parents > useful forms*").

### Half term holiday

Who knows what will happen this holiday but we know it will be a different experience to what we normally have at this time of year. There won't be any trick or treating and no big firework displays when we come back to school. We know there are lots of things that we can still do and St. Helens Council have put together an Awesome Autumn package with games, quizzes and ideas of what to do during the week off and beyond. This can be found at [www.sthelens.gov.uk/awesomeautumn](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/awesomeautumn) where you will find a range of activities to help you keep the children entertained. The Council have also sent families a letter about staying safe over the half term, so please make time to read that (see our website's Covid-19 tab). Our Infant children have a reading challenge to take part in too which may include building a den and there are ideas of what to read in our Love of Reading section of the website. Mrs. Hughes has put a Reading Newsletter on there too and thanks to Nia for being our first book reviewer. The NHS have some good indoor activities at this website: <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities/indoor-activities>

We hope you will be able to get out for some walks and fun in local parks. Let's hope the weather is kind to us! Please stay safe and let school know via email if any of your immediate family test positive during the week off ([oakdene@sthelens.org.uk](mailto:oakdene@sthelens.org.uk)) so that we can alert other families as to what will happen when we come back. We hope that we will see everyone back in and well rested on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** (2<sup>nd</sup> November is a Staff training day).

Once again, thank you for supporting us in keeping our children safe, for helping with their home learning whether this be homework or when self-isolating and for ensuring that all children attend school when at all possible. I hope you can have a relaxing half term.

Yours sincerely,



H. Lee  
Headteacher