



## Parent Partnership – March 2019

The following areas were discussed at the recent Parent Partnership events.

### Teaching & Learning

*“I don’t think my child receives enough homework.”*

Children are given the recommended amount of homework for their age/year group. If you would like additional homework or worksheets for your child, please discuss this with their class teacher so together you can identify the best way forward.

All year groups are set regular homework weekly, whether this is spelling, reading, basic skills consolidation or research work for topic lessons. As children progress through school, we encourage them to become independent, taking responsibility for their own learning, therefore, if you are concerned that your child’s homework is not coming home on a weekly basis, we would ask that you contact their class teacher to discuss this.

Reading is also an important part of home learning. Children are encouraged to take their class reading book home daily as well as Accelerated Reader book (KS2) or phonics book (KS1 and EYFS). It is a huge benefit to children if parents can read with them, even if this is for as little as 5 minutes a day, as it not only contributes to their learning but also to their love of reading. Teachers listen to children read on a 1:1 basis every week and openly encourage reading outside of the classroom.

Children should bring their books into school daily so they can be used in class or swapped when necessary. We are relying on parents to help us.

To access our Homework Policy please visit the Policy section of our school website:

<http://www.greenlandprimary.durham.sch.uk/about-us/school-policies/>

*“Homework is sometimes difficult. The maths & English workshops that were held a year ago were very helpful. Are there any plans to hold any future events?”*

We are pleased that parents found these sessions useful and there will be further workshops for you to attend to support with your child’s school work will take place on the following dates in the Summer term:

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September – Numeracy

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September – Literacy

We will share more details about these events with parents nearer the time.

*“Will the phonics results be shared with parents once scores have been calculated so we don’t have to wait until the end of the year reports?”*

Year One Phonics screening takes place in June. Raw scores are then collated by the Department for Education who then provide us with threshold scores. Following this, formal scores are published in July.

This timeline applies to all schools, therefore, unfortunately we are unable to share results any earlier.

For more information about the Phonics Screening process you may wish to visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/phonics-screening-check-administration>

*“Why are there changes to staff?”*

*“I feel there are a lot of new teachers with some popular teachers moving to other schools within Stanley Learning Partnership. Why is this?”*

The staff at Greenland are our biggest asset and we fully appreciate how valuable they are. Whilst we acknowledge your concerns, in reality, we do not have a high staff turnover.



As an employer we would never stand in the way of a colleague moving up in their career. Only one member of staff moved to another school within Stanley Learning Partnership for a one-year secondment which will aid their professional development and let them gain more experience. Staff see the opportunity to stay within SLP to gain more experience, rather than leave for another school, as a huge benefit to them. We also benefit from staff working across the Partnership schools who bring new ideas and fresh enthusiasm to our school.

We have a very successful Transition Programme in place in school for our children that commences towards the end of the academic year. After the discussions at the Parent Partnership meeting, we will be introducing a Transition Programme for parents whereby you are given the opportunity to meet your child's new class teacher in preparation for the year ahead. This will take place at school from 3.30pm on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. More information will be shared with parents nearer the time.

## School and home partnership

*"Can we have a Parents' Evening to discuss my child's progress and talk about areas where they may be lacking so I can help at home."*

We currently offer two Parents Evenings; one in October and another in June. In the first we will discuss how your child has settled into their new class and share any concerns you may have. The second focuses on their progress and attainment in curriculum areas.

Naturally this is not the only time you can discuss your child's progress with their teacher. Should you have any concerns about this throughout the year we would urge you to contact us as soon as they arise. Do not wait until the next formal Parent's Evening to share them.

Three Parent's Evening per year are arranged specifically to discuss the progress of our children with Special Educational Needs. It is essential that we review SEN every term whether that be in on a one to one basis with Mrs Guy and parents or in a parents evening format.

If you have a concern or question regarding the needs of your child style with teachers and parents with me supporting more complex meetings/reviews.

Again, we reiterate you can contact your child' class teacher, the SENCO or the Headteacher who will be happy to arrange an appointment with you.

## Child health & wellbeing

*"What help and support can be offered to a child that may be struggling at home, or whose personal circumstances may be affecting their behaviour or work."*

If you feel this applies to your child, we would always urge you to come in to speak to us. There are several things both school and outside agencies can do to support you but only if we know there is a problem or concern.

