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Dear Parents / Carers,

What a busy first half term of the school year it has been. It has been wonderful to see pupils in all year groups engaged in learning and enjoying all aspects of school life. I have enjoyed meeting you all and I am looking forward to building relationships and a really positive partnership with parents and carers over the coming years. If you have a concern about your child's learning or wellbeing, the first stop should always be their class teacher as they know them best and can address any concern and provide reassurance quickly. I am also available to share your thoughts and comments, and most importantly those informal daily conversations that build the important bond between school and home.

It's the time of year when children are learning the new routines and expectations as they move up a year. It's also the time for elections and sign-ups for a range of leadership roles across the school. Year 6 will have particular opportunities to fulfil leadership roles and have an important and valued role in the development of our school. We try to ensure that over time, all children have a chance to represent the school. Pupil voice is a key element to our curriculum development and the wider life of the school. I very much look forward to working with our pupil groups to understand what matters to them as we move forward with our school year.

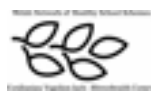
School Uniform: At Durand Primary School, we are proud of our children in their school uniform as we feel it promotes a sense of belonging. All items of clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name to prevent items being lost. Please regularly check that your child's name has not been washed out. We already have a growing amount of lost property - with no names.

Parent Pay and Dinners: From September, all primary aged pupils will be offered a free school dinner as a new Welsh Government initiative. This means that you can save £475 per child per year in food costs. However, **this still must be ordered via ParentPay before 8:30am**. If you haven't ordered a meal, you will need to provide a packed lunch for your child.

Despite the offer of a free school dinner, we still urge you all to apply for the Free School Meals Grant via the link below.

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/home/counciltaxandbenefits/fsm/>

It is of huge benefit to us as a school if you apply. As you know schools are being significantly underfunded at the moment, therefore the more of you that complete the form the greater amount of budget we receive to support your child's learning further at school.



Parent and teacher progress meetings: Parent consultations are taking place the week beginning 6th November. We really value the link between home and school and look forward to seeing you all during that week. Please ensure you have made and received your appointment with your child's class teacher.

Events inviting parents in: It has been lovely welcoming families into school over the half term. We have had Family Learning for Reception families, Tunes and Tales for Nursery parents and Meaningful Maths in Y1. If you have not joined us for these sessions, we still have 4 weeks for Nursery and Y1 on a Thursday after half term. We would love to see you there, please ask at the School Office for more details or to register your attendance. We have loved sharing what we do in school and we know your children enjoy seeing you in their school. Family engagement is so important to us and we will offer further opportunities for you to come into school across different year groups over the year.

Young Carers Information: We are proud to be part of the Young Carers in Schools Programme and extremely proud to be awarded both The Basics and Beyond The Basics awards. We are the first school in Monmouthshire to have both awards and to have made enough progress to be awarded them at the same time. This year we are working towards Best Practice with the view to supporting all our young carers in every way we can. If you think your child is a Young Carer, please contact the school to inform us.

Parent Teacher Association: It was fabulous to see a good number of you at the 'meet and greet' in September. The PTA have already been busy planning events for this term and have lots of great plans for the forthcoming year. Please get involved to support the school and our community. Dates for future meetings and events to follow.

Attendance: We continue to stress the importance of getting children to school. Although we fully support keeping children home if they are sick, we want to fully promote the importance of being in school both for academic development and also social and emotional wellbeing. If your child is too unwell to attend please call the office to inform us of their absence. For safeguarding purposes we will contact parents and carers if we have not received a message. I thank you for your support with this process.

Safe Parking: For the safety of our pupils I ask that all families arriving to school by car park with care and consideration. Please be vigilant and manoeuvre with care and attention. Please be aware of pupils crossing the road and be thoughtful of visibility and pathways when parking. A polite reminder that disabled spaces are for disabled badge holders only.

Why not Park & Stride to the Junior gate entrance - parking at the Choir Hall, the Leisure Centre or one of the many cul de sacs. This will alleviate traffic issues in and around the Alianore Road entrance.

