

15 October 2021

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

'Never worry about criticism from someone you wouldn't take advice from.'

- Chris Whitty

Dear Parents/Carers,

I wanted to pass on my heartfelt thanks to all the parents who were able to attend the parent consultation sessions this week. Although we were not able to conduct them in the normal way as they had to be held in the school hall, it was nice to see so many parents attending and engaging in purposeful discussion with their child's class teacher. We will be following up the parent consultations by introducing Termly Report cards. Please look out for these at the end of the term in December.

Half-Term Holiday

Please note that school will close for all pupils on Thursday 21 October 2021 for the half-term holiday. The school will re-open again for pupils on Monday 1 November 2021 from 8.40am.

Healthy Lunches/Snacks

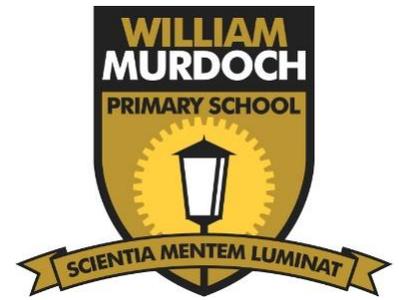
As a school, we try and encourage our pupils to eat healthy. Recently we have noticed an increase in the amount of unhealthy snacks being brought into school. The school is currently reviewing our Healthy Eating policy which will be shared with you in the forthcoming weeks. In the meantime, I would like to remind parents that fizzy drinks, chocolate, crisps and cakes are not permitted.

Attendance

A reminder to all parents that attendance for pupils is mandatory with the expectation that all pupils attend school daily. Whilst we recognise the times in which we currently live and the impact that COVID-19 is having within families, there has been an increase in recent weeks of children being absent from school for non-medical reasons. There has also been an increase in the number of requests for absence, primarily for holidays. Absence in term time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and any request for a term time holiday will not be authorised. Following the school closures over the last 12 months and the impact that this has had on learning, it is more important than ever that your child attends school. We would therefore urge all parents and carers to think carefully before submitting any absence requests and consider the implications that this might have on your child's progress, both socially and academically. Further information and guidance regarding attendance can be found on the school website at:

<https://www.williammurdoch.bham.sch.uk/parents/attendance---punctuality>

Thank you in anticipation of your support with this matter.



School Photographs

Due to a booking mix-up by the photographers, I would like to notify parents of a change in date to the **Upper School** photographs. These will now take place on Tuesday 19 October 2021. **Lower School** and sibling photographs will take place on Thursday 21 October 2021. Please ensure that your child is in **full school uniform**. If they have PE or swimming on the day they should wear their school uniform and bring their kit with them.

E-SAFETY Update

We have been made aware of the following social media applications, which have caused a number of issues in schools across the country.



Discord

Discord is a free app for mobile and PC that lets people chat via text, voice, or video in real time. Combining the internet-calling features of Skype with Reddit-like discussion boards, it's broadened from gamers-only to a social networking site for communities of all types, including those with non-gaming interests like anime, TV series, music, and more. It can also be an easy-to-use group-chatting tool for friends.

How old should you be to use Discord?

Discord requires that users be at least 13 years old, although they do not verify users' age upon sign-up. Common Sense Media also recommends Discord users be at least 13 due to its open chat. Because it is all user-generated, there is plenty of inappropriate content, like swearing and graphic language and images (though it is entirely possible to belong to a group that forbids these). Discord also has "NSFW" channels and servers that require users to be 18 or older to join (but it's easy to click through the verification).

WhatsMock

WhatsMock is an app that enables users to create fake chat conversations that can be used to play jokes on friends and other contacts. Unfortunately, the app is capable of generating and using language that is highly inappropriate and upsetting.

We would continue to encourage families to take an interest in their children's digital lives and to support them in making decisions that will help to keep themselves and others safe.

COVID-19

If your child is exhibiting any of the presently recognised COVID-19 symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more of these coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste – this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

The advice from Public Health England and the NHS is that even if the symptoms are mild, you should:

- Get a PCR test (test that is sent to a lab) to check if they have COVID-19 as soon as possible
- Your child should stay at home and not have visitors (self-isolate) until you get the test result

Please continue to let us know if you have ordered a PCR test and the subsequent result when available.

Parents of Year 6 Pupils

Families with children due to start secondary school in September 2022 (i.e. those children born between 1 September 2010 and 31 August 2011) are now able to apply online for secondary school places. The deadline for applications is 31 October 2021 and places will be offered on 1 March 2022.

