

21.09.18

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome to Christ the Sower for our new families and welcome back to those of you who were already here – I do hope you all had an enjoyable Summer break. My name is Rob Morley-Smith and I am the Head of School from September the 1st. This means that I will have a very similar role to that of the previous Headteacher. Ms. Jo Alikhan is the Executive Head, which means that she has overall responsibility and will be at the school regularly. The children have returned looking very smart in their uniforms and have really impressed me with their behaviour and attitude to learning so far. A huge thank you to all of you – this makes such a difference in setting high standards and expectations for our school.

We welcome three new staff members this year - Miss Miles who is teaching Daisy Class in Nursery, Mrs Robertson who is joining us as the school Learning Mentor and Mrs Ross, who has been seconded over from Drayton Park, will be with us on a Monday and Wednesday and is the new SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

We have spent the last 2 weeks learning about the Christian values that underpin the school's ethos. The children have shared these values with each other in this morning's Collective Worship. Curriculum Newsletters were sent home last week and will soon be available to view on our school website – please have a read through these at your earliest convenience. Last week in Friday's Collective Worship, we welcomed our first group of parents whose children were put in the Golden Book. This will be the norm from now on and parents will be notified if their child has been chosen for the Golden Book on Wednesday by text message.

There have been a few changes at school since the summer which I will summarise below:

- School leaders now teach more
- Higher Level Teaching Assistants have been redeployed to provide consistent cover and Leadership release time.
- Mrs Taylor now works full time and provides 2 hours of high quality PE teaching for most classes as well as providing supervised sporting activities 3 lunchtimes a week and an afterschool club every day.
- The phonics scheme has been changed to Read, Write Inc. This is a nationally recognised scheme which we have used successfully in our other schools. It is particularly effective in supporting children to learn the vital sounds and supports them to 'crack the code' early. A meeting to present the scheme to parents including ideas for supporting reading at home will be held later in the Autumn Term.
- There have been some changes to playtime and lunchtime organisation. Foundation children will now finish for lunch at 11:45am. All other children will stop for lunch at 12:15pm. Children will no longer eat packed lunches in the classrooms, instead they will eat in Cherry Hall.
- Golden Time each week has been replaced with Class Treats approximately every half term (sometimes sooner). The children will work collaboratively to collect class points to earn these. The behaviour / restorative practice policy is being updated to reflect this change.
- Soul Space has been relocated to the Foundation Corridor. Mrs Feil, who leads the Chaplaincy Team, has big plans to develop this space throughout the term.

Many of these changes have been explained in some very successful and overwhelmingly positive parent meetings held last week. Ms Alikhan and I felt very welcomed we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support. Senior leaders, Mrs Robertson and I will be on the school gate every morning and afternoon so please don't hesitate to come and talk to us if you have a question, concern, or just want to say hello!

SUMMER RESULTS

The results for Foundation, Year 1 Phonics, Year 2 and Year 6 will be published on the website soon, with a comparison with the national average and other Milton Keynes schools.

AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITY CLUBS

Clubs will began this week. We have an exciting array of clubs on offer, some by external providers and some provided free of charge by school staff. I know the children will enjoy the wide range of activities on offer.

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING / SCHOOL OPEN MORNING

We are very keen to have parents in the school more often. On Friday September 28th (9 – 11am) we are holding an Open Morning combined with a coffee morning in aid of Macmillan. This is a chance for you to tour the school and see the children at work. At the same time, you are invited to have a coffee or tea and a slice of cake for £1 and all proceeds will go to the very worthy Macmillan campaign. **In order to raise as much as we can, we are asking for cake donations to be brought to school from Wednesday of next week please.** Any leftover cakes will be sold to the children at break time for 20p each so please ensure that your child comes with money on that day if they wish to buy a cake. A letter will go out to explain this in more detail including information regarding allergies etc. Thank you in advance for your support.



HARVEST

On the 5th October we will be holding our annual Harvest assembly which will be presented by Wheat. During that week we would like to invite you to send in any donations for the Milton Keynes Food Cupboard. Further details on this event will follow shortly, many thanks in advance for your support.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

There is a citizen portal to help you find out if your child qualifies for free school meals. Please visit to sign up, even if your child is in year R, 1 or 2 and receiving universal free school meals, or if you have applied before and do not think you are eligible. In doing so you will help us to find out whether we can claim pupil premium for your child. This is additional funding to spend on resources such as extra staff, books or school trips for eligible children. The system is quick and simple to use and can be accessed via a smartphone or hand held device. If you qualify, you will receive a reference number that you simply bring in and show us at school to start receiving meals. Please register at https://emsonline.milton-keynes.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE

PARENTS' EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION / COLLECTION AFTER SCHOOL

Please ensure that you have advised us of any recent changes of address or mobile telephone numbers so that the office staff can contact you quickly in the case of an emergency. Please also ensure we have been informed who has been given authority to collect your child from school each day. If someone different comes to collect your child and we haven't been notified, we will not be able to let them go. If your child is in Years 5 or 6, you may wish to give them permission to leave the classroom rather than being collected from the door at the end of the day. A letter has been sent

home with a slip to complete if you wish to inform us of your wishes. We ask you to complete this permission form as soon as possible please.

DIARY DATES

Please take note of any dates which are relevant to your child. Curriculum newsletter sent out last week also have the dates of any class collective worships that your child will be involved in.

Quinta Residential Trip (Year 6) – Monday 24th –Friday 28th September

Open Morning / Macmillan Coffee Morning - Friday 28th September (9 – 11 am)

Harvest Collective Worship – Friday 5th October (9am)

Maths Evening for Parents Tuesday - Thursday 11th October

Flu immunisation Fdn – Year 5 – Friday 12th October

Parents' Evening Tuesday 16th October (3:30 – 5pm)

Parents' Evening Wednesday 17th October (3.30 – 7pm)

Parents' Evening Thursday 18th October (3.30 – 5pm)

Cross Country Competition – Saturday 20th October 9am

Break up for half term - Thursday 25th October

Children return to school - Monday 5th November

Healthy Schools Week – Monday 12th – 16th November

Children in Need Day – Friday 16th November

There may be additional dates added as the term progresses. Please keep check the weekly newsletter for updates.

CHAPLAINCY

Mrs Feil and the Chaplaincy Team have asked for the following to be included in your prayers:

- Give thanks for the way the children across the school have responded to our learning about our Christian values. Pray that we see these values flourish in each of our lives in the year ahead,
- Pray for our new children, families and members of staff as they join our community here at Christ-the Sower. May they soon feel a deep sense of belonging.
- Pray for the fifty-two Year 6 children as they travel to Shropshire next week to develop resilience and teamwork through a range of outdoor adventurous activities. Pray for safety, fun and night-time sleep!

Many thanks

Rob Morley-Smith

Head of School