



Steam Mills Primary

08.03.2024

Dear Parents and Carers

School Lunches

If your child requires school lunches for next week at all, please check now that you have ordered them. We have a 48 hr cut-off for all orders. Thank you.

Safeguarding – Child Development and Online Safety.

Recent research has come to light about the impact of children, aged 4 and under, having access to mobile phones and digital devices. According to recent statistics, nearly 50% of children in this age bracket has a mobile phone and the research has shown the following areas of children's development being severely impacted:

- Speech and Language delay – less conversations with people around them because they are focused on a device. This leads to problems with phonics and pronunciation of sounds, which in turn impacts how children sound out for spellings, as an example
- Children using American accents and colloquialisms i.e. using the word 'trash' instead of the word 'rubbish' due to watching videos on You Tube/TikTok
- Exposure to inappropriate content which affects their understanding of the world and knowing age appropriate boundaries. Examples of this are issues with not sharing items effectively, which can lead to violent outbursts and swearing becoming normalised as every day language.
- Fine motor skills – children are increasingly finding it hard to hold pens/pencils in the correct way to due to more time being spent on devices rather than games that can develop their finger strength. This then affects their ability in every day skills such as using a knife and fork correctly, or even turning the pages in a book; some children have tried to 'swipe' the page to make it turn.
- Gross motor skills – children being inactive, or spending lots of time on devices affects their physical development as their bones and muscles are growing
- Increase in children needing glasses from a much younger age as a result of watching screens close up
- Reduction in problem solving and resilience – technology promotes a 'now' culture so children find it hard when they have to show resilience or solve a problem.

As professionals working closely with children, we appreciate the benefits of technology however, this research has highlighted to us the importance of balance. We hope that by sharing what we have learnt, it will support the wider community in making more informed choices to benefit the children at Steam Mills.

Term Dates 2023-24

Spring term 2024

8th January—22nd March

Half Term: 12th—16th Feb

Summer Term 2024

8th April—22nd July

Half Term: 27th—31st May

INSET days:

24th May and

22nd July

Diary Dates

(including Federation activities)

March

- 11th Easter Bonnet/Basket Competition Collection Day
- 12th Parents Evenings Federation activity Y3/4 with a Reading theme
- 13th C2 Trip to Slimbridge Federation activity Y5/6 with a Well-being theme
- 15th Red Nose Day Reading Café
- 19th Parents Evenings
- 20th Federation activity Y1/2 with an Easter theme
- 21st The Great Daffodil Appeal (Marie Curie) – wear a yellow item (not non-uniform) Easter Bonnet/Basket Parade
- 22nd Non-School Uniform Day – Bottle Donation for Summer Fayre

End of Term 4

April

- 18th Scholastic Book Fair
- 19th FoSM Meeting – 3:15pm

May

- 13th Rags2Riches collection
- 23rd Sponsored Walk

June

- 14th Sports Day morning

World Book Day

It was great to see so many children ready for a bedtime story wearing their pyjamas and cuddling their bears this week. The children got to enjoy a bedtime story with a hot chocolate and a biscuit. The book swap was also a huge success. We had so many children bring books in to share with others and what a brilliant range of stories we could share! Thank you to parents/carers for supporting with this event.

Absences – Vomiting and Diarrhoea

Please could we remind parents/carers of our policy and also NHS policy with regards to keeping your child off school for 48hrs after their last episode of illness. Thank you.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

My Happy Mind – Parent App Launch

Attached is a letter and a poster outlining our new Parent App which mirrors the scheme of work that we are delivering to the children in school. We have also placed the information on the school website and we hope you find it useful.

Easter Bonnet/Basket Competition and Parade

Mrs Dickinson is kindly organising another Easter Competition, where children can design and make their own Easter Bonnet or Basket.

Templates will be available to collect from the school office from the morning of **Monday 11th March** or children are welcome to create their own. Numbers will be limited for this activity and it will be on a first come, first served basis. An Easter parade to show the items made will be at 3pm on Thursday 21st March, parents are welcome to come in early to watch the parade. Prize giving will be on Friday 22nd March and prizes will be brought home.



