



Hassocks Infant School

NEWSLETTER NO. 2 - November 2023



Dear Families,

Welcome back to school. We do hope that you have all enjoyed the half term break. It is hard to believe that we have already completed our first half term at school and are now beginning to think about Christmas. It has been wonderful to see so many of you at recent school events – the open afternoon, on-line parent consultations and meet the teacher meetings.

This is another busy half term with lots to look forward to in the school diary. We have attached a copy of the diary dates for your reference. We look forward to seeing lots of you in school for the various events planned for this half term.

Adrian Bates-Holland, Headteacher

Harvest Donations

Thank you to all of you for your generous donations to the Burgess Hill food bank before the half term holiday. As you can see from the photos, families were very generous and lots of donations were sent to the food bank. Gary collected these and struggled to get all of these into the car.

Your donations will make a huge difference and it is great to be able to support our local community.

Many families use the local food bank which is based at Powell House next to the school. The school is able to issue vouchers for the food bank. If this is supportive, then please contact Mrs Stedman, Mr Bates or Mrs Nash using dsl@hassocksis.com. All referrals are completely confidential.



Weather Alerts and School Closures

Autumn has definitely arrived and it is feeling very autumnal already! As we approach the winter, we thought that it may be helpful to provide some guidance around school closures and arrangements for extreme weather.

As a school, we will always attempt to open for children to avoid any unnecessary disruption to their learning.

There are some rare occasions when the school may be closed, for example in the eventuality of extreme weather, damage to the school site or disruption to power or water supplies. We have also been advised by West Sussex County Council to close the school if a red weather warning is issued for hurricanes or storms:

"In 2022, we had two situations where the Met Office issued Red Warnings for extreme weather i.e. risk to life. The two warnings however were significantly different in context and needed responding to in different ways. For future reference, where there is a Red Warning explicitly for West Sussex based on extreme weather in the form of hurricane or storm conditions that would potentially put lives at risk on their way to and from school, we would advise schools to use closure as the default position, unless the school believes it can make safe provision locally as a support to parents and the community. In 2022, the Red Warning and change from Amber was provided at very short notice and out of school hours. In future, we would not want schools to be awaiting guidance from the Local Authority in such situations; we suggest that schools adopt closure as the default position and communicate accordingly

In the summer 2022 there was, for the first time, a Red Warning based on extreme heat in West Sussex. However, the risk to life was due to exposure to the sun. Therefore, it was in the best interests of all that schools remained open and provided a safe internal space for children and oversight in case of dehydration and heat stress. Our advice in such situations in the future would be that schools remain open as the default position during such periods where a Red Warning for heat is issued for West Sussex, unless the Local Authority or Public Health advise differently.

Guidance provided to Head Teachers from West Sussex County Council, November 2023

There may be occasions when the school is able to open but we may need to make some changes to our arrangements, for example using a different entrance to access the school or adjusting the times of the school day.

If we do have to close the school, we will always aim to make a decision as early as possible. We will use the following ways of communicating the decision to families:

- * **ParentMail** – an email will be sent to all families. We encourage families to check their inboxes before leaving for school if there is bad weather forecast.
- * **Text Message** – we may send a text message to families if a decision is made at short notice.
- * **Local Radio Stations** – we do inform BBC Sussex of any closures. School closures are announced on the radio and often listed on the BBC Sussex website.
- * **Facebook** – We will use the school's Facebook page to communicate any closures.

We do encourage parents to check these sources before contacting the school office – the office phones are often very busy if the school is closed.

WhatsApp Groups

We have had some occasions recently where incorrect information has been shared through parent WhatsApp groups. Whilst parent WhatsApp groups are incredibly useful, please be aware that these are not connected with the school in any way.

Our primary channel of communication is always ParentMail so we do encourage families to check these emails for information. We also provide lots of updates on our school website and through these newsletters.

Our School Values

Each half term we focus on one of our six school values, which are:

- Be determined – we never give up
- Be independent – we are able to think and work on our own
- Be ambitious – we believe in ourselves and are determined to success
- Be kind – we treat others the way that we would like to be treated
- Be a team player – we work with others
- Be yourself – we value diversity and celebrate our individuality.

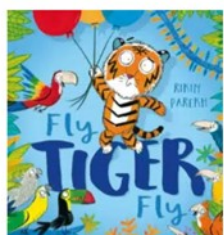


This half term, we are focusing on “be ambitious” and we will be thinking about this during our Key Stage One assemblies and throughout all of our learning.

In assembly and classes, we have explored some stories about being ambitious, trying new things and persevering when things are challenging.

We would love to see some photos from home where children have been ambitious – this could be trying a new skill, doing something which is challenging such as learning to ride a bike or being determined to complete a task. Do feel free to share any photos on Tapestry and we will share these achievements in school.

