

Newsletter 20

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Welcome News

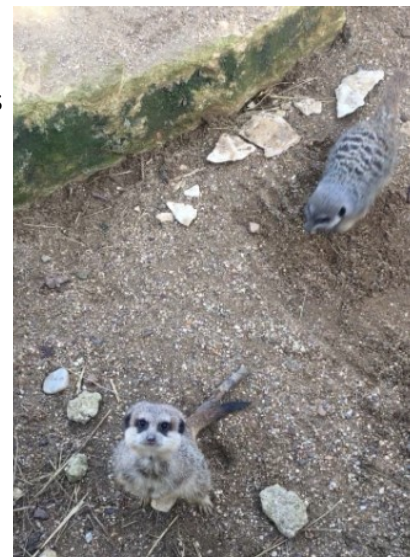
The warm weather and sunshine has heralded the start of Spring this week, raising everyone's spirits. The announcement by the prime minister that schools will be opening fully from 8th March has given us all a further, much needed boost. We are delighted that we will be welcoming all the children back to school although we have much to put in place over the next week to prepare for this. The support and efforts of our families in working with our staff to minimise the disruption to the children's learning over the past eight weeks has been exemplary and nothing short of inspirational. I truly believe that we have shown what a creative and innovative force the Monkfield Park community is. In the coming months I hope we can look back and appreciate many of the positive things that have come out of these unprecedented times. Meanwhile, we have World Book Week and lots of other exciting enrichment activities to look forward to in the coming weeks.

Mrs Howell

Meeting the Meerkats

Year 3 have been enjoying reading the brilliant book, Meerkat Mail by Emily Gravett. This delightful story recounts the journey of Sunny, the meerkat, as he goes on an adventure to visit his mongoose cousins. This week Mrs Tranter arranged for the children to meet some real meerkats who are living in the Cambridgeshire countryside, via Zoom.

The zoo keeper at Johnsons' Farm in Old Hurst very kindly gave Year 3 a short talk about the meerkats who live on their farm and introduced the children to Melvin, Matron and Pippa. The children were fascinated to learn that these cheeky animals live together in large family groups of about 50 meerkats. They live in desert environments where they spend their time digging in the sand looking for food and can survive for days without water.



Name That Uniform!

We have huge numbers of un-named school sweat shirts and other items of school uniform in school at the moment but it is proving impossible to return these items to their owners. As we prepare to re-open to all children, please can you ensure that all items of your child's school uniform are clearly named. It makes re-uniting lost/misplaced items with their owner much easier. Thank you.



World Book Day

Next week we will be celebrating World Book Day on Thursday 4th March. The children always look forward to this annual event and we are determined that even though our celebrations may look a little different this year, we will still be promoting the powerful message about the transformational power of books and reading. Mrs Johnson has been working on some really thrilling activities and events which will be taking place to celebrate World Book Day so we would like to give you all advanced warning so that you can make sure you are well prepared.

Booked potatoes!

For World Book Day this year we would like to set you a challenge of designing and creating your very own themed potato based on a book character. Here are some examples. Can you guess which books they are from?



You can be as creative as you like when it comes to making your book potato character. Here is a list of some resources you may want to use:

- A potato
- Paints
- Felt
- Colouring pens
- Googly eyes (optional)
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue
- Pom poms






We will of course be dressing up as we always do. You can dress up as your favourite book character or, this year, we thought you may want to try something a little different for those of you who love a challenge... vocabulary costumes! Can you create a costume that represents a word?

So if you would like to dress up on Thursday we would love to see a picture of your costume!



Here Comes The Sun

In today's Feel Good Friday assembly, the children listened to the well known track, 'Here Comes the Sun' by The Beatles and reflected on the beautiful sunshine that we have been blessed with this week. They thought about the five benefits of sunshine and how it improves our mood, our health, our wellbeing and our sleep pattern. More sunny days are on their way this weekend so I hope you will enjoy sharing some of these outdoor activities.

Build an imaginary campfire out of sticks. 	Collect five stones to colour or paint. 	Draw a rainbow on the ground outside using chalk. 	Play hide-and-seek outside in the garden. 
Go on a minibeast hunt in the garden. 	Make some mud paint by mixing mud and water in a bucket. 	Create your own den in the garden. 	Count how many birds you can see in your garden in five minutes. 
Have a picnic lunch outside in the garden with your favourite teddy bear. 	Plant some beans or seeds in the garden. 	Make a magic wand from a stick in the garden. 	Use a bucket of soap and water to clean your toys. 
Create an outdoor obstacle course in the garden. 	Make a chalk picture on your fence or garden patio. 	Build a minibeast hotel. 	Make your own magical potion in a bucket. 

Internet Safety

You may have seen the recent BBC investigation about the increasingly popular chat website, Omegle. We have received information that some children at home have witnessed explicit, adult material whilst using this website, and have been encouraged to share personal details with adults on the site.



Omegle is a chat room site where children are connected to random webcams where no user registration is required. Users are randomly paired with a stranger to chat/video within seconds of logging on to the website. It would appear that people, older males in particular, are misusing the site, causing great distress to younger people.

Although Omegle maintains that users should be aged 18+, children are able to access the site easily via links and advertising on Tik Tok and Youtube. The age restriction for using Tik Tok and Youtube is still 13+, but we are aware that many children have accounts for these platforms and are allowed to access them without adult supervision. Once on sites such as Omegle, children have limited control over who they speak to, as other people can be invited into the group without the child's permission.

To safeguard children, we would advise that children are not allowed to access these seemingly innocuous websites without supervision as it is very easy for these sites to be infiltrated. Please keep talking to your child about internet safety and do check that you have effective parental controls in place. We will continue to promote e-safety and internet safety throughout the school on a daily basis to ensure children are made aware of the dangers they may face.

The Circus Comes to Monkfield Park

Today we had another 'first' for the children of Monkfield Park- a webcam circus show! Isn't it amazing what is possible using technology?

We wanted the children to have a light-hearted treat to lift their spirits so we do hope your child enjoyed being entertained by ringmaster Monsieur Loyal and his nephew clown Ninetto, and taking part in the many interactive tricks and games. From the rapturous applause, and the gales of laughter that could be heard coming through the screens around school, it certainly seemed like the children were fully engaged and enjoying this break from their online learning.

Thank you to circus artist and physical theatre performer Tonino Scalia for providing us all with some much needed fun and laughter from the wilds of Scotland. He certainly turned our frowns upside down



Checking Medication Held in School

If your child has an asthma inhaler, epi pen, jext-pen or other medication in school please can we ask you to contact the school office to check that their medication is still in date and is stored in a clearly named box or bag. All out of date medication will need to be taken to a pharmacy for safe disposal. Please note that we will not be able to administer out of date medication to your child.



Forthcoming Dates

These dates may be subject to change if there are changes in Government and Local Authority guidance over the coming months.

1st to 5th March—Book week

5th March—Mid-term reports sent to parents

8th March—School opens to all pupils

16th March —Parent Consultation evening via zoom (details to follow)

22nd to 26th March— STEM week

25th March—Parent Consultation evening via zoom (details to follow)

26th March—LAST DAY OF SPRING TERM

12th April - Children return to school.

