

‘Together we learn, Together we grow, Together we bloom.’

Dear Parents

As we reach the end of this first half term of the new academic year, I wanted to take the time to pause and reflect on all the wonderful things that have taken place this half term and look forward to the many wonderful things yet to come.

This half term we have had the opportunity to come together as a school family, to continue to explore our vision of learning, growing and blooming together and to think about how our values of **Respect, Responsibility** and **Resilience** underpin this. We have also been using our ‘framework’ of Windows, Mirrors and Doors to help us to think about what we can see when we look out at the world around us (windows), how this helps us to form our ideas and opinions (mirrors), and then thinking about our actions based on this (doors- as we ‘go out’ into the world). We have been so impressed with the children’s deep reflections and responses and I look forward to continuing to explore the vision and values further next half term. It would be wonderful if you could also share in using this language with us to keep referring to our vision and values with the children.

Class Newsletters

Please can I remind you that each class teacher writes a newsletter for their class each week. This newsletter shares with you highlights from the week, children’s learning, key information and also celebrates achievements. Please do take the time to read these newsletters; they can be found here: <http://dunsford-lap.co.uk/parents/classes>

Harvest

Thank you to everyone who attended the Harvest Service. It was wonderful to share in this special time with you and to share the music, poetry and artwork that the children had prepared. It was a beautiful service and it was so lovely to see you all taking part in the singing.

For many of our children it was the first time that they had visited the church for a considerable amount of time and, for others, it was the first time that they had taken part in something like this. I was incredibly proud of every member of our school family and the way in which they took part.



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TOGETHER WE EMPOWER EXCELLENCE

Thank you for all your very generous donations for the Teign Valley Larder. The gifts which you provided will make such a difference to the lives of so many and it is incredible that we can show such thoughtfulness as a school community.

Christmas

Next half term is always one of my favourite times of the school year as we face the 'run-up' to Christmas! This year we are hoping to have a number of festive events to 'sprinkle some magic' throughout both the school and the community.

On Sunday 28th November the PTFA will be holding the Dunsford Christmas Fayre. Further details will follow but please save the date in your diaries!

On Thursday 16th December we will be holding a Christingle/Christmas Service

at St. Mary's at 2pm. If restrictions continue to allow, we would like to invite parents to share in this service with us. There will be a mixture of traditional carols and Christmas music alongside other special items. Please also save this date in your diaries.

We will also be holding class Christmas parties, a Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper Day. Please look out for these dates and further information.



Musical Extravaganza!

On the afternoon of Thursday 25th November we will be holding a musical extravaganza in the village hall. This will be an opportunity for the children who currently take part in music lessons with both Mrs Todd and Mr Blurton to share their learning by putting on a special performance. We would like to invite the parents of the children who work with Mrs Todd and Mr Blurton to join us for this event which will begin at 2pm. It promises to be a wonderful afternoon of beautiful music and we are very much looking forward to this.

Open Afternoons

I would like to once again thank you all for the trust that you have placed in us as a staff at Dunsford since September 2020. I do not underestimate how difficult it has been for you not being able to come into school and share the learning spaces with your children and, as a whole staff, we continue to thank you for your support.

Next half term (restrictions allowing) we are planning to hold some open afternoons where the children can welcome parents into different classes and share their learning with you. It will be a special time to share with your child and to listen to them talk to you about the exciting curriculum that they are experiencing. Further information will be communicated to you but please rest assured that we are currently planning this and looking forward to welcoming you into our learning spaces.



Sharing Expertise

As we continue to work to provide the best possible experiences for our children, we would like to ask our parent community for any expertise that you are able to offer. You may have expertise in farming, art, music, creative writing, science etc that you feel able to share to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding and, if you think that this 'is you', then we would love to hear from you!

Mrs Hine is currently looking for parents who can support next half term with learning in Science. She writes:

"To continue to deepen our Scientific understanding of seasons through nature, next half term we would like to broaden the horizons for our EYFS, Year One and Year Two children by welcoming our wider school family into our learning space to talk about how the seasons impact and change the environment around us for people and animals. Our purpose is to explore, investigate and record why these changes are taking place, and how they look different across Autumn and Winter.