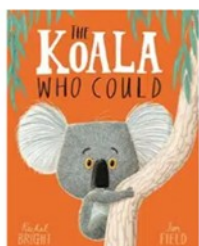
Here are some story books linked to being ambitious which you may wish to share at home or borrow from the local library:



Fly, Tiger, Fly!

Rikin Parekh
Picturebook

Riku's family have all achieved something special - and Riku wants to be special too. His dream? To be the world's first ever flying tiger! Only Riku's friend Jim has doubts . . . Tigers don't have wings. (And Jim should know - he's a parrot!) But Riku is one determined little tiger. With help from Jim and some feathered friends, will Riku make it off the ground and into the air? This hilariously funny book from Rikin Parekh celebrates dreams, determination and the power of friendship. It's a must-read for any little person with BIG ambition!



The Koala Who Could

Rachel Bright & Jim Field
Picturebook

A funny rhyming story about dealing with change and overcoming worries, from the bestselling creators of The Lion Inside. In a wonderful place, at the breaking of dawn, where the breezes were soft and the sunshine was warm, a place where the creatures ran wild and played free ... A Koala called Kevin clung to a tree. Meet Kevin. A koala who likes to keep things the same. Exactly the same. But sometimes change comes along whether we like it or not... And, as Kevin discovers, if you step outside your comfort zone and try new things, you might just surprise yourself!



Almost Anything

Sophy Henn
Picturebook

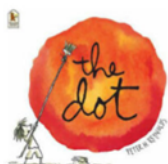
This is a truly charming picture book with an empowering message about the power of self-belief, perfect for EYFS and KS1. At the beginning of the story, George the rabbit sits on a tree stump watching his woodland friends busy doing all sorts of clever and fun activities like painting, roller-skating, knitting and dancing. Believing that he can't do anything like that, George leaves himself with no option but to sit and watch. That is, until a wise old bear observes George's no-can-do attitude and decides to help him to cultivate some important self-belief.

This is an endearing picture book that encourages young readers to have the confidence to try new things using the 'magic' of a positive attitude from within themselves.

The Dot

Peter H. Reynolds
Picturebook

The story of a little girl whose art teacher helps her to develop a 'can do' attitude. Vashti is sure that she can't draw, but when the teacher puts Vashti's simple dot picture on display, Vashti begins to think of what else she might be able to draw too if she is only willing to give it a try.



Reception- People Who Help Us

Last half term, Reception learnt about 'people who help us' and even had some special visitors, including a nurse, dentist and the fire service. They learnt about the importance of these roles and how they support our community. We asked lots of questions and enjoyed role playing with the equipment they use.

We are also looking forward to visits from paramedics and road safety officers in the upcoming weeks!



Remembrance Day commemorations

Poppies and other poppy related items (keyrings, snap bands, bracelets etc) are being brought round to classes each day in the lead up to Remembrance Day on 11th November, with children being given the opportunity to purchase an item should they wish to.

If you would like your child to purchase an item to support this fundraiser please could you send them into school with money in a named envelope and give this to their class teacher.

Thank you.



Individual Photo Deadline

Please note that the on-line ordering for the Braiswick Photographs is now closed

Orders using paper envelope order forms can be handed to the school office before Friday 3rd November. Do note that Friday is the last day for ordering!



Screen Time

As it gets colder and the days shorter, I thought I would send out some information about screen time. I also asked the children for their thoughts.

“What happens if you have too much screen time?”

Here are some of their answers.....

“You get more eyes, but they are square ones”.

“You get told off”.

“Your ears hurt” (it took me a while to work out that this child thought I said ‘scream time’).

For some slightly more factual accounts, this is what ‘UK Safer Internet’ say:

Think about quality over quantity

Research has found that there is no perfect amount of screen time. The right amount of screen time will be different for everyone, and will depend on your family’s lifestyle. Instead, it is useful to think about screen time in terms of quality over quantity. Children might be enjoying a wide range of activities on their devices, like homework, online games, or socialising with friends. These positive uses of technology can really support young people’s wellbeing.

Talk about warning signs

There are lots of ways to tell if you have been looking at a screen for too long. It could be sore eyes, a headache, feeling sleepy or restless, or needing to stretch. These signs will be different for everyone, and it is good to talk to your children about these signs, to help them to recognise their own warning signs.

Create, review and adapt expectations

Create expectations around screen time and use of technology together. Discuss how long you each think you should be spending on your devices, what limits you can put in place, and how you can help each other stick to those limits. Including your child in this decision-making can make it easier for them to stick with it, especially if they see you thinking about your screen time too!

Explore and use wellbeing settings

Lots of apps and devices now have wellbeing settings to support children and young people with having a healthy balance of screen time. This could be screen time limits alongside controlling content.

As adults, we should be mindful of how much our children see us using screens too.

If they see us engaging in other activities, they will want to join in, so crack out the backing tray, share a book or create some seasonal artwork – all good fun! 😊