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Wednesday 4th September 2024

Dear Families,

It was wonderful to welcome the children into school yesterday, especially those children who are new to the Fir Tree community.

We thought it helpful to note down some lines around protocols you will need to follow.

Who are the key safeguarding professionals at Fir Tree? What are the arrangements for reporting concerns?

Parents and carers play a role in safeguarding children in their community. If you have any concerns, no matter how small, you should report them to Mr Knight, Mrs Yener, Mrs Jackson or Mrs Ash

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the front door to Children's Social Care for all child protection and immediate safeguarding concerns. If there is an immediate safeguarding concern where a child is deemed at risk or has potentially suffered significant harm, the MASH team should be contacted immediately.

For example:

- Allegations/concerns that the child has been sexually/physically abused.
- Concerns that the child is suffering from severe neglect or other severe health risks.
- Concern that a child is living in or will be returned to a situation that may place him/her at immediate risk.
- The child is frightened to return home.
- The child has been abandoned or parent is absent.

If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on **0345 050 7666** during office hours (8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 4pm, Friday)

Outside office hours call the Emergency Duty Team on **0800 833 408**

In order to speak about any aspect of my child's education, who should I approach?

Your child's class teacher **must always** be your first port of call. This is because they spend the most time with your child and are therefore best placed to respond to you.

How will I know how my child is doing?

On Friday 4th October you will be sent a one page document which will set out how your child is doing in terms of settling into their new class. Following this, shortly after October half term, we will offer more formal Parent/Teacher meetings in school. Information on how you can book your appointment will be sent out shortly. A similar meeting will take place in the spring. Finally, you will receive a formal written report at the end of the summer term in July 2025. Alongside these aspects, each week you will receive a brief summary of what your child will be learning the following week.

If you have any worries about your child's learning, you should contact your child's class teacher.

We are committed to delivering education of the highest quality that supports and challenges all pupils to learn and progress in a secure and happy environment.
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How should I go about contacting my child's teacher?

The time shortly before the school day starts at 8.45 or the time soon after the school day ends at 3.15 is a good time to approach the teacher, but only if it is for a very brief conversation. If you need to raise something that may take a little longer you could email the class teacher or call the office in order to arrange a call-back from the teacher. In both of these scenarios you should expect to receive a response within 72 hours.

If, after talking to your child's teacher, you would like a conversation with a school leader or with our Home School Link Worker we urge you to approach Mr Knight or Mrs Stockley who are most mornings at the school gate as the children are arriving. We know that parents are not always around at this time, but this is the best way to communicate with these professionals, as opposed to emailing.

What are the arrangements for communicating with the school's SENCo?

As of September 2024, Mrs Ash is our school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Mrs Ash has a significant teaching commitment – her SENCo time will be on Wednesday afternoons and on Thursdays. Please be mindful of Mrs Ash's teaching commitment and the fact that she has taken on a new role. She will, of course, be communicating with parents but we ask that you take these factors into account during the early weeks of this half term.

I have some forms from an outside agency that I need a school contact to complete. How can I go about doing this?

As you will appreciate, school staff are very busy, especially at this time of the year. We therefore ask that you provide the school with plenty of notice that the forms need completing. Our protocol is that it may take up to 14 days from when we receive the forms until they are completed and sent to you or to the outside agency.

How do I go about reporting my child's absence?

If your child is going to be off school for any reason, you must contact the school to let us know. You can do this by telephoning or emailing the school office before 8.45am. When we do not receive contact when a child is absent it is regarded as a child protection matter.

You may have heard that changes have been made to the systems in place when families take the decision to take their child out of school, eg for a holiday, during term time. You will know that in the most exceptional circumstances are schools allowed to authorise term time absence requests.

For reference, attendance of 90% or below is regarded as persistent absenteeism. Average attendance at Fir Tree for 2023/24 was 96%.

It is not uncommon for children to be unwell, but in some cases it is perfectly fine to send them in to school (such as them having a sore throat). The NHS has produced a helpful guide on whether a child should still come into school. Please click [here](#) for details.

How will I know about PE days, homework, swimming etc?

Over the next week or so, you will receive a 'welcome letter' from your child's teacher. This will let you know how things will work and dates for the first term.

We very much look forward to working in partnership with you for this academic year and beyond.

The School Team

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