



Mr Stark's Messages - March 2024



Here we are zooming through March! Although this half term is shorter, it is still jam-packed with lots of learning and events as detailed in the February whole school newsletter. What a great World Book Day it was yesterday with so many happy faces, creating their T-shirt artwork and chatting about their books! Please see some notices and updates below.

MOBILE PHONES IN SCHOOL - GOVERNMENT UPDATE

You may have heard that the government has recently updated its guidance on the use of mobile phones in school - **it is now prohibited for children to use their personal mobile phones in any school.**

Please note, this guidance already reflects our current policy, therefore our procedure of handing phones in at the beginning of each day will continue. Phones for

At Sutton Green, we accept and understand that personal mobile phones and tablets are often given to pupils by their parents to ensure their safety and personal security, this is why we will continue with the handing in system.

We are therefore writing to:

- Share some of the research referred to in the guidance on the use of mobile phones by children.
- Explain how the school is expected to comply with the new guidance.
- Provide you with an overview of online safety, along with some links to a number of useful

websites. **Childrens' mobile phone use: facts and figures**

- By the age of 12, 97% of children own a mobile phone. (Ofcom)
- The majority of 8-11-year-olds (63%) use social media and messaging apps. This rises to 93% for children between 12 and 15 years old. (Ofcom)
- 29% of secondary school pupils (rising to 40% for KS4 pupils) reported mobile phones being used without permission in most of their lessons. (The National Behaviour Survey (2021-2022))
- Mobile phones have already been prohibited or restricted in countries worldwide, such as France and The Netherlands. • Screen time can displace positive activities. (Royal College Paediatrics and Child Health; 2019)
- One in five children have experienced bullying online. (Office of National Statistics; 2020)

Government guidance

The new government guidance states that schools should:

- Prohibit the use of mobile phones and *other smart technology* throughout the school day, this includes during lessons, between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Develop and implement a tailored policy on the use of mobile phones and other similar devices in school.

HOMework

I have seen a dramatic increase in the engagement in home learning since our homework review. The projects that are coming in are phenomenal and demonstrate such enthusiasm, variety and creativity! Over the past few weeks, I've seen:

- *model habitats for lots of different animals*
- *an enormous 'History of Ellesmere Port' information poster,*
- *a marvellous model solar system*
- *a layers of the Earth model*
- *an awesome adventure story*
- *independent school learning journals*
- *informative Online Safety posters*

Thank you for all of your efforts in supporting homework.

POLLING DAY - MAY 2nd 2024

On Thursday 2nd May 2024, the elections are taking place across Cheshire to elect the next Police and Crime Commissioner for the Cheshire Police Area. The Cheshire Police Area is made up of the local authority areas of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington.

Please note, **we will remain open** for this election to minimise disruption to learning. We are liaising with the Local Authority to ensure this happens as smoothly as possible.

The hall will be out of use all day on this date. The lunch offer for this date will be a cold lunch served to classrooms.

I am endeavouring to change the use of Sutton Green as a polling station to a more suitable, convenient and less disruptive location. I will keep you informed. Thank you for your understanding.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please be reminded of our Parent Code of Conduct [here](#)

Expectations include:

- Respectful dialogue between parents and staff.
- Respectful messages on group chats.
- Avoid acting upon or sharing unfounded concerns - always follow the correct procedures - talk to the class teacher in the first instance.
- Appropriate language and conduct towards each other on school grounds and in the vicinity of the school.

Thank you for your continued respect and your trust in Sutton Green to provide the best education, support appropriate behaviour and keep your children safe.

NEW ARRIVAL!

You may have heard about Mrs Howsam's exciting news... she is expecting a baby! Please join me in congratulating Mr and Mrs Howsam and look forward to meeting the new arrival in September!

ATTENDANCE

We are continuing to work with families who are regularly absent or late and we are seeing a marked improvement.

Some families have received letters regarding procedures for unauthorised holidays, irregular attendance and regular lateness.

If any child has frequent unauthorised or irregular attendance, I am duty bound to notify the local authority, who will either issue you with a warning or a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

Please be aware, the government and the NHS guidelines clearly state that children can still attend school with milder illnesses.

PARENTS' EVENING

In our recent parent feedback survey, some parents felt that information regarding your child's progress mid-year could be clearer. To further improve this, you will be presented with a mid-year progress slip as a record of the conversations held during the parent meetings. This will clearly state how your child is progressing and will guide conversations regarding next steps, attendance and attitude to learning.

ONLINE SAFETY

What can parents do to help protect children online?

As parents, you play an essential role in protecting your children online and there are lots of ways you can help to minimise the risks and increase awareness of the online world. To help you start discussing some of the issues regarding mobile phone use and the internet, we have listed some of the ways you can do this below:

- **Talk** to your children about why it is important to stay safe online. Explain that whilst the internet is a fun, exciting and knowledge-rich tool, it is also a place where people may wish to bring them into dangerous activities or expose them to harmful material. It is important to be clear that you are not saying your child may never use the internet again, or that everything on it is harmful – it is about teaching them to have a greater awareness and to be able to manage and report any risks.
- Only give your children devices or access to **devices that you feel comfortable with**, and not as a result of peer-pressure deriving from their classmates and/or friends who are also using those devices. ● Discuss **rules** for being online and draw them up together, including which sites, games, etc., are acceptable. If certain games are off-limits, try to explain why – for example, because of excessive violence. If your child uses online gaming, consider setting rules such as only talking to others in the same age range and having the conversation on speaker, rather than headphones, so you can monitor it.
- Discuss what information should be **private** and what is ok to share; for example, addresses and names. Names should never be given out to people online, as this could allow them to identify where your child goes to school or lives.
- Keep an **open dialogue** with your child – letting them know they can always talk to you about anything that has made them feel uncomfortable online is key to keeping them safe.
- Set **parental controls** – do this as a dialogue with your child so that they are aware of what they are not allowed to view; however, do not rely on parental controls on devices, as they are not always 100 percent effective, and many children know how to bypass them.
- Make sure your child knows how to **report or ‘block’ unsuitable content, messages or people online** – show them how to block on the websites or games they frequently use and explain that they can always tell you, a teacher or another adult if they experience anything which makes them feel uncomfortable.

Here are some other resources you can use to help you protect your children online:

- NSPCC – ‘Talking to your child about online safety’ (<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-child-online-safety/>)
 - Childnet – ‘Have a conversation’ (<https://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers/have-a-conversation/>) ●
- Thinkuknow (<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>)
- UK Safer Internet Centre (<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>)