



# PENSHURST C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Parents,

As you will have heard in the news the Prime Minister has set the date as the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021 as the earliest that schools will return. We have no further information than that – of course this date depends on other factors being fulfilled – I will keep you fully updated with any new information I receive. Apologies as I seem to be sending daily letters and information but I am sure you can appreciate this is an evolving picture and I am doing my best to ensure you are kept fully aware of new developments.

I am working with teachers over the next couple of days to review our remote learning provision – we will reflect on what we have learned during the past four weeks and how we might adapt our offer to best meet the needs of the school community. There may be one or two small changes or tweaks but you will be given plenty of notice of any changes. I am sure you will agree the teachers have done a magnificent job at adapting their teaching to make this way of teaching work well.

## No Screens Day

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February, before we break for half term, there will be no online lessons. This will provide teachers with time to prepare for the next period of remote learning. This will be a no screens day for pupils – I am putting together a range of well-being activities that children can dip into. The afternoon session is usually PE/get active and this will continue as normal. Please also note that Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 is an INSET day – school starts again for Term 4 (remotely) on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.



## Collective Worship



Sorry if I caused confusion with the times of Collective Worship – to clarify:

Mondays and Wednesdays Collective Worship – 1.45pm (10-15 minutes)

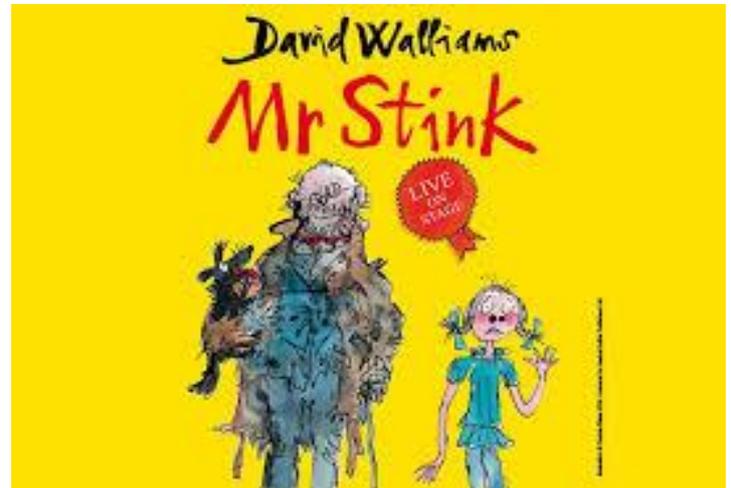
Friday – Celebration Whole School Assembly – 1.30pm.

## Reading at Penshurst –

At Penshurst CE Primary we understand the huge importance of books and stories in a child's learning. Research evidence shows that reading fluently and having a wide vocabulary are clear indicators of future academic success. Having a wide vocabulary is not simply being able to read a book with 'hard' words – it is so much more than that. A good knowledge of words, their origin, how they are linked to other words and a full understanding of what they mean are more important than the difficulty of book a child is reading. Very often teachers find that children can read a complex word but

have no understanding of what the word means and therefore the content and meaning of a sentence is somehow lost. One technique that teachers use is to ask children to replace a word with another that has a similar meaning so that they expand and extend their knowledge of words. The English language does not make things easy for our young readers as some words have multiple meanings. When reading with your child it is important to discuss the vocabulary – I think you might be surprised that even some words we assume children know the meaning of are not always fully understood. That is why it is important for children to continue to read aloud even when they are in Year 5 and 6. For younger pupils knowing rhymes, traditional tales and re-reading familiar stories are key to reading success. Repetition is key - research shows that re-reading a sentence or book several times enables the reader to build confidence and become more fluent in their reading.

Reading a story to children is another way to develop a love of books. All teachers in school read every day to their class – it is a time that children look forward to. Mr Newman our Year 3 and 4 teacher is a great role model for reading – he reads to his class with great enthusiasm – bringing stories to life and sharing great story plots with the children. I often walk past and hear him – he takes on the voices of the characters and the children are hooked into the story. They have just finished reading Mr



Stink by David Walliams.

Comments from some of our Year 3 and Year 4 pupils:

*"I think Mr Newman's reading is brilliant fun to listen to. He is great at funny voices and makes it very enjoyable." Isabel (Y4)*

*"I love listening to Mr Newman's story time. I really enjoy it when he acts out the characters" Alice (Y3)*

*"I enjoy listening to Mr Newman read every day, he's a good story teller and is very engaging". Dexter (Y4)*

I would encourage you to share and enjoy books with your children – a story really can take you to new places. Take time this weekend to share a favourite story. Stay safe and take care of yourselves.

Best wishes, **Sue Elliott, Headteacher**