



# THE HESSE ACADEMY COMMUNITY TRUST

Executive Headteacher: Mrs S L Young

## Penshurst Primary School

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Dear Parent

As the Leadership team begin their planning for the new academic year, I always like to indulge a little in memories of the previous year and share some memorable experiences with you our parents. As ever our Parent and Friends Association (PFA) have been very active raising funds for those 'little extras' that our children enjoy through the learning year. The PFA are extremely active across the Trust and have been fabulous at encouraging local businesses to sponsor prizes for their Christmas Raffle as part of our Festive Fair Event, in addition they have focussed our attention on the importance of supportive and loving families by enabling children to have the independence of purchasing a small gift for Mother's Day and more recently Father's Day.

In addition to our fundraising efforts, for which we are always grateful for parental support, we have ventured out into the community for many trips and visits to support our learning and had fun at the same time. Our staff and children have made Herculean efforts continuing the fundraising theme with bun sales, bag packs and the like, to ensure that all school trips and visits are heavily subsidised.

Fun and academic success go hand in hand here at Penshurst Primary School where children enjoy their hands on learning through active engagement in sports, with our new Sports Coach Mr Kendall and I am delighted that Mr Leaf will be joining as a second coach from September to further extend our provision, to testing out a range of cultural foods in celebration of different faiths and simply reading for enjoyment on our unique 'Bibliobus' – what a fantastic year.

Last year I wrote to you to highlight that the schools successes were being shared within our locality and that our role was increasing exponentially. As a consequence, the Board of Directors and Senior Leaders have been successful in securing further funding to build two new classrooms which we hope will open in January.

However, we must turn our attentions to the new year and whilst I am sure you are looking forward to the summer break there are a number of 'housekeeping' items I would like to draw to your attention to ensure we have a really positive year in 2016/17:

**Uniform** –The majority of our children wear the correct school uniform and wear it with pride and they are so pleased to show they are a member of Penshurst Primary School.



This positivity is reflected in the calm and purposeful atmosphere in our school and the equality we pride ourselves on. Following the successful partnership the High School have developed with Rawcliffes the Uniform Retailer, we are delighted to inform you that from Monday 25 July, they are now stocking Penshurst Primary School uniform. I enclose an updated copy of the 'Uniform Policy' for your information and would like to remind all our parents this is a uniform policy, not a dress code, and as such is compulsory for all our children. You will note the only change is to the PE Kit information including a change to the **PE Bag** requirement. As the school is now full we must be conscious of Health and Safety and large PE Bags on pegs have caused trip hazards. Therefore, all children have been issued with a FREE drawstring bag which they must use for PE kit. To celebrate our Penguin Houses a Coloured House PE T-Shirt is also required, this will be the children's main PE Kit and will hopefully avoid any undue cost and anxiety is ensuring that children have a 'house T-Shirt' just for Sports Day. As a parent, I do appreciate that some children will already have Uniform PE Kit that will fit them into the new academic year. As a consequence, we will have a transition period to the new House PE kit which will become compulsory from the Summer Term in 2017. All items of school uniform, including the Year 6 'Leavers Hoodie' can be purchased from Rawcliffes at a very reasonable cost.

**School Attendance and Punctuality** – we are delighted that our attendance has risen to be classed nationally as good and our punctuality has also improved dramatically. This is as a direct result we believe of open communication and awareness raising of the consequences of missed sessions with you, our parents. However, as increasing evidence would suggest the impact on all children regardless of their age and their learning of missing a single session of school we would encourage you to help us maintain this 'good' level of attendance. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents that legislation around **term time holidays** has not changed regardless of recent media exposure and term time holidays will still only be granted in very exceptional circumstances. If you require any further guidance then please consult our website ([www.thehessleacademy.co.uk](http://www.thehessleacademy.co.uk)) or contact Mrs Ward, Attendance and Welfare Manager on 01482 648604. Please be aware that we are installing new automatic gates at both the road and pedestrian entrances during the summer break. These gates are being installed for safeguarding purposes but will have restricted opening times – please see the messages published in the notice boards on the playgrounds and in the Nursery collection point for further details. We would ask parents not to block Winthorpe Road as pedestrians or motorists as this causes significant difficulty for our neighbours in access and egress from their homes.

**Social Media (makes a reappearance!)** – Although we continue to educate our children, at all ages, about the responsible use of social media, it remains that with these rights come responsibilities. I feel compelled to remind parents that FACEBOOK, for example, is not recommended by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) and indeed FACEBOOK themselves offer guidance that the appropriate age to begin to use this facility is 13. In addition, many other social media sites, SNAPCHAT and INSTAGRAM for example are offering similar guidance. I would advise all parents to be social media savvy when it comes to their children, please do check what they are looking at and how they are using this powerful tool. If you are unsure then please see a member of staff for support or VODAFONE do some fantastic parent guides which can be accessed on line. I must however, remind parents that as adults we must also use social media with caution. The Directors will seek legal and safeguarding advice should any reference directly or indirectly to the Trust or any organisation or employee within it be made on social media.

**Clubs** – Our after school clubs programme is second to none in the local area and indeed nationally with approximately 60% of our children remaining afterschool for fun FREE activities. Our provision will continue but parents are actively encouraged to consult the schedule as clubs do change over the course of the year. In addition, please note that all clubs will **finish at 4.00pm** from September and a prompt collection from school is essential.

**Safeguarding** – Once pupils arrive at school we have a duty of care for their safety which is of paramount importance to us. Many of the policies and changes we make are to ensure safeguarding is as good as it can possibly be, though this may inconvenience staff, parents and visitors, the children are our main priority. Subsequently children will not be allowed to leave the school site unaccompanied at lunchtime (please see School Travel plan on the website).

**Through-school** – one of our most significant developments this academic year has been to secure the future of the organisation by merging to be a through school from 1 January 2016. The impact of this means that children at Penshurst Primary School are able to have freely available access to specialist facilities during their learning day such as Science Labs, Food Technology, PE and Drama. In addition, we are able to offer more coordinated support to our most vulnerable children to ensure they receive the support they need, especially if this is long term support. From a parental viewpoint the transition between primary and secondary school is easy with no requirement to fill in forms at the end of Year 6 and priority access to first class facilities and exceptional learning experience with the best outcomes of schools locally across GCSE and A Level.

Returning to where our correspondence began, if there are any parents who would be keen to join the PFA and support the school please leave your details with Mrs Stafford at the Main Reception and the PFA will be in touch.

We would like to wish you and your family a happy and safe summer. An opportunity for children to recharge their energy levels for the new academic year – though please don't forget the joy of reading together as a parent and child over the summer break. We very much look forward to welcoming children back to school and meeting our new children on Tuesday 7 September. Nursery provision will start separately with details having been issued.

Yours sincerely



Mrs S L Young

