



Healthy School

Many years ago children brought any kind of snack they wanted into school to eat as a playtime snack. As part of our recognition as being a 'Healthy School', a few years ago, the pupils of the school voted that only healthy snacks and drinks should be allowed. Obesity and poor dental health are two of the major health issues facing young children then, and unfortunately still are now. Chocolate based snacks, biscuits and crisps were deemed as unhealthy snacks. These have been allowed, in reasonable quantities, in packed lunches but if Meal-Time Assistants notice obviously unhealthy packed lunches they inform the teacher who will ask the parent to alter the type of packed lunch they provide. For a while we were able to use Devonport Regeneration money to provide fruit for every child in the school each day. We still get funding to do that for children up to year 2 but not for the older children unfortunately. The decision to only allow healthy snacks in school was based around the educational values of instilling an awareness of the dangers of certain food and drinks. Even low sugar squash and fruit drinks cause dental decay, particularly if taken as frequent sips over a long period of time rather than one 'short term' attack on the teeth. For this reason children can drink water in class but not squash or fruit juices. Children have free access to water drinking fountains near all classrooms but are encouraged to bring in (named) water bottles to keep rehydrated during lessons. Drinks other than plain water are not allowed. I apologise if this expectation has not been made clear to parents who have joined the school in recent years.

Match Attax

Every so often a new fad becomes very popular and children like to enjoy their interest in school as well as at home. Loom bands were very popular a few years ago and gave children hours of enjoyment in the playground. When such a fad first surfaces children are informed that they will be allowed in school until they start causing upset over ownership or 'loss' of a child's precious new objects. Football cards have usually made it to the fifth or sixth week before problems have emerged, but this year we have already had problems with children being upset over the loss of Match Attax cards and others wrongly accused of taking them. The level of upset and disruption tips the balance between the benefits of such a hobby and the drawbacks. For that reason children have been asked not to bring Match Attax cards into school from now on.

Literacy Planet

Mathletics has been a useful tool in improving the number recall and maths ability of children throughout the school. Each week we now celebrate which class has amassed most points and which child has gained the most points personally to become our 'Mathlete of the Week'. Devonport Regeneration money allowed us to make a long term subscription to Mathletics many years ago and we are still benefitting from that.

Thanks to support from The Friends of St Joseph's we have good news about a new resource to help children to widen their vocabulary and improve their spelling skills. Literacy Planet is a sister website to Mathletics and the Friends have recently provided the funds for us to subscribe to the website for school **and home** use. Teachers have attended training on how to get the most out of the website. Most children have used it in class in the last couple of weeks and we will soon be ready to distribute usernames and passwords to children to allow them to access the site from home. Please encourage your child to use their 'screen time' in a positive way by going to Mathletics or Literacy Planet rather than hours of Fifa, Roblox or Musical.ly!

Children in Need

To make it easier for children to find an outfit to wear for Children in Need Day on Friday 17th November we have extended the description of clothes to Stars, Spots and Stripes. That should give you a better chance of having something in your wardrobe or, if not, a wider chance using your creative skills.