



Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

We have certainly had a busy few weeks at school and we are getting into the full swing of Christmas spirit. We had Love of Christmas day on Thursday where your children really enjoyed the opportunity to buy Christmas presents for their loved ones – for many this was a great opportunity to practise using physical money. Thank you to our fantastic PTA volunteers for their hard work in preparing for and running this event.

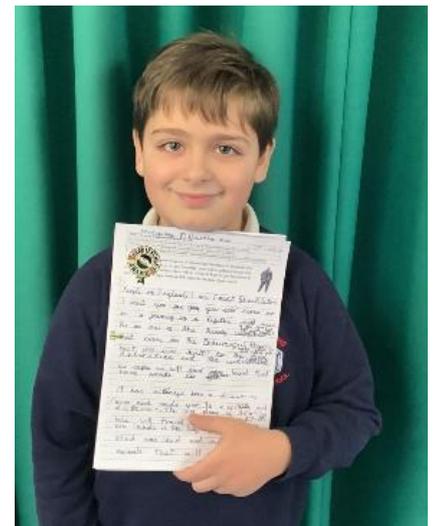
### **Covid 19**

I am very pleased to say that Covid cases in school have reduced significantly and we are no longer meeting the thresholds for additional measures. We are planning to leave our year group bubbles in place until the end of term and then be guided by the Government advice when schools return in January. Please be aware that cases within our local area and Portsmouth are considerably higher than national average and Omicron cases have been found in Portsmouth. This does mean that everyone following the guidance of wearing face coverings and taking regular lateral flow tests is very important in keeping cases down and our children in school learning.

### **Omicron**

Please be aware, that all individuals who have been identified as a close contact of a suspected or confirmed case of the Omicron variant of COVID-19, irrespective of vaccination status and age, will be contacted directly and required to self-isolate immediately and asked to book a PCR test. They will be informed by the local health protection team or NHS Test and Trace if they fall into this category and provided details about self-isolation.

We are currently updating our contingency plans and we will send a letter detailing these next week. We are expecting school to open as normal in January, however we would like to be prepared for every eventuality.



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**Deputy Headteacher: Erica Wintle BA Hons PGCE**

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### Texting From School

We are about to turn on the facility to text both priority one and two contacts following the return of the Data Collection sheets to confirm the information. If you haven't seen your sheet (which came home with children on or after 19th November), then please contact the office for another copy.

Please note that we can only receive text in messages - we do not receive emojis, gifs or pictures (mms)

If you use the t2p app, please ensure that you have notifications switched on, so you know when we have sent you a message.

### Christmas Cards

The PTA have let us know that the Christmas Cards will be delivered to school the early part of next week. It will be great to see everyone's art work.

### Christmas Performance – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December at 9:30am and 2pm

We have been busy preparing for the Christmas performance next week with lots of singing practise and outdoor rehearsals. Your children have done a fantastic job of learning their songs, lines and dances and it is going to be a super event. We are expecting a sizeable audience for both the morning and the afternoon performance. We would ask that you follow the guidelines below in order to ensure that this event goes ahead safely:

- Please can everyone attending, take a lateral flow test before coming to the performance.
- Use the sanitiser provided on arrival to reduce the spread of germs.
- **Bring your own chairs** and sit in socially distanced family groups. Please try to stay in these groups throughout the performance and practise social distancing when you are entering and leaving our school site.
- Do not attend a performance if you have any tested positive for any strand of Covid-19 or you have Covid-19 symptoms including but not limited to a high temperature/fever, a cough and loss of taste and/or smell.
- Wear a face covering whilst on the school site.
- Do not approach our pupils at the beginning or the end of the performance- this will support us to maintain social distancing.

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The weather forecast for Tuesday is looking quite promising and so we are hopeful that the event will go ahead as planned. Please remember to dress your child appropriately for the event. If the weather is not good, we will hold the performance on our back up date of Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December. On arrival please walk past the school office and through onto the field where there will be a sign in sheet.

Pupils will be able to leave early after the afternoon performance if they have had family/ friends watching. Children will all return to their classrooms at the end of the performance and then can be collected from their normal classroom doors. Please be aware that normal collection arrangements will remain in place with only named adults being able to collect. Children who are normally walk home can be collected by a family member unless the office are informed otherwise. Children will not be being able to walk home independently until the end of the day at 3:30pm.

### **Internet safety**

We were pleased to see some of our parents attend the online safety awareness sessions we offered this term. We received excellent feedback and will be holding more in the upcoming terms.

Following on from the sessions, I want to raise awareness of cyberbullying and how to prevent it. 'Cyberbullying' in its most basic form, is someone using the internet to harm, frighten or upset another person on purpose over a period of time. This can include (but is not limited to) sending unpleasant messages or posting unkind/inappropriate comments or photos.

We often talk about the effects bullying has on the victim, and quite rightly so. As well as being bullied, the reality is, our children bully others too. Therefore, I want us to adjust our thinking and consider if our children are the perpetrators and how we identify and act upon this. Consider your child's language and behaviour when they talk about their peers. Is your child secretive or defensive if you ask to see messages they may be sending? If so, it's time to discuss appropriate behaviour and conduct online. Link this to our school values of kindness, respect and responsibility.

I am sure we all agree that any form of bullying can be very scary, worrying and upsetting for all involved, parents and children alike.

