



Horspath Church of England Primary School  
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Headteacher: Mrs. Emma Coleman

Chair of Governors: Mrs. Munaza Dogar

31<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Dear parents,

### **Homework Policy**

In our parent survey last term we were asked for more clarity on our homework policy. We have written a new policy which you can find at <http://horspath.oxon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Homework-Policy-March-2017.pdf> The type and amount of homework that primary pupils are set is an issue that often divides opinion. In setting out our expectations in the policy, we have taken into account the ages of the children in each Key Stage and the national guidelines that have been set.

### **School Values**

Thank you for taking part in the survey during the parents' evenings on the school values. The children have also taken part and our final top ten values look like this:

Friendship  
Perseverance  
Respect  
Honesty  
Tolerance  
Fairness  
Compassion  
Courage  
Trust  
Loyalty

Next term's values will be: *Trust* followed by *Courage* after half term.

### **School Uniform**

When you get your child's PE kit home at the end of next week, can I ask you to check that their trainers or plimsols still fit and that they have black shorts and a plain white T shirt for PE please.

May I also take this opportunity to remind you that trainers are part of the PE kit only and should *not* be worn as school shoes.

Leggings are also not part of our school uniform, despite what the shops, labels or children would have you believe! The link to the uniform page is here:

[www.horspath.oxon.sch.uk/parents/uniform/](http://www.horspath.oxon.sch.uk/parents/uniform/)

### **A message from the Governors:-**

You will, no doubt, have heard much in the media recently about proposed National Funding Formula and its impact on schools around the country. The principle of this is to address the significant differences in funding per pupil in different areas across the country. For example, a school in the City of London receives more than double the per-pupil funding of a school in Oxfordshire; a school in Nottingham receives more than £1000 per pupil per year more than we receive at Horspath. So we fully support moves to introduce a fairer formula.

However, it is highly questionable whether the proposed formula really is fairer. As expected, London schools will see a significant drop in funding, but historically under-funded areas such as Oxfordshire do not necessarily see an increase. Indeed, some schools around Oxford have also seen a large reduction in funding.

Horspath's budget in the new formula is relatively unchanged. We lose funding, but only by less than 0.5% of the total school budget. To put that in perspective, the drop is roughly half the annual funding we receive for one pupil. We are not amongst the worst affected, but that doesn't lessen the frustration we feel about this. Horspath and Oxfordshire should have been one of the "winners" in this redistribution of funding due to the historic under-funding in the county, and the high cost of living. In real terms, this is a much more serious cut than it appears because of rising costs. School budgets are already under significant pressure - Horspath is by no means immune to this as we already receive less than the national average funding from government, and have very few other sources of income (contrary to popular belief, the school receives no funding from the church). The school's finances remain healthy primarily due to astute and prudent financial management from Mrs Coleman and Mrs Ackland, and careful oversight from the Resources Committee of the governing body. Not all schools are as fortunate to have such strong financial management.

Many schools have written to parents warning of potential staff cuts, or even requesting financial contributions from parents. At this point we feel that both of these would be premature. The funding formula is still a proposal, and the formal consultation period ended this week. There is a widespread feeling that the changes will be delayed, revised or maybe even withdrawn due to the hostility they have provoked around the country. So at this stage it is impossible to predict exactly how our budget will be affected in years to come. It is clear, however, that there will continue to be severe pressure on school budgets so it is also impossible for us to rule out staff cuts or requesting financial contributions in the future.

Of course, we understand that many of you will be as unhappy about this as we are. You might find it interesting to visit <http://schoolcuts.org.uk> to find out more. This site also includes a mechanism for sending a letter to your MP complaining about the proposed changes. You will notice that the figures on this site attempt to quantify the "real terms" cuts in the context of rising costs - this is a complex calculation that we have not attempted to validate independently.

We realise that school funding is an emotive subject, but there is no need to panic. Budget cuts are a serious concern for the future and Horspath is just as vulnerable to this as any other school, but the school has rigorous financial management procedures in place. We will continue to lobby for better funding for schools in Oxfordshire, and will assess the funding we are allocated when it is finalised. At that point, if significant changes are required, we will write to you again.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about this, you are very welcome to contact the governors via the school office.

## Reading Survey

Throughout your child's time at the school, reading at home both independently and with a parent is hugely beneficial to their progress. We do recognise that it isn't always easy to persuade children to read outside school, and it can sometimes be hard to find appropriately challenging material. We would like to learn more about these challenges so would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete a short online survey about reading outside school:

<http://horspath.oxon.sch.uk/survey/>

You will notice that the survey is entirely anonymous; we'd like you to be entirely honest, and not be tempted to give us the answer you think your child's teacher would like to hear. If you have more than one child at the school, please complete the survey separately for each child - we know that every child is different, and their reading habits change as they get older.

We will collate and publish the survey results, along with any initiatives we identify as a result of this. The more responses we receive, the better informed these results will be, so please do take just a few minutes to complete the survey. If you would like a paper copy, you can request this from the school office. Thank you.

### Spring Term dates for your diary:

Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	No Family Assembly
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	Topic Display 3.15pm
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> April	Topic Display 9am
	Beech and Lime Living Rainforest trip
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> April	PTA Easter Egg Competition
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> April	9.15am Easter Service in school
	Easter Egg Tombola and Cake Sale at 1.30pm
<b>Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<b>School Closes at 1.30pm</b>
Easter Holidays	10 <sup>th</sup> April – 21 <sup>st</sup> April
Summer Term:	
INSET	Monday 24th April
School Reopens	Tuesday 25th April
SATs meeting KS2 Parents	Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 4.15pm
<b>Key Stage 2 SATs Tests</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> May – 12<sup>th</sup> May</b>
<b>Key Stage 1 SATs Tests</b>	<b>22nd May – 26th May</b>
Half Term	29 <sup>th</sup> May – 2 <sup>rd</sup> June
School Closes	Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> July

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Emma Coleman  
Headteacher