Parents Evenings – Tuesday 12th and Tuesday 19th March

We are holding Parents Evenings on Tuesday 12th March and Tuesday 19th March. Bookings for classes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are made via our eSchools system which is open for booking. The meetings are in 10 minute slots, please adhere to this time limit. Please let Miss Agg (school office) know if you would also like to see Miss Barber (SENCO) and she will book this for you. If you have any issues booking for your child/ren, please contact Miss Agg for assistance. Pre-school Parents Evenings will be on the same days and bookings can be made with the Pre-school staff.

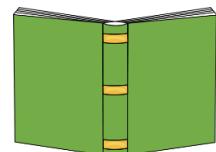
Red Nose Day – Friday 15th March

We will be celebrating Red Nose Day this year with a "Wear something Red Day". We are not asking for donations for non-uniform but we will have a limited number of Red Noses for sale. Please note that they will be £2 per Nose on the day, with sale initially be limited to 1 per child. If we have lots left, children may have the opportunity to purchase more.



Reading Café

Don't forget that Mrs Gibbs will be hosting our next reading Café on **Friday 15th March** after school. You and your child/ren are most welcome to join us.



The Great Daffodil Appeal (Marie Curie) – Thursday 21st March

There is a Wear Something Yellow day to raise awareness for The Great Daffodil Appeal (Marie Curie) on Thursday 21st March. The school is supporting this day by encouraging children to wear a small yellow item if possible; e.g. hair clip, socks, t-shirt to raise awareness, no donation necessary. All other clothing on this day is to be uniform. We have a Marie Curie assembly planned this term so this day will link nicely to what the children will learn.

Class Snippets - (Article 28- children have the right to an education. Article 29- Education should develop a child's talents, personalities and beliefs)

Pre-school – we finally had some snow! On Monday we talked about the weather and the things we did in the snow. We loved wearing our pyjamas into Pre-School for World Book Day and did a book swap in the school where the children were able to pick a new book to take home. We enjoyed being out in the garden in the dry, sunny weather having a bit of a spring clean! Our sound of the week has been P and our number has been 3.



Class 1 – this week, Class 1 have been filling out weather diaries. Each morning, we have been observing and talking about the weather. There have been lots of language and different perspectives of the weather this week, before the children have independently sounded out and written their entries in full sentences. In English we have been writing captions about Jaspers Beanstalk, retelling the story from memory. In science we have been looking at the different parts of trees and went for a walk in the school grounds to find and identify the different parts.

Class 2 – this week, the year 2s have been working on their measuring skills. They have been measuring in cm and m, as well as comparing measurements. We have begun our DT topic; Wacky Windmills. Over the next few lessons, we will be exploring the best materials to design and create our own windmills. This week, we have been naming the parts of a windmill and exploring what would make a solid base. The children really enjoyed World Book Day and were very lucky to have Mrs Evans read one of her favourite stories; The Selfish Giant. They also enjoyed their hot chocolates and biscuits.

Class 3 had a visit from a Viking this week. He talked to us all about cures and medicines used in Viking times, around 1000 years ago. The children were surprised to learn that spider webs were used as plasters and that maggots were used to clean wounds. The children engaged brilliantly with this session and enjoyed asking our visitor lots of questions. In writing, the children have planned their own unhappy endings to fairy tales, based on our book Lost Happy Endings. I am looking forward to reading their writing next week.

Class 4 have been working on their understanding of sentence structures this week; they have revisited complex sentence structures with main and subordinate clauses. Now, they are trying to extend these structures with main clauses using semicolons. They have also been taking ownership of their writing with the purple polishing pens and revising their work whilst identifying features they have used. In science, they have explored how animals have adapted to their habitats to survive and in DT , their bird hides are taking shape.

Phone calls for forgotten homework and kits.

Class 4 children have been informed that they are no longer able to ask Miss Agg to call home for parents to bring in forgotten homework or PE/Swim kits. In one morning, Miss Agg had to make 10 calls; this takes her away from her job and is not always feasible. With this, if the children forget kits, they will have to use the spares available and if it becomes a persistent problem, the behaviour policy will be followed. With homework, if children forget it/it is not completed, the homework policy will be adhered to – this can result in missed playtimes to catch up. The children were able to tell the teachers what they could do to be more organised: pack their bag the night before; check their

homework diaries for hand in dates and make a note of PE kit days so they can bring in the right items on the right day; this is information that is shared in class repeatedly.