If you do not want to talk to your child's class teacher, you are welcome to talk to any member of staff that you are comfortable discussing your worries with. We will always work with you offering help, support and guidance wherever we can. Mrs Guy the SENCO is very experienced in working with children and families and is always available to discuss any concerns.

*"Is there a 'go to' person that my child can talk to should they feel frustrated or overwhelmed in the hope this will not spill into home life at the end of the day?"*

*Initially we would urge your child to share their concerns with their class teacher. Additionally, all classes have a teaching or higher level teaching assistants who would be there for the children also.*

*"Could my child have a diary whereby notes of their day or home life are noted so we can all be aware possible reasons behind the choices they may make or behaviour?"*

We regularly reassure children that they can talk to any member of staff if they are worried, feeling frustrated or overwhelmed. All our children's needs are different, so it is about identifying who the person is for your child. Again, if you think this is something your child needs then it is important that you come into school to talk to us about it.



The introduction of a diary system for all children is not be feasible given the constraints of the teaching day. That said, the sharing of such information is very important so that we both know your child is happy and settled in school and at home. Again, if this is something you are worried about or feel your child needs, then please approach their class teacher in the first instance so that we can agree the best way forward for them.

We have also begun to work on several children's Mental Health initiatives. Whilst these are in the early stages, more information will be shared with parents as we progress.

*"Head lice seems to be an ongoing problem. Are there any steps to reduce this?"*

Unfortunately combatting head lice is the responsibility of parents. We appreciate this is a recurring problem but are relying on you to eradicate it by regularly checking and treating your child's hair.

Treatments are available from your local pharmacist and we will always publicise when our school nurse is in school who can also offer help and advice to you.

*"Why did I receive a letter stating my child was overweight/obese when I never gave my consent to their height and weight being taken?"*

We should stress this initiative was implemented by the NHS as opposed to Greenland. Letters were sent home by the NHS giving parents the opportunity to 'opt out' of their child's height and weight being taken. Had you not chosen to opt out your child's details were taken and subsequently shared with you.

Whilst this process does take place in school, we simply facilitate it and have no control or input into it. The information you received was not shared with school.

Any concerns should be raised directly with the NHS whose number is on the letter you received.

*"If a child brings crisps and chocolate into school in their packed lunch would you take this off them and see them go without or give them an alternative such as carrot sticks? What if they don't like carrots?"*

Upon the request of parents, Greenland like most other schools, have implemented Packed Lunch guidelines. These guidelines have been in place for several years now. They clearly state crisps and chocolate should be limited to a Wednesday and Friday respectively.

Should children bring such items into school on days other than those stated above, a polite note will be placed into their packed lunch bag to remind parents of the policy. Food is not taken off children, nor are alternatives such as carrot sticks given.

In the instance your child does not like certain foods and school meals are not their preferred option, parents are welcome to take their child home for lunch ensuring they are back at school by 12.45pm in advance of afternoon registration.

Our Packed Lunch guidelines are detailed within our School Handbook, a copy of which parents receive and agree to upon joining our school.

## Attendance

*"My child is worried about staying off school given the importance school places on attendance."*

The National Average for attendance is 96.1% and we strive to both reach and whenever possible, exceed this. To date our attendance has improved from 93.6% to 97.07%. This is a fantastic achievement that both staff, parents and children have worked together on and should be proud of.

A weekly whole school assembly is held which solely focuses on attendance. We are proud that like staff, children now see attendance as a main contributor to their learning, achieving and success.

We understand wholeheartedly that children genuinely become unwell and this should never be a concern. If this is this is the case, then parents are encouraged to contact Mr Banks to share them and identify a way to work together to eradicate them.

*"Is it fair to a child that has never been off not to receive a non-uniform day because other members of the class are off?"*





Our weekly attendance initiative rewards classes that have achieved +99% or above with a non-uniform day the following week. Sadly, any class that does not achieve this benchmark will not be eligible, irrespective of individual children who have.

