Friday 6th September 2019

Dear Parents/Carers,

**Welcome back!**

Welcome back to a brand new school year from all the staff at Grove Road. I hope you have all had a restful and enjoyable summer holiday.

It was wonderful to welcome everyone to school this week, including 48 new members of Team GR children and staff, and to see the children all rush through the doors as the new school year begins.

The team have worked hard over the summer to make continued improvements to the school building; Bertie’s makeover is nearly complete and the classrooms are looking fabulous.

**New School Website**

We were delighted to launch our new school website at the end of August. We have designed the site to provide a comprehensive overview of our school vision and values, our Grove Road curriculum and regular information and updates to improve communication and class information.

There are many new features available including pages specifically showcasing school learning and events that will be taking place via the ‘Latest News’, ‘Upcoming Events’, the ‘School Calendar’ and our Twitter feed and YouTube channel.

The school calendar already has lots of events diarised across the school year including ‘Meet the Teacher’ evenings later this month, parent consultations in the autumn and spring terms and various other special events. You can also now subscribe to the school calendar so that it is easily accessible on your mobile phone or a tablet device.

**Cross-Curricular Topics**

You may or may not be aware that in order to make the learning as engaging as possible for our children, all classes enjoy a theme for each half-term which links different areas of the curriculum. A ‘stunning start’ and ‘fabulous finish’ enables teachers to ‘hook’ children into their learning at school, giving an exciting buzz and sense of purpose to each topic. Relevant topic webs for each phase of school can be found on the website so that you can see what your child(ren) will be up to!

**Clubs**

This year, we will be organising a range of after school clubs, for all year groups, through a specialist provider called Clubbly. Bookings and payments will need to be made directly through Clubbly. Information and flyers on how to do this will be sent out via ParentMail.

We will also still have a number of free school clubs lead by school staff including Choir, History Club, Reading Club and No Worries Club.

**Friends of Grove Road (FOGR)**

I would like to thank all of the FOGR group for doing such an incredible job last year, organising and running various special events. Your generous contributions helped FOGR to raise a huge amount of money for school resources. As a result, and with the help of Stray FM, we will be launching our new school radio station after the half term holiday! This would simply not be possible without the tireless efforts and dedication of our FOGR members.

If you are interested in getting involved and joining FOGR, there is an AGM Meeting on at The Swan on the Stray at 7.30pm on Sunday 15th September.

**School Radio Station**

I believe the Grove Road radio station will provide a unique way to help our children by; building confidence, improving collaboration, encourage risk-taking and a growth mindset as well as hooking children in to exciting and engaging learning opportunities; skills that develop and reinforce positive life-long learning opportunities. The children will be taking part in an official vote, next month, to name the radio station!

**National 3 Peaks Challenge**

After being inspired by Mr Morland’s running, I have decided to attempt the national 3 peaks challenge, in 24 hours, next summer. I shared this with the children on Wednesday and I have even managed to rope Mr Davies into doing it with me! I very much hope it will be a positive example for the children demonstrating our Pride values as well as raising money for the school.

**Free School Meals**

I wanted to remind all parents/carers of the benefits of signing up for Free School Meals. Even though meals are provided for all children in Reception – Year 2, we provide financial support for trips, uniform, resources and clubs to children who are signed up for Free School Meals. If you think you might be eligible please visit <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/free-school-meals> or contact the school office for an application form.

**New Catering Provider – Chartwells**

I am pleased to be able to inform you again that our new catering provider Chartwells are now leading the kitchen team. They will be sending parents/carers lots of helpful information later this month about our new menu and upcoming family menu tasting sessions.

**E-Safety**

Computing and the use of digital devices is an essential resource to support teaching and learning at Grove Road as well as playing an important role in the everyday lives of our children. Whilst exciting and beneficial, it is vital of course, that we are all aware of the range of risks associated with the use of various technologies.

One in five 8 to 11 year olds has a social media profile, 1 in 4 children have experienced something upsetting on a social networking site, 1 in 3 children have been a victim of cyberbullying and three-quarters of parents have looked for or received information or advice about how to help their child manage online risks. (Source NSPCC.)

The internet is an amazing tool that can enhance education, but unfortunately it can also bring problems. With today’s fast paced internet world our children are far more at home on the internet and with modern technology.

We have lots of helpful information and advice via the school website on how to keep children safe online. If you have any concerns or questions about online safety please do not hesitate to contact me or our Parent Support Advisor, Heidi Hunter.

**Attendance/Punctuality/Sickness**

It is vital that you inform the school office if your child/children will be absent. Please use the absence reporting facility on ParentMail or telephone the school on 01423506060 any time to leave a message. Please report any pupil absence by 9.30am. If we do not receive notification of absence you will receive a telephone call from a member of the office staff.

If your child is sick, please notify the school via ParentMail/telephone on each day of absence. All letters concerning pupil absence should be emailed or handed in to the school office. Forms for requesting special leave are available from the school office. Once completed these should be addressed to the Headteacher and submitted to the school office.

**Uniform/ Lost Property**

A polite reminder that all children should be wearing appropriate, black shoes for school. Remember that there are lost property boxes for school uniform in the front entrance of school. It is extremely helpful if all items of school clothing are clearly labelled (particularly coats and jumpers) as it significantly increases the likelihood of finding and identifying any lost clothing.

**ParentMail**

All letters will be sent out electronically via ParentMail and added to the school website. If you need any assistance in setting up a ParentMail account please contact the school office team who will be more than happy to help.

**Seesaw**

Last year, we were able to share over 12,000 posts showcasing the children’s learning and had nearly 17,000 visits to our Seesaw account from parents and carers. I would like to thank everyone for making Seesaw such a successful communication tool at Grove Road. I am sure you will agree it makes such a positive difference to engage the children in their learning and for you to see what’s happening every day.

Don’t forget that you can like and leave a comment on their learning journal, which the children love to see! If you need any help/advice or you are not yet connected please speak to the class teacher.

I look forward to chatting to as many of you as possible in school or on the playground over the next few weeks.

As always, thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards,

Mr C J Parkhouse

Headteacher