Extended Half Tem Holiday for Pupils (15th October 2020)
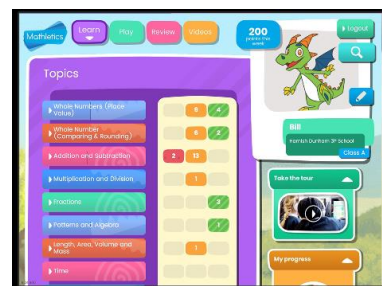
Dear Parent,

You will have heard via the media yesterday and throughout today that the NI Executive have instructed schools to extend their mid-term break for a period of 2 weeks beginning on Monday 19th October 2020. These measures have been put in place in order to stem the number of cases of COVID-19. School closures will be reviewed by the NI Executive towards the end of this two-week period, however it has been announced by our First Minister and echoed by our Education Minister that schools will reopen on Monday 2nd November 2020.

The guidance presented to schools by our Education Minister states that remote learning is not intended to be provided. As a school we will follow the official guidance provided to us. We have had conversations with parents over the last few days and we know that some of you would like to continue to work with your children over the next two weeks as you would do during any school holiday. With this in mind we are providing some general guidance for the next few weeks. Teachers will send a message to each class by Monday 19th October via Seesaw. Essentially it will be reinforcement of good habits and revision of concepts and facts already taught in school.
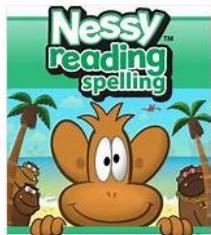
Numeracy

All pupils from P2 – P7 will receive their refreshed 'Mathletics' login details (This is a fantastic resource and each pupil can login and take part in games to reinforce tables and number bonds as well as working through the structured activities, these can be done in any order and will not be allocated to you by the teacher. Pupils in P1 and P2 will benefit from practical counting and using the resources already in their 'Maths Boxes'.

Spelling and Sounds

Those pupils who have their 'Nessy' login details and who use it in school should try and use this on a daily basis during the holidays. This structured programme is tailored to each child's needs and will provide fantastic reinforcement of sounds, reading and spellings. Those who have been allocated this resource should use it as much as possible because it is extremely beneficial.

Reading

Reading books will be provided for pupils from P2-P7 and as always it is so beneficial for pupils to read on a regular basis. The Accelerated Reading target deadline for Term 1A has been extended until next Friday 23rd October. Even if pupils have achieved their target please encourage them to read and complete quizzes as this goes towards their overall word count and awards.

Outdoor Activity
Activities have been allocated to your child's Seesaw account and should become 'live' over the weekend. These optional activities include- A Nature Scavenger Hunt, A Pumpkin Trail and Fancy Dress PE with Joe Wicks.

Of course all of the above activities are at the discretion of parents. This is an extended holiday break for pupils and we encourage you to get some well-earned rest and time with your family to relax.

Parent/Teacher Interviews
Usually we have our Term 1 parent/teacher interviews in the middle of November and close school early at 1pm for 3 days to facilitate the interviews. Given the extended Half Term Holiday for pupils we appreciate and are sympathetic to parents who may be unable to get time off given the extended half term break. To mitigate this, we have decided to bring forward our parent/teacher interviews to next Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th October.

Recent guidance from the Education Authority has said that 'best practice' for parent/teacher interviews this year is to hold them via a telephone conversation. Teaching staff will be ringing parents on Monday and Tuesday (There is no set time given the short notice). If you have a particular time that definitely suits or doesn't suit on Monday or Tuesday could you, please send a short message to your child's teacher via Seesaw and they will try their best to work with these requests. The call will come from an 'unknown/withheld' number at some stage between 9 am and 3 pm. Obviously if we are unable to connect with you first time we will try at various stages throughout the two days.

'Folders/Work packs'
We fully expect given recent announcements to be back in school on Monday 2nd November, although with our politicians we do need to plan for alternatives. Some teachers will be sending home 'folders' on Friday 16th October with your child which will assist with remote learning should it be required. Anything in this folder is not to be used until instructed via Seesaw on Monday 2nd November. Assuming school does open as expected please send this folder back with your child on Monday 2nd November.

Key Worker Pupils and Free School Meals
It is important to note that school will not be open for any child during this period of extended half term holidays, including the children of key-workers. For those children who receive Free-School Meals, direct payments from the Education Authority will be made as was the case during the summer months.

Flu Vaccination Programme
As you are aware the pupils were due to receive this year's flu vaccination on Tuesday 20th October in school. The latest information I have received is that this might now take place in Cookstown Leisure Centre during next week and you will be informed about times to bring your child/children. Any information we do receive will be shared with parents ASAP.

Thank You
Finally, could I once again thank all our pupils, parents, staff and members of the local community for their continued support and understanding since 'Restart' on 24th August. This partnership has ensured Term 1A at Coagh Primary School for our pupils has been as successful as possible in challenging circumstances. We hope you enjoy the half term holidays with your family and look forward to seeing you again for Term 1B on 2nd November.

Yours sincerely,

Mr I. Bayne
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