



Horsmonden Primary School

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Mr Malcolm E. Hayes

4th December 2009

Dear Parents,

What a wonderful afternoon yesterday! The **Christmas Present Fayre** seems to formally mark the beginning of the Christmas season and yesterday was no exception in creating a magical atmosphere for the children as they carefully selected their gifts. Many thanks to the hall full of mums who, led by the incomparable Paula Veysey-Smith, gave so willingly and cheerfully of their time. 212 smiling faces more than justify the time and effort and it was great to see a really good blend of long-serving mums alongside those new to the school this term.

The **Christmas postbox** is not only starring in the infant Christmas production, but is in the entrance hall first thing in the morning for your children to post their Christmas cards. Please check that the recipient's name and class is on the envelope as it can be challenging to work out a destination. Year 6 'postal operatives' have promised no industrial action, so there shouldn't be any other disruptions to the delivery process.

*Tricia Sparks and Penny Ironmonger will be doing the **teas and cakes** stall at the Farmers Market on Friday Dec 11th in aid of Horsmonden Primary School, and would be very grateful for donations of cakes to sell. Please could you leave them in the main reception at school on Thursday afternoon. Many thanks.*

Year 6 will also be at the Farmers' Market on that morning singing Christmas Carols and songs to entertain everyone. We'll be heading over for 11 a.m., so if you're planning on going to the market that morning, it'll be great to see you in the Village Hall.

Tuesday 15th December is the **Carols by Candlelight rehearsal** for **juniors**, which means the mammoth undertaking of shifting 120 juniors to the church and back. It's actually quite straightforward, but then I've done it 17 times before! For those of you with children in infants, drop them at school first and then head for the church. We need to fill up cars with as many children as possible because the lanes are narrow and we don't want to waste fuel. Teachers will check on the Monday who has lifts and who doesn't, but if you've got spaces, please let your child's teacher know well in advance.

To keep the roads as safe as possible, please head for the church via Lamberhurst Road, turning left at Spelmonden Road and returning to the village via Brick Kiln Lane and the Goudhurst Road. This may cause some of you to have a slightly longer journey, but the roads may well be very slippery and it's better to use a one-way system that avoids incidents. If you're able to assist with the return to school at 10:45, that's excellent. If you are able to assist with transport, can you please wave your insurance certificate in the office beforehand.

Carols by Candlelight itself will start at 7 p.m. on the Thursday evening. Some pews will be reserved for infants and I will also reserve a few seats for those who've recently had leg operations or who are heavily pregnant (we'll find room at the inn!). If you've got a special reason for needing a reserved seat, please let me know and I'll organise something – man-flu is not a valid reason, nor is "My child's in it and I want to have the best view". There will be a retiring collection for Hospice in the Weald, who we have supported through our carol service for a number of years. Please bring a torch; this will not only be useful to see your way from the car parking area, but it will be handy for singing the last carol once the lights are down and the church is lit purely by candlelight. If it's very wet and you have a 4X4 and it's very muddy, please bring a towrope, a pair of wellies and a selfless attitude.

Christmas parties are in the list of dates in your September starter pack or on the website. Individual teachers will give you details as to what's happening and what's needed next week.

Reception parents, there are some days when we'd like part time children to stay in the final fortnight and an option for full-timers, too.

Monday 7 th December	all children all day (rehearsals)
Tuesday 8 th December	morning children leave at lunchtime as normal
Wednesday 9 th December	all children all day (dress rehearsal with Kindergarten watching)
Thursday 10 th December	all children all day (matinee. Collection from classroom at 3.20)
Friday 11 th December	afternoon optional for all Reception children. Some may need to go home for a nap before the evening performance.
Monday 14 th December	all children all day
Tuesday 15 th December	all children all day (Infant Christmas party)
Wednesday 16 th December	morning children leave at lunchtime as normal
Thursday 17 th December	morning children leave at lunchtime as normal
Friday 18 th December	all children all day (Christmas dinner and singalongasir)

On to other matters now. I was more than a little amused by the Schools' Minister, Vernon Coker who, when faced with this week's report by the Office for National Statistics on the effectiveness of the investment in education said, "This report takes far too narrow a view of the education system in England. Parents will appreciate that there is far more to school and to a child's time at school than productivity". That would be the same minister that has presided over an Ofsted framework with a formula for judgements almost exclusively restricted by the number of level 4 grades at Year 6 SATs time, ignoring the progress made, higher level success and all other value added activities. Such moments are rare, but incredibly sweet!!

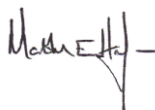
Whilst on the subject of irritating pests, the wet and warm weather of previous weeks is just how **headlice** like it. Can you please remember to check your child's hair on Sunday evening as there are some little critters that we simply don't welcome for all our festive activities. Children with long hair need to keep it tied back to prevent easy transport for headlice who fancy a change of domain.

Many thanks to Mr Brown for organising the **E-safety evening**. The parents who came along were very appreciative of the advice given and surprised by just how easy it is for things to become uncomfortable in cyberspace. We'll try to make this happen again as, judging by the response from those parents present, it contained information that all parents need to know.

Have you handed in your **Christmas Dinner form** yet? If you haven't, please make sure it's in by Monday at the very latest as we'll need to get the order sorted.

Just two weeks left in the most exciting month of the year for young children. It's very busy, all happening, and the various notes and messages that come home which may leave some of you highly confused. Please remember, there's no such thing as a stupid question and we're only a phone call away.

Yours sincerely,



Malcolm E. Hayes
Headmaster

