



# The Two Way Street

Welcome to the first edition of the Two Way Street for 2013! In this issue, we will be covering a variety of topics, all related to questions, queries and comments made by parents over the past few months. If you have any issues or questions that you would like to see answered in future issues of the Two Way Street, please do not hesitate in contacting us by email (address below), in person, or if you prefer to be anonymous, by letter.



Why are the children using iPads to play games in school?

We are very fortunate in having a class set of iPads for use in school, and although the children do play some games on them, when the iPads are used, there is always a learning purpose! iPads inspire creativity and hands on learning, and the children love using them – if you mix all this together, you get children that are happy to learn and often do not realise that they are! The iPads are used from Nursery through to Year 6 and the activities include; -

- ❖ Practice of times tables and mental arithmetic.
- ❖ Creating short films linked to topic work (remember, scripts have to be written before filming takes place and the facts have to be learned, all of which support literacy skills!)
- ❖ Writing music scores so the children become composers using a variety of instruments – they also learn early notation that could help them should they choose to play an instrument.
- ❖ Story writing – children can design their own characters/backdrops for stories then use them in their writing – they can even do so in the form of a comic strip!

Four aspects are mentioned here, but the list is endless. Technology is always going to play a part in our children's futures, so why not use this now to engage them?



My son is having temper tantrums and won't go to bed at night so he is grumpy in the morning!



As a school, we know how stressful it can be when you are having difficulties at home and we appreciate that sometimes it is difficult to ask for help. We have a support worker called Kelly Yates from Brownhills Children's Centre that works with us to help you. She is happy to support in all aspects of home life including toilet training, sleeping routines, behaviour management – anything that you need help with! She is also a good listener and will be sympathetic to your needs. If you feel that you could use some impartial and friendly advice from Kelly, come into school and ask Mrs Haigh for a referral. This service is provided with confidentiality, so your needs will not be discussed with any other agencies. If you don't ask, we can't help!



Why do children have to wear uniforms?

Uniforms promote a sense of belonging. By wearing the same clothes then pupils share a feeling of belonging to a community, which is otherwise very difficult to achieve. It also cuts out the arguments for parents of what they want to wear each morning! Uniforms give the feeling of equality. It brings everyone to the same platform, no matter how rich or poor he or she is. It also prevents competition as to who has the most trendy trainers or latest designer gear! Research has also shown that people wearing uniform are more caring for their peers; they care not only for their growth but the growth of their peers as well. St. Johns insists on uniform being worn in line with the school rules.

My child never brings home school letters and I am always the last to know when things are happening. It is very annoying!



We want all our parents to be informed of everything that is going on in school, and we do appreciate that some children fill their school trays with letters and then finally bring them home in one pile, often too late for you to book an appointment for parents evening or to reserve a place at an after school club (which is generally on a first come first served basis)! We are trying to sort this by promoting our email option because then, you will be guaranteed to get the letters (before paper copies are given out!) and you will have it on file to refer to at any time. We have had issues in the past with parents not being able to open attachments, however, we are addressing this and by half term any attachments will be in a pdf format (this can be downloaded free of charge from the internet). We prefer this method as it is a much greener option and it keeps costs down. Photocopying is an expensive business! We also want to increase the number of newsletters we send so that you have more regular updates on the running of the school and our achievements. We are currently limited by reproduction costs. ALL celebration newsletters, school dates and Two Way Street publications can be found on the school website and can be read on the school internal and external news boards. By now you will have had a paper copy of a letter asking you to send in your email details so that we can be more efficient; you will get all letters, you will get them quicker and you will be less likely to lose them. If you have not already done so, register now!



Can you celebrate children's achievements out of school in the special assemblies?

Absolutely! We want to celebrate all our pupil's achievements whether they obtain them in or out of school. Some children do not like to talk about their out of school activities so this is an ideal way for us to know a little bit more about your child. For example; -

- ❖ Sporting achievements including swimming badges, judo belts, gymnastic badges etc.
- ❖ Musical grades from playing an instrument.
- ❖ Participation in any amateur dramatics productions or choirs out of school.

We are going to put an achievements box in the Reception area where you can post details of your child's award. On a piece of paper, put your child's name, class and details of the achievement awarded. We will then include it in our next assembly.



My child does an after school club and I would like to come and see what goes on and possibly help out as I am doing a teaching assistants course and need some experience. Would it be possible for me to come in?



Over the past few years, we have had many parents come into school for one session so that they can appreciate what goes on at our after school clubs and try to develop their child's skills even further at home. This has been very successful with clubs such as the RM maths club and art club.

We are also appreciative of any support parents may have to offer, however, if you wish to help out at a school club, you will need to get a CRB check first (forms available through the office) and the teacher running the club must be agreeable (some staff prefer to run the clubs on their own!). It must also be an after school club that your child does not attend (we have found that this situation can be difficult as the child does not know which responsible adult to turn to, and having a parent in the group does change the way their peers interact with them and the dynamics of the group). If you want any further advice or want to clarify this, please make an appointment at the office to speak with a staff member.

### New Years Resolutions!

I am sure that you have all made a few, and hopefully still sticking to them! However, if you wish to add a few more, consider the following; -

- ❖ Hear your child read everyday even if it is just for a few minutes (every little helps!)
- ❖ Communicate with us! If you have an issue, let us know straight away!

Happy New Year!

If you have any comments, concerns or questions - why don't you email us on our brand new address specifically for the 'Two Way Street'

**Email address:**

[twowaystreet@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:twowaystreet@st-johns.walsall.sch.uk)

