



Dear Parents/Carers,

What a wonderful morning we have had here at Hornbill School today! It has been fantastic to see the children arrive with broad grins and share their stories about the holidays. We are absolutely delighted to have the children back in the school again; they have settled in brilliantly and are adjusting very well to their new routines and environment. I have really enjoyed speaking to the children this morning and getting to know new members of our school and community. For our new families, I hope that you are enjoying your new homes and I will look forward to getting to know you more over the coming weeks.

### **Early Reading – Supersonic Phonic Friends**

Here at Hornbill School, prior to the children returning, we have been busy preparing for the new school year. We have been implementing a new approach to Early Reading to support our children with developing their phonic knowledge. The scheme, Supersonic Phonic Friends, has been developed to ensure progression for children across the primary phase and also provides us with a new spelling scheme of work, which we are confident the children will enjoy and learn from. **Reading books will be sent home with your child on Monday (the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September)** to compliment each child's learning stage within the programme.

### **Reading**

A huge thank you all for your evident support of your child's reading and numeracy skills throughout the holidays. Talking on the playground, I have been delighted to listen to children sharing details of the many books that they have read (and evidently enjoyed) and maths games (such as pairing numbers to ten, or one hundred or counting in jumps and multiplication tables) they have been playing with their families. Activities like these really help children to learn and are incredibly motivational. A little every day can make a huge difference to a child's learning and progress. The children clearly value the time and support that they have received from their families this holiday – and so do we! Sharing books and activities, even for a very short time, benefits every child. Daily reading supports decoding letters, understanding words, putting together sentences and making meaning of what they are reading. Similarly, when an adult reads to a child, we transport them, via our voices, to a different world and expose them to new words in a way that makes it easier for them to process.

### **Communication from School**

School newsletters will be sent to families by email. This newsletter has been emailed to all parents today (further to the paper copy to be sent home with your child tomorrow), using the email addresses given to the school when you enrolled your child. Please can we ask you to check that you have received it and if you have not, please contact the school office to update your contact information so we can ensure that you are kept fully informed.

All DCS schools have been asked to move away from communication systems such as Class Dojo, which has been our method of communication until now. To ensure that we keep you fully informed about all that happens at school, we are moving to utilising the school website to provide parents of children in Years 1 to 6 with a regular **Year group blog** for each Year group, informing you about the learning and activities completed. Children will feature in photos on the blog only if parents have given permission for them to be used on the school website. Children's names will not be used on the school website. Permissions can be changed at any time, and if you would like to remind yourself or check what you have and have not authorised in terms of data protection, please contact the school office.

For pupils in **FS1 and FS2**, the school will communicate with parents using the **Famly app**. For parents of children in these two year groups, Famly will be familiar for some of our parents, as it has been the tool used by Treetops Setting since January.

Parents will be informed with information about how to access the blog and/or Famly via email presently.

### **Volunteering Within Our School**

We are keen to encourage volunteering here at school. Offering your services as a parent helper is a great way to gain some insights into what actually goes on during the school day – and in some cases, could even pave the way for a school-based career.

Volunteering in school can take many different forms. Some ideas are areas like:

- Helping to develop play – perhaps you could share some traditional playground games during our break times (things like ‘What’s the Time Mr Wolf’ or ‘Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses’)
- Developing children’s communication through engaging them in conversation
- Consolidating learning in maths by playing some simple maths games or counting forwards and backwards in steps
- Reading to and listening to children reading
- Helping us to keep our school library organised and tidy
- Maintaining our outdoor areas



Whatever you can think of – we would be grateful for your help! Volunteering at school is a great way to help us in our work to support children in their learning. It is also a brilliant way to show your child the partnership between you and the school, so that they can see us working together for their good. The role of volunteers can vary, so it is a good way to develop new skills and meet new people.

All volunteers will be invited to complete a Volunteer Information Sheet with their contact details, and our Volunteer Agreement form, which sets out the school’s expectations of volunteers and, just as importantly, explains what volunteers can expect from our school. Prospective volunteers will also be required to complete safeguarding training, learning how we keep children safe and ensuring that we are vigilant of signs of risk or harm. If working without direct supervision, volunteers will also be required to complete a routine Disclosure and Barring Service check, to ensure that there is nothing in their background that may pose a risk to children, before starting to help in school.

If you do have some free time and would like to get involved, we would really value your contribution. Please contact the school office to express interest. Thank you.

### **Reminders:**

#### **Coffee Morning with SLT – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August at 07.45 hrs**

We would like to invite parents to join us for a coffee and conversation with our Senior Leadership Team to help us to understand how the return or start of school has been for you as a family - what has worked and what we can develop and improve upon. If you would like to join us to chat about your experience, you are warmly invited to join us at 07.45 hrs (to fit around the school drop off. We are really keen to learn and improve so would warmly welcome any feedback. We would also be very happy to share more information about our new Early Reading and Spelling programme and other aspects of our school, for any parents interested.

**Packed Lunches** – Please can I remind our school community that all food on our premises must be **nut free** to protect individuals within our community who suffer from severe nut allergies. We politely request that everyone observes a nut-free policy and therefore do not include nuts, or any traces of nuts (including food items such as chocolate hazelnut spread) in children’s packed lunches. Within each classroom, cold packed lunches are stored within a fridge, and thermos lunch boxes can be used to keep any food hot for your child.

Please talk to your child, or to the teacher, if you are sending hot food in so we can ensure that your child does not place it into the fridge! All packed lunches should arrive at school with your child at the start of the school day. Thank you for your support with this.

I hope that you and your family continue to enjoy the end of your holiday. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

With warm regards,



**Mrs C. Neal, Headteacher**



### **School Term Dates – Academic Year 2024/25**

#### **First Term 2024**

First Day of Term 1 for FS1 pupils	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September
INSET Day (School closure)	Friday, 11th October 2024
Mid Term Break	Monday 21st– Friday, 25th October 2024
Last Day of Term 1	1200hrs Friday, 13th December 2024

#### **Second Term 2025**

First Day of Term 2	Monday, 6th January 2025
INSET Days (School closure)	Friday, 14th & Monday, 17th February 2025
Last Day of Term 2	1200hrs Friday, 21st March 2025

#### **Third Term 2025**

First Day of Term 3	Monday, 7th April 2025
Mid Term Break	Monday, 26th – Friday, 30th May 2025
Last Day of Term 3	1200hrs Friday, 11th July 2025