



## Horsmonden Primary School

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Headmaster:

Mr Malcolm E. Hayes

26<sup>th</sup> September 2008

Dear Parents,

There's a decidedly autumnal feel about school both inside and out this week. The obvious change in the weather is producing new colours on the trees outside. I know it's a bit of a rush some mornings, but do take the time to talk with your child about what they see on the changing face of the school grounds as you come to school as it increases children's sense of belonging and level of care and interest in their school.

Next Friday, weather permitting, the **Ken Mills Challenge Day** for juniors will take place. Junior children have their first house competition with a range of sports throughout the day in what many of them tell us is their favourite sporting opportunity of the year. Unless the weather is truly awful, juniors should arrive in winter sports kit for the duration of the day and the winners trophies will be presented the following Monday at Special Mentions after which they will be on display in the main entrance hall.

### HARVEST FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> October, we have our **Harvest Festival Day**. Children are invited to bring in a variety of produce on the Tuesday or Wednesday, which will be displayed in the hall before all our classes head out into the village and distribute it among our elderly residents on Wednesday afternoon. Last year all junior children decorated a box for the harvest goods distribution, which was really appreciated by the recipients, some of whom have very few visitors and who were truly grateful for the time, care and effort that went into the boxes. We'd like to do this again and as we have exactly the same number of junior children as recipients this works rather well.

- **Junior children:** Next week's homework is to decorate a box for harvest distribution with the decorated box left empty but taken into class by Wednesday morning; harvest goodies should be brought in separately as the boxes are made up after the harvest assembly.
- **Infant children:** Infants do not need to make boxes as they will be making cards to go with the gifts in school. Harvest goodies should be brought to school and placed on the display in the hall.

Please give generously and creatively for harvest. A little effort on our part goes a long way to the local residents who really appreciate knowing they are cared for and thought about by the school.

If you happen to have **4 bales of straw laying** around and only want three back, could you let me know. We like to make the display attractive for the assembly.

If you are able to help as one of our **bag ladies** (or men) for about an hour after the assembly, please let Sarah, Maggie or Velsha in the office know. We'll need the goods to be evenly distributed among the decorated boxes in preparation for the afternoon distribution.

Are you free to assist with the **afternoon distribution**? If you are, please let your child's teacher know. The walk round the village is a great opportunity for children to show the very best of the values here in school and year after year they make us proud when we read the cards from residents.

Still thinking around the harvest theme, many of you may recall the **pumpkin growing competition** with pumpkins provided by the Farmers' Market. Please bring your prize pumpkins in on the morning of Harvest Festival Day, where they will be displayed and judged. Year 7 ex-pupils are still eligible for the competition (we have two entries already from them).

Thinking well ahead, I'm afraid I need to mention the word Christmas. With only 89 shopping days to go (when I was a boy Sundays didn't count!), we're already planning our hall displays. We will be in need of an 18 foot high **Christmas tree**, in other words one that reaches the ceiling. We'll need it at the beginning of December and we don't want to spend a lot of money getting it. If you know of where we can get one, please let me know.

**Data Caption Slips!** Sounds gripping, doesn't it? This is one of those aspects of school life that is dull but essential and accompanying this letter in paper only form is your current information sheet. We need to know at any given point in the day where we can get hold of you should your child be unwell, so please ensure that the information we have is bang up-to-date and return your slip as soon as possible.

Much more exciting than that is the news that there will be an election for **parent governor** with no fewer than four candidates. There is a letter with ballot paper accompanying this newsletter and voting slips must be in by next Thursday. Thank you for the interest that has been generated on this occasion and my advice is to read carefully the information from each candidate and make sure you use your votes. Remember, you can vote for **two** candidates.

**Communication** in any organisation is both crucial and, at times, challenging. We do our best to make sure you are kept aware of everything that's happening and the most efficient method for up to the minute information is to join the listing for the electronic newsletter. In addition to the weekly letter, I occasionally send out alerts, so please do sign up if you regularly use email. Our recently upgraded email system also means you can contact all staff by using a standard form of email address, which is <first name>.<surname>@horsmonden.kent.sch.uk . In another small but significant effort, there's a new external noticeboard on the corner of Year 6, which will contain whole school notices; we also have the Friends of Horsmonden Primary School noticeboard in the children's entrance and the community noticeboard now in the main entrance opposite the Headmaster's noticeboard. Please make every effort to keep yourself well informed by looking at all of these when in and around the school.

There's a **fun run** for children taking place on Tuesday evening at **Mascalls School**, which starts at 4.15 pm and should finish at approximately 5.15 pm. There are two races, one being for Years 1 – 3 and the other for Years 4 – 6, with the overall aim being to generate interest in a cross country running club across several schools. Parents will need to provide transport and stay with children who are participating. If you are interested, please let Mr Brown know.

Wednesday was our first day of a wet morning and the first real test of **parental parking power** under those conditions. As my school reports often said, 'must try harder'. Many of you observed the one-way system and thought about the safe crossing for children who cannot see over the top of your car. Others unfortunately displayed a complete disregard for the Highway Code and for the safety of other people's children. Really, I have no problem if parking in a way that causes less of a hazard means you are a few minutes later than you hoped, but we'll all have a problem if a child gets hurt. It's clearly time for me to get outside with the cones to make sure you all understand which bits to avoid when parking in the interests of the children's safety.

**Friday Football** for juniors will soon begin, with quality coaching being provided through Premier Sport, ensuring your children have familiar faces on the field, but we still need volunteers to offer services for matches and, ideally, a match co-ordinator. Children previously paid £1 per week for Friday Football and we will be keeping the cost the same. Booking forms will be handed out next Wednesday for return the following day and Friday Football will start on 3<sup>rd</sup> October at the end of Ken Mills Challenge Day.

So, with this week's newsletter cunningly interwoven to return to the subject of the first paragraph, all that remains for me to do is thank you for your excellent attendance at last night's parents' meeting. All the teachers were extremely grateful for the level of support and interest in what's happening in school this year which means our efforts in class go so much further. Thank you

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm E. Hayes  
Headmaster

