

14th September 2020

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Maple class! We have had a brilliant week getting to know the children and are so proud of how well they have all settled in. They have been fantastic, picking up the rules and routines quickly and thoroughly enjoying getting to know each other. We feel very lucky to have such a fabulous class!

This letter contains some useful information for you, regarding the routines and expectations for the coming year.

Phonics

We are currently playing some listening games with the children, and doing lots of verbal word games to get them ready to start phonics next week. We will be following 'letters and sounds' to teach phonics, with the children learning 4 or 5 sounds a week. We will also be teaching them 'tricky words' (words which can not yet be sounded out) so that they can begin to access reading books. We will be sending home a 'reading folder' with a letter fan for you to help your child practice their sounds at home, as well as flash cards with high frequency words (common words they will see often in books) as they learn them in class. Please use these with your child – it will really help them consolidate their learning and pick up the sounds they need quickly. We are looking at ways to run a phonics sessions for parents virtually, but if you need any support before then please just ask at drop off, or send us an email.

The most important thing you can do is ensure you are saying the sounds correctly when modelling them to your child. Watch this video on youtube to hear how each sound should be pronounced;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwJx1NSineE>

Reading/reading records

From half term, your child will be taking two different books home each week.

Bug Club' book: These are phonetically decodable and we will start these once your child can blend a word to read independently. They will be carefully chosen to match your child's individual stage of development with phonics, focused on previous sounds they need to practice or that week's learning from the classroom.

PM book: These are more focused on reading for meaning, containing lots of the high frequency words that don't just rely on phonics. Mrs Foy will pre-read the book with your child in school and they will take it home for the week. These books are designed to be accessible to your child, so whilst they may seem easy or repetitive, they are helping your child secure their recognition and understanding of important words and vocabulary.

Reading records: We will be reading with the children individually at least twice a week in school, and each time will write a short note in the reading record to let you know how they are doing. We ask that you aim to read with your child everyday if possible and that each time you do you write a comment, or at least sign, the reading record. This will help us keep track of how they are getting on.

We will send home some more information about reading, and the reading books, when we send the reading folders home in a few weeks.

Home Learning opportunities

Whilst the only home learning we expect everyone to do is reading, there will be some other opportunities for the children to take part in some fun home learning tasks. These will be introduced over the next two terms once the children have settled in and we have the reading routines fully established.

Bug Club Online: This is a fun, engaging way for children to access books online. We will set different titles and the children can read them and then play games and quizzes linked to the book. We will send home usernames and passwords for this later in the term.

MyMaths: Through MyMaths we will set children fun, practical maths tasks that can be completed at home or in the outside environment, supporting the maths learning that will be happening in the classroom. We will ask that you take photographs of your child completing the task and upload it, with a brief description of how they did, through the 'Evidence Me!' app. We will send home usernames and passwords when the first task has been set.

Evidence Me!

Hopefully now everyone has received some observations of their child that we have taken in school. We will continue to send these home throughout the week and absolutely love seeing the comments you have been writing in reply! We are also printing them out to create individual learning journeys, which contain any practical work the children create as well. You can also use the app to send us observations of things that the children have been doing at home, so please do make use of this if they do something you think we would like to see! They will then be included in the children's learning profile and inform our assessments.

PE

Our PE day is Thursday so please ensure your child comes to school dressed in their PE kit. School tracksuit bottoms or other dark coloured jogging bottoms can be worn if the weather is cooler.

Snack and lunchboxes

Just a reminder that we are a healthy school, and the children's packed lunches need to reflect this. The children are also welcome to bring in a healthy snack each day – we encourage this to be a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable, or cheese.

If you have any questions about any of the information in this letter, or anything else regarding the school year, please do not hesitate to email us on our class email address (maple@penshurst.kent.sch.uk) or speak to us at drop off.

Kind regards,

Mrs Foy and Mrs Poole