

Grove Park Primary School

Newsletter No 29

21st May 2010



CRICKET VICTORY!

Grove Park Primary School entered an inter-school cricket competition on Tuesday and a team of excellent cricketers went to represent the school with Aaron Bromfield. Throughout the day, messages of success were relayed to the school and by 4pm we learned that our team had not only entered the final, but had won! This puts them through to the Middlesex competition! What a fantastic achievement!



Aaron has two lunchtimes dedicated to organising sports in the playground. He concentrates on two aspects of fitness and fun. He runs a fit club during lunch and has specialised on cricket games for everyone. This has really paid off as several colleague Headteachers commented on the special skill of our team at the competition. Thanks Aaron for all your excellent work with the children. I know they all loved it! Congratulations to our winning team: Jayesh (Team Captain), Isaiah, Tyrese, Tom G, Abi, Freya, Holly and Lucy R. Also in the squad were Thomas H, Khallis, Bilal and Mozahedul, all from Year 5. Well done!

HAVE YOU COMPLETED YOUR SURVEY?

Today is the last day for completing your online survey to get the views of all our families on how Grove Park Primary School is doing.

Please log on to <http://surveys.cocentra.com/index.php?sid=23523>

If you are unable to access this through the internet, please come in and ask for a paper copy. You may complete one survey per child, but please add the year group. If you completed a paper survey please hand it into the office on Monday at the latest. Thank you.

PICNIC LUNCHES

Now we can be more certain of good weather, Terry, our Cook has arranged for children who normally have a school lunch to have a picnic lunch once a week. The children love this and we eat on the grass by the rainbow room. Packed lunch children join us, of course!

HALF TERM

Don't forget we break up for half term next Friday, 28th May at 3.15. School is closed from Monday, 31st May to Monday, 7th June. **Don't forget that the school is closed for children on the Monday, 7th June for professional training for all staff.**

MUSEQUALITY

Musequality is a charity which provides musical instruments and music learning to children all over the world. It is one that is very close to our Music Teacher, Jean Buck's heart. We will be arranging a range of fund-raising events including busking after half term. Look in this newsletter for updates on events.

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE OFFICER

Many of you had questions following our last article on the work of our new Educational Welfare Officer, Katherine Heyne. An Educational Welfare Officer is appointed to every school by Hounslow. Their role is to monitor attendance and develop a supportive relationship with parents and schools. They also provide information about the links between attendance, behaviour and achievement. Katherine visits our school once a fortnight. If a parent is experiencing difficulty in getting their child to school, she can liaise with the family and the school to discuss what the causes may be and suggest plans to help parents overcome the difficulties.

It has always been practice to advise parents that children should attend school *every* day through term time. There is a direct link between irregular attendance and poor attitude to school, which may result in poor behaviour and / or low attainment. Consequently, it has always been policy, throughout the country, to advise parents that a maximum of 10 days term-time leave may be granted in *exceptional circumstances*. Sadly, however, over the years it has come to be interpreted by some families as an 'annual right'. Some families simply leave for a holiday without warning. This is a national picture and central and local government are increasingly concerned by the trends. I have been flagging up the impending tightening of the rules, over several months through our newsletters. Let me re-iterate the agreed process:

Children are expected in school EVERY day of each term.

Children are expected to be on time every day. School begins at 8.55 a.m.

If your child is sick, please ring the office. We have a dedicated answer machine where you can leave a message.

The EWO looks at patterns of attendance. If absences occur either side of a weekend for example, she questions the school about the possible reasons. If a child has frequent bouts of sickness, again she asks for evidence about the health of the child, in order to satisfy herself that the school nurse should not be alerted. In some cases she writes to parents to enquire for details, particularly if the school is not aware of the answers.

The EWO alerts parents to patterns, so they can be aware of issues and make changes if necessary.

In exceptional circumstances, a family can apply for term time leave. We use a form, which is obtainable from the office. Once this is complete, you bring it for discussion with the Headteacher, who may agree that this leave should be authorised. Holidays in term-time are VERY, VERY RARELY authorised. The headteacher has the right to decide what constitutes exceptional circumstances. Headteachers are being asked to scrutinise air ticket booking slips to prove that an incident is an emergency booking etc. Occasionally Heads are asked to present this evidence to the EWO.

Leave taken without informing the school (for whatever reason) will incur a warning letter.

An unauthorised absence automatically triggers a response by the EWO. She will write a warning letter to the family in the first instance.

On a repeat unauthorised absence the family can be fined £50 per parent, per child. This is new legislation.

The NEW piece of practice within the legislation is that unauthorised absence is now rolled over THROUGHOUT the school life of the child—both primary and secondary school life.

Absence of 10 days or more may result in a child being taken off roll. If you are ever stuck abroad PLEASE notify the school so this does not occur unnecessarily.

I realise that some families find this information worrying. It really should not affect many of you as attendance is generally good at Grove Park. However, we do have families whose children only attend for 75% of the school year and this is very worrying for us as educators.

I believe that letters are already being sent to families so they can be aware of their current term time leave position. However, I will advise the EWO that at Grove Park we are only just starting this system with the commencement of Katherine's post, rather than back-dating!

I hope you understand this new position clearly and the reasons for its enforcement. Thank you

FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Grove Park raised over £1200 clear profit on Sunday with their excellent Grove Park Tournament! This event is loved by our wider community and many schools send their teams to compete. It was a lovely atmosphere and the children clearly enjoyed themselves. I would like to thank Marsha Glean and her wonderful team for organising this successful event and all the parents who helped with the catering. Our Year 6 team, Grove United, consisting of Danyal, Sonny, Jamie, Adrian and Aryan, did fantastically, winning every match they played and were overall winners of the entire tournament! A brilliant result all round!