I thank you for your support in making our school as safe as it can possibly be for our pupils.

Kind Regards,

Mrs Kilbourn

(Headteacher)



Nursery update:

Nursery have settled really well to the new term. Our theme has been All About Me. It has got the children talking about what they like, their appearance, who they live with and what kind of house they live in. Nursery have been able to explore different literature, including Guess How Much I Love you and The Scarecrow Wedding. All the Nursery children love visiting and exploring the forest as part of The Scarecrow Wedding story. We have also been very busy learning to recognise our name, numbers and shapes. Nursery has enjoyed learning new Welsh phrases and songs including asking for snack in Welsh.



Reception update:



Our topic this term is Autumn, and our sub topic is All about Me. We have been learning about our likes and dislikes, our families and parts of the human body as part of Health and Wellbeing learning. We have read many books, our class reader is "FunnyBones". Reception Class have embraced the new Jigsaw PSHE programme where we discuss relationships, school rules and how to be kind. The children have settled into school well and we are looking forward to the run up to Christmas.

Year 1 update:



Blwyddyn Un have had a fantastic start and have settled well into Year 1 life. Our theme for the Autumn term is 'Here' where they have been looking at the locality, their addresses and types of houses that they live in. The children created a huge pictogram of their houses to discover what was the most popular house that they lived in. Year 1's class reader has been Hansel and Gretel. From this stimulus the children have made their own gingerbread houses which they decorated with sweets, written recipes in lists, used bossy verbs to write a method and made postcards pretending they were either Hansel or Gretel describing the house they were in. The children have immersed themselves into Year 1 life taking ownership of challenging their own learning and completing 'must do' challenges to a high standard.

Year 2 update:

Year 2 have had a great start to the school year. Our theme is **Here** and we have been busy collecting data and doing research into our local area. We visited Caldicot town centre to look at the shops and services on offer and have used the data to create bar charts and leaflets on Caldicot, practising our factual writing skills. The texts we have read as a stimulus to



learning have included Silly Billy, a story about a boy with many worries, this allowed us to explore feelings and worries. We made worry dolls and wrote letters to Billy's Grandma. Our class reader was Esio Trot by Roald Dahl. The children have loved this story about a tortoise and we had a special visitor in class for the week Colin the Tortoise!! We have used factual writing skills to produce a fact file on tortoises.

Year 3 update:

Year 3 has had a great start to our new term and all have settled into the new routine brilliantly. Our topic for this term is 'Here: Our Locality'. So far we have been doing research into our local area and after half term, we will be focusing on the history of Caldicot and surrounding areas. In literacy we've also been reading the text: The Tin Forest. They've all been working hard exploring adjectives and other language features to describe settings and write character descriptions. In maths we've been working hard on place value within 1000, using lots of practical resources to develop our understanding. Soon we'll be moving onto addition and subtraction. In other areas of learning, the children have been looking at the plants on our school grounds and significant Welsh Black influences. The children have blown me away with the improvements in their technology skills in the last 8 weeks. They can now independently log on, access resources and activities on Google Classroom / HWB and have been creating their own shared and individual documents! Keep up the hard work Year 3.



Year 4 update:

Year 4 have had a superb start to the new term and have all settled in quickly. Our exciting theme is Curious Characters, with The text 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes forming the stimulus for our learning. We have been exploring the use of language within the text including similes and adjectives and have been working hard to identify and sequencing the main events in readiness to write our own recount. In maths we have been working hard on place value including partitioning numbers and rounding. We have also been comparing and ordering numbers and applying this in our theme work. In theme, we have been exploring electrical circuits to make the Iron Man's eyes light up and we have been observing how robots move using video extracts to inspire us to create our own robot dances in PE.



Year 5 update:

We have had a busy and fun start to the new term in Year 5. Our theme is Curious Characters and we are focussing on the text, The Snow Spider, by Jenny Nimmo. The children have really enjoyed reading it so far and have completed some lovely pieces of work linked to it. Across the curriculum we have researched spiders and mountains in Wales, compared Wales in the 1980s to now and have carried out an investigation into light. The children have continued to



develop their I.C.T skills, regularly accessing resources on Hwb and through google classroom. In maths we have been working on place value, and addition and subtraction. We will be moving on to multiplication and division soon. The children have all been amazing so far this term.

