



Horsmonden Primary School

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Mr Malcolm E. Hayes

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Dear Parents,

I'd like to start by letting you know that we have a very full oil tank for the cold snap that we're possibly going to get this weekend and beyond. It's also worth letting you know what happens in a situation of **exceptional weather** or other emergency circumstance rather than waiting for it to happen. In the event of snow at any point in the winter, your children will need to bring wellies and warm clothes; with fresh snowfall we traditionally head for the field for a snowman building competition. We're also normally the last school to close in the event of deep snow, for which the staff remain exceptionally grateful. It's important that you judge whether or not your journey is either safe or possible and that if you decide it's not, just let us know, but do so after 08:45 as the phone lines get extremely busy on such mornings. Should there be the need to close the school at any point for any circumstance, we will notify local radio, send an E-letter alert out and use the most effective method of all, word of mouth. Now that I've given you all that information, you can rest assured that there will be no need to either prepare for snow this weekend or to close the school this year.

Whilst it's not exceptional weather, just a few children don't have **coats** in school. If you're having a problem with convincing your child that they need a coat and they insist that it's 'uncool', do let me know. I've had remarkable success over the years in convincing children that it's 'cool to be warm' and will be happy to share my knowledge with them!

As we head towards the festive season, a number of you may well want to spend a little extra time on your Christmas shopping. Have you thought of using our **Extra Hours Club**? This could give you the flexibility in the week to save on the rush and to spare yourself needing to take the children with you (or am I the only person in the world who finds this quite an ordeal?). You've heard a lot from us about the club, but what about the children's view? I have a quote from Felicity, who stays right through until 6 p.m. on a Friday:

"I love my after-school club because it's fun and full of great activities. I get to wear my home clothes. I did puzzles and games before tea, then after my yummy tea I did painting and make-believe games. It went so quickly – I was so surprised when Mummy appeared at 6 p.m. I can't wait for next week."

I make no apology for shamelessly advertising our Extra Hours Club as the sustainability of the provision is an essential element in its success. Whilst I have philosophical reservations about schools being open from 08:00 - 18:00 five days each week for 48 weeks of the year, it's a requirement that children have that provision so we simply need to do it better! Attached is a form for next term. We will be rolling out the service 5 nights each week and early bookings enable us to plan as well as assuring you of a place.

Thank you for your support at the **Scholastic Book Fair** earlier in the autumn. I'm delighted to tell you that we can now choose **£299** worth of free books for the school as commission for sales.

We don't yet have a **Christmas Tree**. Do any of you happen to know where I can get a tree approximately 18 feet high (5.4864 metres). We'd like to be able to put the tree up on Monday 1st December, so time is running desperately short. Please let me know ASAP if you discover one.

Reception learning evaluations will be on Wednesday 3rd December at 09:00 and will end at around 10:00. This is when you sit with your child and go through their learning with them. For those of you with Kindergarten children, drop them off first and others of you are welcome to wait in the warm inside school until registration is complete – there will be a cup of tea in the hall available from 08:45.

How's homework going? I'm particularly interested in how you are finding the balance between the academic and the practical tasks, as feedback so far suggests that what may be happening is something positive for families when the practical happens in removing stress and increasing shared activity. Please let me know the high spots and challenges, ideally via email, on what the homework experience is like in your household.

Year 1 have looked a little different today with their **China Day**. Along with the sights there have been some wonderful aromas from their cooking and some of the photographs will be displayed on the screen in the front entrance hall throughout next week.

Have you got your **tickets** booked for tomorrow night's Gig featuring Chris Watts, Nick Stephens, Little Fish Big Pond and Mark Villarosa & Bamboojuice. You don't get many opportunities to behave like a teenager, so in the darkness you can pretend and nobody will worry! Doors open at 7 p.m. and the action will start within minutes.

And now we come to the inevitable moment in the newsletter where we must all focus on the words of Paula Veysey-Smith. I'm sure you will all appreciate that Paula's writing is heavily censored to remove content that is, frankly, more suited to late night Radio 2 than a school newsletter, but here are the bits you're able to read:

"All I can say is . . . get those presents in!! The first count has taken place and the number of gifts still needed is **850**. There are a lot of presents to come in and all I can say is get them in so I can stop prematurely ageing! All gifts can be popped into the box at the display in the entrance hall. In all seriousness, if we don't get enough gifts we will have to limit the amount the children can buy on the day which would be a great shame for an event that the children love so much.

"If you're still stuck for ideas how about some old fashioned sweets wrapped in a cellophane bag tied up with a bit of festive flair ribbon. Great for Dad's – mint imperials, vanilla fudge, choco éclairs are all great. For Mums', how about cookie cutters wrapped in cellophane and tied with ribbon – simple and cheap gifts that are what this event is all about. And the cellophane is freely available from the box in the entrance hall.....smashing!

"So, let's make next week a bumper week for gifts. As ever, please contact me on 07816 687616 if you have any questions or are new to our event. Your support now will make a big difference to our children on the day. Many thanks."

Well, I think we got through that one largely unscathed. And so I thought I would end by bringing you another nugget from the lunch hall from a Reception child whose identity will remain undisclosed. He was sitting alone at one of the small tables, so I enthusiastically asked if he'd like me to sit beside him. With total politeness, he looked up at me, pointed to several tables away and said "No thank you. You can sit over there if you like". Ah, the honesty of small children!

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm E. Hayes
Headmaster