We would welcome anyone who works on the land, with animals or is simply passionate about the environment to support with this.

If you are interested, please contact Mrs Sinton via the school office or speak to myself or Mrs Guntrip."

Thank you in advance to anyone who thinks that they would like to offer any support and expertise!

Attendance and Lates

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all for your efforts in attendance and punctuality at Dunsford. As we all know, when children attend school they both learn and grow! We continue to place a high importance on attendance here at Dunsford and we continue to value the part that you as parents play in this.

Did you know?

- An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school
- Being late for school reduces learning time
- If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year
- If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss 2 weeks of learning each year
- Attending school everyday = 100% attendance
- Attending 4 1/2 days a week = 90% attendance equating to 4 weeks missed per year
- Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance equating to more than half a term missed per year
- Attending 3 1/2 days a week = 70% attendance equating to more than a quarter of the school year missed

Every Minute Counts!



Homework and Reading Logs

This half term the children have begun elements of homework. Next half term the range of homework learning opportunities will increase and vary. Please can you talk with your child/children about their homework and encourage/support them to engage with this.

We are also continuing to focus on Reading for Pleasure and supporting children to engage with a range of texts. Please can you ensure that your child reads 4 times a week and that this is recorded in their Reading Log (older children may also wish to independently record their reading journey). This is important in supporting us to ensure that the children continue to read for pleasure, develop fluency and read a rich variety of different texts/authors. Thank you for your support.

Civic Award

Next half term we will be welcoming the leader of the Torbay and Devon Civic Award to talk to the Year 6 children about how they can take part in this initiative. The award is for children who are interested in:

- Supporting to improve further our school and community
- Making a difference
- Taking up new challenges and opportunities

We are looking forward to hearing about how the children can take part in this award and how we can support them to achieve at Dunsford.

Young Minds

On 8th October, we celebrated World Mental Health Day and, as a school community, we wore yellow to raise awareness of this important issue. We are delighted to tell you that we raised a brilliant total of £107.20 that will go directly to the charity Young Minds. This money will continue to support people in need and thank you all for your donations towards this great cause.

School and Eco Council

Thank you to all the children who took the time to write me a letter to express their interest in School or Eco Council. The letters were full of wonderful ideas and I am looking forward to seeing these ideas in action. We will be beginning with our first School and Eco Council meetings after half term, including working with Mrs Twelvetrees on some exciting projects. Watch this space!

Face Coverings

Please can I ask for your continued support after half term by wearing face coverings when you enter the school site. We have got many different opportunities planned for next half term (such as the Christmas Service, musical afternoon, open afternoons etc) and they will only be able to happen if we are all continuing to support to keep each other safe. Thank you for your understanding- it is greatly appreciated by all of us at Dunsford.

Cauliflower Cards

This year we will be creating 'Cauliflower Cards' again. We would like to give you advance notice of the following things to ensure that the cards are all created on time!



- The artwork will be completed at school
- Forms will go home so that parents can order online (along with the artwork)
- Artwork needs to be returned by Friday 5th November
- Cauliflower Cards will be collecting on wed 10th November

We are looking forward to seeing what the children produce!

Family Groups

We have now moved to using Family Groups within school. Family Groups are designed so that the children across the school have an opportunity to share a learning space with children who are not normally in their class. During these times, the children from Willow, Cedar and Oak work within a 'Family Group' and have the opportunity to learn alongside each other. The sessions are a lovely way for the children across the school to continue to develop their relationships and to learn from each other. We will continue to share some examples of these.

I wish you all a wonderful, relaxing and happy half term holiday. We return to school on Monday 1st November and I am looking forward to hearing all about your holiday adventures.

Stay safe and enjoy your time together.

Yours sincerely

Mrs. Guntrip

Mrs Guntrip
Head of Academy