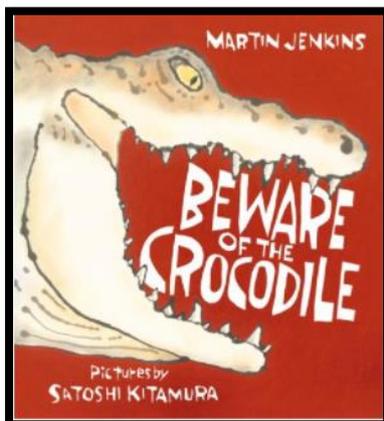
All the information families need to make their applications is on the council website:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20119/school_admissions/1778/secondary_school_year_7_admissions/1

It is particularly important that families carefully consider the school's admission criteria and name at least one school on their application where their child would have been offered a place in previous years. Please be aware of the deadline as parents who apply late are less likely to be offered one of their preferred schools.

Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

Lower School



Beware of the Crocodile – Martin Jenkins and Satoshi Kitamura (Illustrator)

This engaging introduction to the lives of crocodiles begins with a focus on their hunting methods and food consumption, then moves on to their excellent parenting skills. Then comes the big reveal about a link between these two aspects. The language is colloquial while featuring literary devices such as alliteration - 'snoozing on a sandbank' - and simile – suggesting that the nest where the mother crocodile lays her eggs is 'like built-in central heating'.

Satoshi Kitamura's illustrations don't hold back on the depiction of big sharp teeth, but there is always a humorous glint in the eye of these fearsome beasts appropriate in a book for young children in which the text also doesn't go into too much gruesome detail – it's just hinted at using terms like 'twirling and thrashing.'

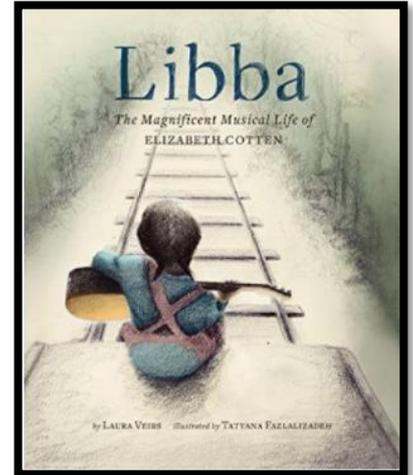
As with other volumes in the Nature Storybook series, there are interesting gobbits of information aside from the central narrative in a different font, plus an index to introduce children to this concept which is such an important feature of information books as they get more complex.

Upper School

Libba: the magnificent musical life of Elizabeth Cotten – Laura Veirs and Tatyana Fazlalizadeh (Illustrator)

Subtitled 'The Magnificent Musical Life of Elizabeth Cotten' this picturebook biography outlines the life the African American folk singer who composed the well-known song 'Freight Train'.

As a child, Libba taught herself to play the guitar 'upside down and backwards' as she was left-handed and the only instrument available to her was the guitar belonging to her right-handed brother, Claude. As an adult, she worked for many years and had become a grandmother by the time a chance meeting when she was working in a department store led to her becoming housekeeper to the famous folk singing family, the Seegers. Her early love of music was revived in the atmosphere of their home and, late in life, Libba became known as a composer and performer.



Mr Slinn's Artists of the Week



Jannat and Ankreet Y2.1

The children have been learning about the life and works of the sculptor Alexander Calder. The children then produced their own sculptures in a similar style to some of the ones created by Calder. Jannat and Ankreet showcased their extraordinary artistic talent in their creation.

Reaen Y5.3

The children in Year 5 have been working through a unit of work called 'Style'. They have learnt about many different styles of art including abstract art. Having learnt about the artist Mondrian and explored some of his work, the children created their own abstract paintings. Reaen produced an excellent piece of work.



Pupil of the Week

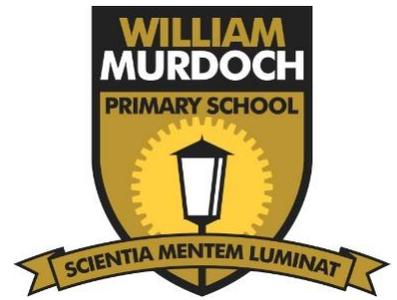


Y2.2 - Kesharn



Y2.3 – Jesika

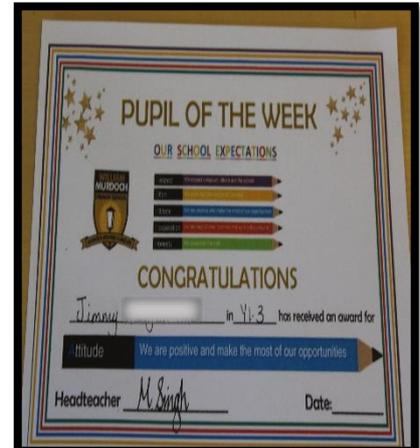
KNOWLEDGE LIGHTS UP THE MIND



Y1.1 – Fatima



Y1.2 – Amir



Y1.3 – Jimmy

Thank you for your continued support in these unprecedented times and we look forward to continue working alongside you this year.

Your sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'M. Singh'.

Mr M Singh
Headteacher



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