So as not to discriminate any child that is achieving outstanding attendance, we implement the following individual incentives:

- A weekly attendance winner from Key Stage 1 and 2.
- A weekly reward for those classes who have not had any late arrivals in the previous week. Individual class teachers decided what the reward will be.
- Weekly non-uniform rewards for who classes with +99% attendance.
- Monthly attendance rewards: children are told in advance that for a particular month there will be a reward for any pupils with outstanding attendance, e.g. Mr Merlin or an afternoon of sporting activities have been offered in the past.
- Half-term and full-term attendance certificates are given to those children with outstanding so as to formally recognise their efforts. Whenever possible we may attach additional rewards to this, e.g. in the summer term of 2018 children were also able to win Intu Metro Centre vouchers.
- The SLP Star Awards Amazing Attendance awards recognises excellent attendance at a partnership level. 2018's winner was a year 5 child who had been at Greenland since EYFS and never had a day off school.
- End of year celebration assembly is held to acknowledge those children with excellent attendance.
- End of year excellent attendance awards: at the end of the year the children with outstanding attendance will receive a special reward. In July 2018 we took 35 children to Ultimate Bounce to celebrate.

With all of these incentives and rewards the attendance team endeavour to factor in those pupils who may have a long-standing medical condition whereby they are required to attend doctor or hospital appointments on a recurring basis. Likewise, any exceptional circumstances which have meant a child has been unable to attend school through no fault of their own are also taken into consideration.

*“Is absence due to medical conditions taken into consideration in relation to various incentives and rewards?”*

Yes. Should a child have an ongoing medical condition that may require treatment or check-ups we will always take this into consideration provided we are notified in advance and evidence is provided. Once again, there is a reliance upon parents to keep us informed of such situations so we can fully support you and your child.

In the event a general doctor or dentist appointment is required we would ask that whenever possible, such appointments are made outside of the school day. If this is not possible then again, please contact Mr Banks to discuss it further.

## Behaviour in school

*“How is behaviour dealt with in school? If one or two children misbehave are whole tables or classes punished?”*

Greenland Community Primary School is a caring community. We aim to create an environment which encourages and reinforces good behaviour and the fostering of positive attitudes and is attachment aware.

We have high expectations for good behaviour throughout the school and at all times during the school day. Our staff fully support good conduct by adopting an attachment awareness approach. We feel it is vital that the school adopts and always maintains a consistent approach to behaviour and by all members of the school community.

Our Behaviour Policy clearly details the expectations we have for children and the approach we follow should they not be met. To access a copy of our Behaviour Policy and all related policies please visit our website:

<http://www.greenlandprimary.durham.sch.uk/about-us/school-policies/>

To assist our staff in dealing with incidents of unacceptable behaviour we provide them with a flow chart which details the steps they should follow. This ensures that our staff are as consistent as possible when dealing with behaviour which has fallen below the expected standard.



### EYFS Flow Chart

### KS 1 and 2 Flow Chart



In both instances our teachers use their relevant knowledge of the children in their care and valuable teaching experience to apply the above system. At times, there will be certain behaviours which require immediate attention from management in school and not all of the steps will be followed.

Should a pupil have an identified and diagnosed SEND need, their understanding of expected behaviour in school may not be at the same level of their peers. If this is the case class teachers' will have a bespoke approach to managing certain behaviours.

At Greenland we believe that we should foster in our pupils a sense of collective responsibility for behaviour in school. We are a school community and as such we are united together.

If one of us makes a wrong choice, irrespective of what it is, it is the responsibility not the *fault*, of everyone. We therefore encourage pupils to buy into our school community and what we believe in in terms of expectations for behaviour.

There may be occasions when a whole class, year group or Key Stage may be spoken to about general or specific behaviour in school. Whilst we understand that in such instances not all children may have been directly involved, the purpose of this approach is to alert all pupils to the fact that we are aware of the incident or behaviour and outline the way in which it will be dealt with should it occur again in the future.

## Rewards in school

*"There seems to be a lot of different reward schemes running in schools. What are they all and what does my child have to do to earn star badges?"*

We have a number of different reward initiatives in school:

**WORK OF THE WEEK** – Class teachers select the pupil in their class who has produced an excellent piece of work over the week. This could be an improvement in spellings or times tables, a written piece of work or achieving a target.