Childnet offer Top Tips for supporting children age 7-11 with cyberbullying:

**Encourage your child to save the evidence and show you.** They can do this by taking a screenshot of what has happened or by keeping the messages they have received. By doing this they will have proof when they report the cyberbullying and it

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helps you understand exactly what has happened. **Don't deny access to technology.** Although it can be very tempting to remove a device from a child if they are being bullied online, it may prevent your child from coming to you about online worries again. Our pupils tell us one of the reasons they wouldn't speak to their parents about cyberbullying is because they are worried their technology would be taken away from them or they will be in trouble. **Don't reply.** Most of the time a bully is looking for a reaction when they are being mean online. Tell your child not to reply. Instead, they should tell a trusted adult what has happened. Reassure your child that even if things have spiralled out of control and they are also at fault, they should come and talk to you or a trusted adult. You can then work out the best way to resolve the situation together. **Speak to the school.** We will offer support and advice to you and your child. By working together, we can all do our bit to reduce all types of bullying. We can support you in how to **use the tools available.** You can report a person or profile, as well as content e.g. a post, video or comment to the service or platform it was made (such as facebook, Instagram, snapchat, X-box) who will review it against their terms and conditions.

We aim to keep all of our children safe and support families in monitoring and acting upon their child's online behaviour.

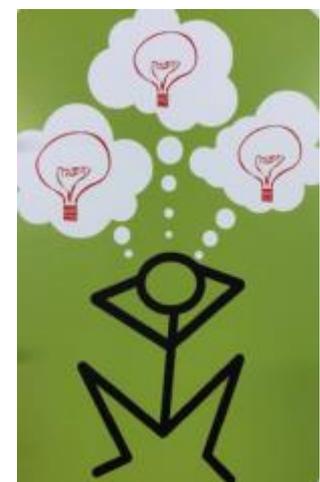
### **Trick Box**

Over the last couple of weeks, we have continued to learn new tricks as well as revise old ones. It was so lovely to witness the 'Win Win' trick being used on the playground last week to solve a disagreement between some year 4 children. After an argument about what they should play and a reminder about the trick they quickly came up with a solution that suited everyone! Well done to those children!

Years 3 and 4 have been learning the **Sunny Side** trick (details of this trick have been shared in an earlier newsletter this term) and **Light Bulb**, while Years 5 and 6 have learnt **Signal Change** and **Ask How**.

**Light Bulb** is a trick based on building creativity in our thinking. It's about considering solutions to a problem in a way in which maybe you haven't thought of before. Thinking creatively may just lead to one of those 'light bulb' moments!

**Ask How** is a really good trick to help get our brains out of the 'I can't do it' mentally we sometimes find ourselves in. Instead of thinking 'I can't, you ask yourself 'how can I....?' This change can



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help our brains to begin problem solving and overall helps us with our mental health and wellbeing because we stop focussing on the negatives and about how we can't do something. Try asking yourselves this question next time you finding something tricky.

### Year 5

Year 5 have had a very busy and enjoyable week, designing our own planets and playing around with different sentences to describe them in the most scientific way.



We were very excited for Thursday's Christmas activity and jumper day and enjoyed shopping for our friends and family very much. It was great fun creating Christmas light up pictures, Christmas cards and comics too!



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We have also been practicing lots for the Christmas show and can't wait to share with you our talent. We have laughed so much learning how to play the recorders and different compositions as a group. We have had such a fun half term and are looking forward to what the Spring term brings! Merry Christmas from year 5 😊

## Year 6

It has been a busy week in Year 6 this week! It has also been great to welcome Miss Furlong back! In Science, we have continued our unit on evolution and looked this week at how animals have evolved over time to suit their environments. We looked at how polar bears have evolved to suit the harsh polar regions as well as how other creatures such as butterflies and alligators are suited to their habitats. Next week, we will finish the unit off by looking at how plants have evolved and adapted over time.

In maths, we have finished our BIDMAS unit where we enjoyed exploring the order of operations. We are looking forward to moving onto our next unit, fractions, after Christmas.



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We have really enjoyed our English unit recently. This week, we have been learning how to write a speech to "rally the troops" with particular attention on Shackleton and how he encouraged crew to join his expedition to Antarctica on his ship The Endurance.

Yesterday, was Love of Christmas day. There was a variety of activities happening in year 6, ranging from making snowflakes, making Christmas tree decorations and stained - glass windows. We also enjoyed our Christmas shopping event in the MAD studio. It was a brilliant experience and really got us in the mood for Christmas!



### **Water Bottles**

It is important that all children have their own named water bottle in school.

### **Lost Property**

Lost property Instagram page: **mrjs\_lost\_property** Any unclaimed items are photographed and shared before being held in school for the next half term. If you spot any clothing belonging to your child please comment below each photo so that we can return it to them or pop into the office to collect it. Can I ask all parents to re-check PE kit, coats and school uniform to ensure that full names are clearly labelled in all items of clothing. Thank you.

### **And finally...**

We have an Instagram account for the school which will enable family and friends to follow on a regular basis different aspects of school life. The account can be found by searching for **millrythejuniorschool**. There is another account called millrythejunior but this **is not** the current account for our school. **The school account is not for children to follow on their own Instagram app as this is not meant for children under the age of 13.**

Have a great holiday and a happy New Year,

Becky Vousden, Acting Headteacher

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**Key dates for the academic year 2021 – 2022 confirmed so far:**

**Spring 1**

4<sup>th</sup> January INSET Day  
5<sup>th</sup> January First Day Back  
6<sup>th</sup> January Y5 Winchester Science Museum  
18<sup>th</sup> February Last Day of Spring 1

**Spring 2**

28<sup>th</sup> February First Day Back  
8<sup>th</sup> April Last Day of Spring term

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