



West Malling

CE Primary School & The McGinty SRP

Old Cricket Ground, Norman Road, West Malling, Kent ME19 6RL Headteacher Mr David Rye MSc PGCE NPQH

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6th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to school for the start of the new school year. I hope that everyone had an enjoyable summer, whether that was on holiday in this country or abroad, or simply enjoying some time in the sunshine that finally decided to make an appearance. Welcoming everyone back is always a special time of year, and I extend a particular welcome to the new Chestnut children and families who are joining the West Malling family.

Building Work

Significant work has taken place in school during the break. Chestnut (Reception) and Lime (Year 1) classrooms have had a complete redecoration. They look fresh and bright, as if they are part of a brand-new school! The roofing work has continued and is now nearing completion with new roof-light windows due to be installed and the fascias being finished as the final touches. The most complex project of all has been the re-configuration of the old library/ICT suite area. This part of school is currently sectioned off while the work is completed. While the 'heavy' construction work has been completed, re-routing of cabling and decoration requires further time. We are hopeful that in a few weeks' time this phase of the project will be complete to allow the exciting design and furnishing to begin, using the funds raised by all of you through the PTFA, for which we are incredibly grateful.

Attendance

Matters of school attendance have been very much in the media over the summer as new statutory guidance from The Department for Education, entitled 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' came into effect from 18 August 2024. While we shall be sharing further information in due course, I would like parents to be aware that there is now a requirement for schools to inform the local authority when a pupil is absent from school due to illness for 15 days or more (either consecutively or cumulatively throughout an academic year) or is due to be absent for 15 days due to illness. In addition, the guidance from Kent County Council is that schools should not authorise any absence of a planned nature in term time. Planned absence includes all holidays and weddings and parents will be liable to fines if they choose to ignore this advice. The fines are issued by Kent County Council and the money is collected and retained by the authority and does not come back into school.

Heart of Kent Hospice

From conversations with the children, I know that many of you went hunting for our own Macey as part of the Shaun the Sheep in the Heart of Kent trail in Maidstone over the summer. As well as being a fun thing to do, the sponsorship you all raised through our heptathlon back in July has now raised over £2000 for the Hospice. This is an incredible amount and placed us in the top 5% of all fundraising activities on Just Giving for the month! I know that the Hospice is over the moon at the amount raised and I would like to express my own thanks to all families who have helped us support such a special local charity.

The normal format of newsletter will return next week, and I hope you all enjoy a good weekend.

Mr Rye

