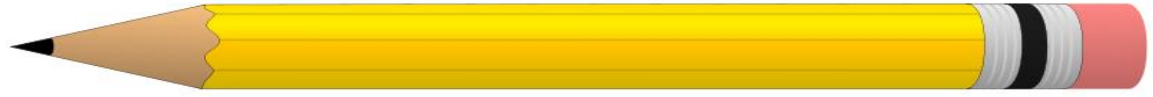




Dixon's Diary

March 2020



Head Teacher: Mrs. S Good

Tel: 0121 675 2775

Email: enquiry@georgedixonprimary.bham.sch.uk

Advice from Public Health England regarding COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

As a school, we are following all of Public Health England and Department of Health advice. Schools do not need to close in relation to COVID 19 (even if there are associated possible cases undergoing testing – which there currently are not). If a confirmed case is identified with links to a school, specific advice would be given on a case by case basis and parents and students would be updated appropriately.

In addition, we are following NHS hygiene guidance for minimising the risk of spreading any infections:

How can you stop coronaviruses spreading?

If you need to cough or sneeze



Catch it with a tissue



Bin it



Kill it by washing your hands with soap & water or hand sanitiser

You should wash hands with soap & water or hand sanitiser



After breaks & sport activities



Before cooking & eating



On arrival at any childcare or educational setting



After using the toilet



Before leaving home



Try not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands



Do not share items that come into contact with your mouth such as cups & bottles



If unwell do not share items such as bedding, dishes, pencils & towels

Learning for Peace Big Question

When does it take courage to tell the truth?



peacemakers

Home Reading Books

Please ensure home reading books are returned to school every Monday!

Staff Updates

Congratulations to Mrs Hamer who had a baby boy! Miss Williams will no longer be working with us, and we wish her all the best as she completes her NQT year. Mrs Lawrence will now be teaching the Swordfish class and Year 5 will be supported by Mrs Sidhu across both classes.

Healthy Schools Reminder

Children should only bring healthy snacks to school – this includes fruit and cereal bars. It does not include crisps and chocolate! (These are only allowed on Friday.)

Sporting Success

Congratulations to our Girls Football team who had a successful competition at West Bromwich Albion. They won every match in the lead up to the semi-finals and were excellent sports!

Our Dodgeball team has won a local competition and has been invited to the city wide finals at Birmingham University – congratulations and well done to them!

Playtime and Lunchtime

In light of the wintry weather over the past months, I have sought advice from Dr S Singh, MBChB MRCGP, a Senior Doctor at a Birmingham Surgery, in terms of what is considered best practice for children's physical and mental well-being and playing outdoors. His advice is attached to this letter.

Dates for your Diary – Spring Term

March

Thursday 5th – World Book Day (children should come to school in pyjamas ready to 'snuggle up and read', please see newsletter sent last week)

Monday 9th – In Her Shoes Community Workshop (for Moms) 9am in the Community Room

Tuesday 24th and Thursday 26th Year 3 educational visit to Enginuity Museum – details to follow

Thursday 26th – EYFS, Year 1 and Y2 Well Done Assembly – you will receive an invitation if your child is getting a certificate

Friday 27th – Year 3, 4, 5 & 6 Well Done Assembly – you will receive an invitation if your child is getting a certificate

April

Wednesday 1st - Parents Evening* 3.30 – 5.00 (last available appointment is 4.50)

Thursday 2nd – Parents Evening* 3.30 – 6.00 (last available appointment is 5.50)

Friday 3rd is the last day of the Spring Term

Monday 6th – Friday 17th School is closed for the Easter Holidays

Monday 20th April - children are back to school for the start of the summer term!

*Parents Evening Letter to follow

Reasons to get children playing outdoors in the cold weather

Advice from Dr S Singh
MBChB MRCP, Senior Doctor

The weather often varies during seasons – in winter, it does become cooler by the day and days become shorter. These changes do have a physical and mental impact. It is important not to adversely increase the bad impact of winter. The focus below is on the area of children, outdoor playing and what is best practice.

Unsurprisingly, some parents and teachers may want to limit children's playtime to stay inside during winter. Parents may even think their child will not "like" being outside in the cold. But this is not good practice.

The myth: Is there any truth to the age-old wisdom that 'cold air makes children more sick'. Well, no. This is just a common misconception. During the school day, much needed breaks are needed for maintaining good health and a good mind.

The evidence-based truth (.... medically speaking) is that it is not the cold weather that makes children sick. Granted, when the weather is colder, our bodies work harder to keep warm. This is natural and normal metabolism.