**STAR OF THE WEEK** – Class teachers select their Star of the Week every Friday. Star of the Week is for the child who has impressed their teacher with their work, attitude or behaviour. Children can receive this award for random acts of kindness or achievements outside of school (football tournaments, dance competitions etc). It is rewarded with a certificate and a Star badge (see below).

**STAR BADGES** – This is the second year of our star badges initiative and one that runs throughout the full academic year. Badges are not awarded for academic achievements, instead qualities such as random acts of kindness, showing a helping hand or going above and beyond will all be acknowledged.

Initially staff will allocate bronze badges as and when they feel a child should be rewarded. Once five bronze stars are awarded, they should be exchanged for a silver star badge. Once they have earned three silver stars, they should exchange it for a gold.

At the end of term gold badge holders will travel to London to enjoy a visit to the Harry Potter studios.

**CLASS ATTENDANCE WINNERS** – as detailed above; any class achieving +99% attendance or above for a full week will be awarded a non-uniform day on the subsequent Monday. Children are notified of the winning class/es in our Thursday attendance assembly and this is also posted on Facebook on a Thursday with a Sunday and Monday morning reminder scheduled.

**ATTENDANCE REWARDS** – please refer to the initiatives within the Attendance section above.

**SLP STAR AWARDS** – Held annually staff will nominate children for a variety of awards. Miss Lewis will select a winner and two runners up who will each receive a certificate of recognition in a whole school assembly.

Winners and their families will be invited to a red-carpet event to receive their formal awards.

*“When awards are handed out to children could there be an awards event for families to attend?”*

*“Other SLP schools seem to do a lot more than Greenland to get families involved.”*

This is something our Senior Leadership Team will now consider, looking to identify the best way of introducing this. More information will be shared in due course.

## Recognition of the school

*“I am aware that the school wants awards and I want a happy child and help with this. Awards seems to be a very big thing.”*

The priority of our school is our children and their learning and progress together with their safety and wellbeing. There are a number of initiatives we have implemented in school or benefits we offer that have resulted in us receiving local and national recognition and accreditation.

Our staff and your children work so hard to make Greenland the great place that it is today we are proud that this has been recognised, however, they are not our sole purpose and are always a bonus to our hard work and dedication.

## Communication

*“Are there any plans to introduce a text messaging service?”*

We are currently looking into the possibility of introducing a text messaging service. That said, given the number of pupils on roll, initial quotations have indicated this to be quite costly. This being the case we will consider school budgets and other required expenditure to assess if it is a viable purchase at present. Should the decision be taken not to introduce this service we will revisit it in the future.

*“Does everything go on Facebook? I sometimes feel this is very last minute.”*

We currently adopt the following methods of communication:

- We have an open-door policy and families are encouraged to talk to staff about any questions or concerns they may have. If you are unable to speak to a teacher when dropping your child off or picking them up, please call our Main Office on (01207) 232147 to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.
- Parents Evenings, held twice a year, are a formal opportunity for you to discuss your child’s progress.





- Our school website has a lot of information on it about school life. There is also a calendar on the home page which includes the dates of everything happening in school.
- Our newsletters are published at the start of each half- term. Our newsletters include dates for your diary to help you plan along with any other important news we would like to share with you.
- Letters that are specific to a child, class or contain a lot of information are sent home as and when. Both newsletters and letters are sent home with children, therefore, there is a strong reliance on parents and carers to check their little one's bags daily please.
- Facebook is primarily used to remind followers of things happening in school and to share good news or media stories. It is very rare this is adopted as our only means of informing parents about something.

As with everything we do in school, as much notice is given to families as we possibly can. There will always be instances when opportunities arise that will offer our children new or exciting learning experiences. In such cases we will take them in the hope that parents appreciate our decision.

*"It sometimes feels like there is no communication between staff & parents."*

We are sorry you feel this way and would reiterate that parents are openly encouraged to speak to staff should they feel they need to.

We appreciate how busy everyone is, staff included, hence you are welcome to call our Main Office to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet with your child's class teachers, our SENCO, Deputy or Headteacher.

## **Additional benefits offered by the school**

*"Free breakfast club, wrap around, free milk, clubs and trips are great."*