FSM Children fund for Easter Holidays

We would like to make you aware of a change to the holiday Free School Meal (FSM) voucher scheme that Gloucestershire County Council is currently offering to families in Gloucestershire. Gloucestershire County Council is committed to supporting families with 1 week of vouchers (£15) for the Easter holiday and 1 week (£15) for the May half-term. Vouchers for the May half-term will be distributed at the same time as those for the Easter holiday period. Therefore, families who have signed up will receive a total of £30 per eligible child.

During 2024, there will be food and activity support available via the HAF programme (during Spring, Summer and Winter holiday periods). This is a separately funded scheme that provides the children who book and attend events with a meal. The HAF programme is not able to distribute food/supermarket vouchers. For more information on the HAF programme please visit their webpage here: [Holiday activities and food programme \(HAF\) | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

This Easter 2024 holiday period, Gloucestershire County Council will provide families in receipt of Free School Meals, who sign up to this offer, with vouchers to assist with food costs during the April (Easter) 2024 and May 2024 school holidays. Applications for holiday FSM vouchers for April 2024 and May 2024 (Easter and half term) holidays will be open from **midday 27 February until midday on 12 March**.

We will be unable to accept any applications after this date. Vouchers for **both** holiday periods (1 week (£15) for Easter and 1 week (£15) for May half-term, a total of £30 per eligible child) will be distributed to families the week commencing 18 March 2024. Please check junk/spam folders during this period as sometimes the vouchers end up there. If parents have not received their vouchers by 20 March 2024, please email childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk before the end of the holiday period (07 April 2024).

The scheme is for children in reception to year 11 who receive Pupil Premium (benefits-related) free school meals and attend a school in Gloucestershire. **We are unable to consider college and sixth form students, nor children who receive infant free school meals (available to all children from reception to year 2) - they are not eligible for this scheme.** To find out more about the scheme and to apply, parents can visit our [FAQs | Gloucestershire County Council](#)

Families who have signed up previously do not need to re-register for Easter 2024 and May 2024 holiday vouchers-

they will already have been included. Families that have previously signed up will need to contact us with any changes to their circumstances (e.g. if the number of children eligible increases or decreases). To ensure we reach all those who are eligible, we are encouraging parents that have not previously signed up, to sign up as soon as they can.

Please note we check eligibility for the scheme by cross-referencing with the term-time free school meal register, so please make sure parents are registered beforehand. They can register by visiting the [apply for free school meals](#) page. If your school is one of the five that do not use this method, we will require confirmation from yourselves on the child's eligibility. You can find more information on what schools these are on the link above.

Using vouchers – vouchers need to be used will only be awarded once the parent has registered for the scheme and cannot be backdated. Vouchers are valid for 6 months, although should be used in the holiday period in which they are awarded. If vouchers are not claimed and have expired, they cannot be re-issued. Vouchers not received should be queried via email to childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk by the end of the holiday period.

For any parents wishing to update details of an existing application, please ask them to email childrensfund@gloucestershire.gov.uk so we can update their account, as details are not automatically updated.

Coolmilk

Did you know that your child could be receiving a free or subsidised drink of milk each day? This is the link to register your child or if they are entitled to Free School Meals, please contact the school office and we can register for you.

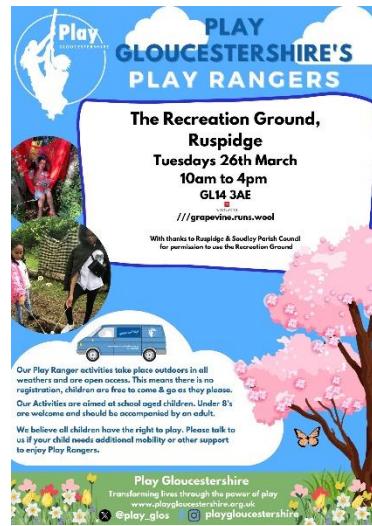
<https://www.coolmilk.com/parents/>



Families Gloucestershire Magazine

Here is the [link](#) to the next issue of **Families Gloucestershire Magazine Mar/Apr 2024**. The **Mar/Apr 2024** issue is packed full of useful information for parents including:

- Make your own Easter chick cup
- Mother's Day Bakes
- Developing a positive attitude to learning
- Sea Monkeys Mini Pet giveaway
- and much more.....



As always, please do let us know if you have any questions or queries. We do also encourage parents/carers to let us know if they have any suggestions of events or activities that you would like to see in school.

Our Safeguarding, Behaviour, Complaints and other policies are available on our school website