However, with the correct clothing to protect children from the elements, there are several benefits to having regular breaks and ensuring playing outdoors during autumn and winter.

The following are genuine medical reasons not to cancel break times outside and to encourage children to learn to put their snug gloves, warm woolly hats, coats and scarves on to play outdoors:

1) Outdoor play in the cold strengthens the immune system

During autumn and winter, more bugs and viruses tend to proliferate and circulate. This leads to few children being able to make it through the colder weather without getting ill. This is normal and expected and common.

Winter frequently gets a bad name for making children poorly, but the key reason for contracting germs (often respiratory infections) is staying indoors and around people who are unwell. With little ventilation indoors and being warmer, germs are more easily circulated, making children more susceptible to spread of viruses. Viruses are air borne infections – you breathe in a virus to get infected. You are more likely to breathe in a virus in a confined space and where there is a high density of people (eg schools, hospitals, work places). This is a valid reason for an employee to stay away from work if they are clinically infected with a virus. They do more harm coming to work and spreading their infection, than by mere sickness absence. But, let's not deviate!

Playing outdoors in the fresh, chilly, open air can boost children's immune systems, developing their ability to fight off infections and build resistance to allergies. This is needed

to remain resilient through life. You only have one childhood period to build your immunity to protect future years, so make sure you lead a normal childhood.

Research has shown that school children who participate in active play outside are healthier than their peers who stay more indoors.

2) Outdoor Play in the Winter Months Helps to Burn Extra Energy

In the winter months, it can be tempting to keep children indoors, but with that you may bring increased sedentary behaviour and increased screen-time. Child play in a playground is often a shared experience (with its social benefits) – learning to explore, imagination, work together through healthy social relationships and simple problem solving in a group setting (this can help in celebrating and appreciating differences as well). Children need to be active - those who are full of pent-up energy may act out in class and at home due to frustration. Physical exercise relaxes the body and mind.

The playground is an ideal way to burn off extra energy and stop kids from getting restless. Children can socialise with their friends and have fun by running, jumping and exercising key muscle groups.

When playing outdoors, children can keep fit and continue developing their physical skills. Outdoor play reduces the risk of obesity by getting blood flowing to the organs, at the same time as keeping them fit and healthy.

3) Outdoor Play in Different Conditions Promotes Problem-Solving and Cognitive Thinking

Research shows that regular outdoor breaks during the school day can improve academic performance and concentration in class.

Colder weather brings lots of different and fresh challenges for kids and offers new ways of learning outdoors. Children are encouraged to assess risks such as slippery surfaces caused by the rain, moss and frost; they can improve their balancing skills and co-ordination, so then adapt their play to ensure safety and self-confidence. Falls in childhood are a good learning experience – from grazed knees to abrasions on hands. It also helps children to acquire new problem-solving skills and promotes cognitive thinking.

Learning about the elements and nature in class is one thing - seeing and experiencing them is another. Playing in the cold encourages children to ask and to learn about the rain cycle, the nature of rain droplets and at what temperature rain turns into ice. This is first-hand experience of the wonder of nature.

Experiencing nature and its changes through the seasons is vital to mental well-being. Why do the leaves change colour in autumn? Why, after playing outside for 10 minutes, do they feel much warmer than they initially did? Playing outside in different weather conditions delivers a new found appreciation of nature.

4) Outdoor Play in the Winter Boosts Vitamin D levels and Uplifts Mood

During the winter, we have a smaller window of opportunity to be exposed to sunlight and increase our vitamin D levels. Short days mean less sunlight. Vitamin D deficiency is increasingly common and leads to complications, ranging from tiredness, aching to bone weakness and even kidney stones.

As days are shorter, schools may need to review their break times. However, irrespective of the weather, and as long as children are dressed appropriately in the colder months, breaks should continue to be outside (with a few logical sensible exceptions, such as heavy snow and driving rain).

Research shows that exposure to sunlight provides essential vitamin D, which regulates mental and emotional moods, increases energy and sharpens memory. In as little as 15 minutes of playing outside, children can get their daily dosage of vitamin D.

In summary.

As a society, we must revise our way of seeing winter as a time for children to spend less time outdoors.

By trying to protect them from colder weather, we are doing the opposite and hindering learning and natural physical development.

Breaks should continue outside, in the playground, so that children can burn off steam, face new winter challenges that they often crave, and benefit from improved serotonin levels through sun exposure and an increase in vitamin D.

Dr S Singh
MBChB MRCP, Senior Doctor