

19th March
2021

THE DOWNS SCHOOL NEWS

Message from Ms Allen

This week the children have settled back into school routines and enjoyed wearing their funky socks to school in support of all the Young Carers we have. Children in KS2 learnt what it means to be a Young Carer. Two snakes, Az and Pandora visited Year 6 to help with their science topic of Living Things and Habitats and children in Year 1 enjoyed their virtual visits to Yew Tree Farm. Please see our school website or Twitter for some photos. <https://www.downsschool.com/news/?pid=3&nid=1>

Thank you if you have already sent back your form requesting contact with the class teacher for our parents evening phone conversations. It has been an eventful year already and it is vital that we work together to support your child in all ways. Communication between school and home is an essential part of this.

On Monday we will be sending out a parent survey, we appreciate you completing this survey for us as it helps us to know what we are doing well and what we can do better.

We recognise that social media is part of children's lives and children in our school as young as 6 years old have social media accounts on Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook. **We remind parents, especially those with children in KS2, to speak to their child about the use of social media and to monitor what their child is accessing.** The biggest threat to children's online safety are the strangers that they may meet online. This is why children MUST have their social media accounts set to PRIVATE. However, we are also very concerned about the amount of upset and worry caused by chat on social media sites between friends. We would suggest you consider these two questions: Does your child freely show you their phone as soon as you ask to see it and how often do you do this? Does your child have deleted messages from them or their friends? Please be vigilant if you have decided to give your child access to sites that have a recommended age of 13 years old. We have booked the 2Johns to provide a virtual session for children in Years 5 and 6 on the use of social media and being safe online. Please see the flyer on our website. <https://www.downsschool.com/page/?title=Internet+Safety&pid=1032>

Sadly, we have had a couple of parents tell us that outside of the school gates, on the narrow entrance to the school site, some parents are not parking or driving safely. Please be considerate of each other and please report any concerns to North Essex Parking Partnership. <http://www1.parkingpartnership.org/north/> We are a 3PR school and urge you to walk if you can. Walking is much better for your child and for the environment.

Before Easter you will still be receiving your voucher if you are entitled to benefits related free school meals so remember to look out for this.

As a reminder, next Friday the children finish at 1.30 and the Nursery will not be open.

Please remember we are still in lockdown. All visitors should be wearing a face covering, arriving at the correct time, not congregating on the playground to chat and adhering to social distancing. Thank you for letting us know if your child is unwell and for collecting your child straight away if they become unwell in school. We are being extra cautious around any signs of illness and we are following all guidance to help prevent an outbreak of Covid in school. We are aware that some schools have had to close bubbles.

We continue to book virtual visits for our classes to broaden their experiences in the only way we can right now. Our Year 6 children will have their virtual visit to Chester Zoo on Thursday 25th March. You will receive a letter with further details.

We also have two new additions to our school with the arrival of Popcorn and Pretzel. They are two guinea pigs who live in the Reception classes and are looked after by our Reception children and staff. We hope to introduce them to the wider school once we can move around more freely without having to stay within our 'bubbles'.

Our word of the week is: relinquish – Prince Harry decided to relinquish his right to be king.

We have additional bagels and cereals in school, if you wish to collect these to take home for the Easter holidays. Please come to the school office.

On Friday 26th March, children can wear non-school uniform and ideally something with the colour purple. This is to show support and increase awareness of epilepsy. You can also donate through your SIMs pay account at any time or send in a cash donation with your child.

House Points - Children are able to earn Team Points for their house by working together and showing a good team spirit.

 Dragon	372
 Griffin	286
 Lion	231
 Unicorn	275

WELL DONE DRAGON!



Stars of the week – to children who have really shone in class and impressed a member of staff.

Tyarla and Adan in Acorn Class	Kataali in Aspen Class	George Godley in Oak Class
Freddie in Mulberry Class	Dolly in Cedar Class	
Joahan in Holly Class	Ajla in Rowan Class	
David in Elm Class	Mia B in Chestnut Class	
Robert in Larch Class	Chase in Willow Class	
Saurav in Sycamore Class	Lilly in Birch Class	
Evan in Maple Class	Roksana in Hazel Class	



Team Spirit - Children are able to earn Team Points for their house by working together and showing a good team spirit. Children who have been awarded for Team Spirit are as follows.

 **Dragon House**

Martha in Elm Class
 Elaina in Larch Class
 Ryan in Aspen Class
 Olivia in Chestnut Class
 Poppy in Birch Class
 Freya in Hazel Class
 Phoebe in Oak Class

 **Griffin House**

 **Lion House**

Lacey in Holly Class
 Malachi in Cedar Class
 Zoe in Rowan Class
 Jenah in Willow Class

 **Unicorn House**

Charlie in Mulberry Class
 Elinam in Sycamore Class
 Liam in Maple Class

Diary Dates for the Spring Term 2021

Wednesday 24th March	Virtual Farm Trip – Maple (1:30pm)
Thursday 25th March	Virtual Chester Zoo Visit – Hazel and Oak (10am)
Thursday 25th March	Virtual Farm Trip – Sycamore (1:15pm)
Thursday 25th March	Last day for Nursery Children
Friday 26th March	Purple Day to support Epilepsy
Friday 26th March	1.30 school closure
Monday 29th March – Friday 9th April	Easter Holidays – School Closed
Monday 12th April	Children return to school
Monday 12th April	2Johns – Year 5 and 6 Virtual Visit 1:30pm

More events and details regarding specific events will follow.