Year 6 update:

Year 6 have had a busy first half term! We have been working hard on our topic of 'Curious Characters'. Hugo Cabret is our exciting class novel, we have written diaries in the role of Hugo, looked at themes and feelings of characters and we are continuing to read about his next adventures! In Maths we have been working on Prime Numbers, multiplication and division and also using factors and multiples. In theme, we have been learning about sound, the ear, we have carried out an investigation into pitch also! Our ICT skills are developing nicely, we have created a collaborative database and a shared google document. Phew - we have been working hard!



Pupil committees: Congratulations to Y6 pupils on their excellent House Captain speeches. We are so proud of them, standing up in front of a full assembly and presenting on how they can support and make changes to the school. Y6 pupils have been voted as House Captains and Y6 pupil leaders will work alongside members of staff, supporting younger pupils, in their different roles: School Council, Eco Council, Health and Wellbeing committee, Criw Cymraeg and House Captains. A big congratulations to all of you.



Forest School:

Year 4 had a fantastic time during their time in the forest. The children learnt two important knots during week one, a clove hitch knot and a square lashing. This then enabled the children to attach wood together using rope. The children were separated into 5 groups and were given a different type of den to construct over the next few weeks. This took a lot of perseverance, patience, teamwork and problem solving skills. All groups were successful and enjoyed being in their dens for their fire day.



Dates for your Diary:

Friday 27th October - Last day in school before half term

Friday 27th October - Dress down day (Pupils to bring an item for Winter Fayre)

Monday 30th October - Friday 3rd November - Half term

Monday 6th November - Pupils return to school

Tuesday 6th November - Parent and teacher progress meetings

Wednesday 7th November - Parent and teacher progress meetings

Monday 6th November - Applications for Reception class Sept 2024 open

Monday 13th November - Deadline for secondary schools Sept 2024 applications (5pm)

Friday 17th November - Children in Need (Details to follow)

Friday 8th December - PTA Winter Fayre

Friday 15th December - Caldicot Castle Grotto opening

Monday 11th December - Y3/4 Christmas Concert 9.45am

Monday 11th December - Y1/2 Christmas Concert 1.30pm

Tuesday 12th December - Y1/2 Christmas Concert 9.45am

Tuesday 12th December - Y3/4 Christmas Concert 1.30pm

Wednesday 13th December - Christmas dinner and jumper day

Wednesday 13th December - Y5/Y6 church concert 2.00pm

Thursday 14th December - Christmas Disco (details to follow)

Thursday 14th December - Nursery/Rec concert 9:45am

Friday 15th December - Panto (Cinderella, in school hall)

Wednesday 20th December - Last day in school for pupils

Thursday 21st December - INSET Training day school closed for pupils teachers on site

Friday 22nd December - Training Day - School closed to pupils and staff will complete twilights in lieu of the training day

Monday 25th December - Friday 5th January - Christmas holidays

Monday 8th January - Pupils return to school

Thursday 8th February - Last day in school before half term

Friday 9th February - Cluster Inset training day - School closed to pupils

Monday 12th February - Friday 16th February - Half term

Monday 19th February - Pupils return to school

Friday 22nd March - Last day of school before Easter holidays

Monday 25th March - Friday 5th April - Easter holidays

Monday 8th April - Training Day - School closed to pupils

Tuesday 9th April - Pupils return to school

Monday 6th May - May Day Bank Holiday - School closed

Friday 24th May - Last day in school before half term

Monday 27th May-friday 31st May - Half term

Monday 3rd June - Pupils return to school

Thursday 18th July - Last day of school before Summer holidays

Friday 19th July - Training Day - School closed to pupils - This date may need to be changed if we have to close the school earlier in the year due to Elections.

All dates are provisional and subject to change

