

Orchards News



February 2014

Well what a busy half term. We do want to know your thoughts about Christmas arrangements and we are currently devising an electronic questionnaire that you can complete on line or at the parents meetings.

Parents Meetings

We are trialling a different system for parents meetings this term with the opportunity to come to a meeting during the day or to a late meeting. Again we would like to hear your thoughts about this. You should receive a letter about this early next half term, but the date for your calendar is 12th March.

Class Assemblies

So you can see your child acting, singing, dancing or whatever they do best we will be having Class Assemblies over the next two terms. You should see a lot more of your child than you would in a large Christmas production with two or more year groups. Year 4 will get us started and we look forwards to seeing you all at your child's show.

PARKING

We are again having problems with cars being parked across driveways or unsafely in front of school. Please be considerate when parking and be aware of the safety of all children. We have now had two accidents involving children and had to call an ambulance as well as a further two near misses. Thank you for your support.

Class Photographs

Class photographs will be in the same casual style as last year and will be taken on 19th March.

Flood Advice from the Environment Agency

Although Cambridgeshire has been less heavily hit by the recent floods than other counties, there is further rain to come. Cambridgeshire does have some areas of significant flooding where there might be danger.

The Environment Agency have published the following safety advice on their website:

- Avoid walking or cycling through flood water.



- Be aware that flooding can cause manhole covers to come off.
- Keep out of floodwater and watch out for submerged debris.
- Don't walk on riverbanks.
- Take care or avoid crossing bridges when water levels are high.
- Take care crossing culverts or drains as they are dangerous when flooded.
- Look out for other hazards such as fallen power lines and trees.
- Wash your hands thoroughly if you touch floodwater as it may be contaminated.

Fair Funding for Cambridgeshire Schools

Did you know that:

*per pupil, Cambridgeshire schools are the **least funded** in England?

*Cambridgeshire receives **£600 less** per primary pupil than the national average?

*this amounts to £4,200 over your child's time in primary school?

* if fairly funded Orchards School would receive an extra **£243,000 per year**.

Cambridgeshire headteachers are proud of the quality of teaching in our schools and the standards our pupils achieve but imagine how we could raise standards if we had fair and equitable funding.

Like all state funded schools in Cambridgeshire we receive the lowest funding per student compared to schools in all other counties in England. The reasons for this are historic and complex and headteachers, Governors and MPs have been campaigning for years to secure a fairer system of funding so Cambridgeshire's schoolchildren do not lose out.

The **government has said that the distribution of school funding across the country is unfair and irrational**, but, so far, they have not done anything that gives Cambridgeshire proportionally more money, so our schools remain the worst funded in the country. The government have, over the past few months, made a series of policy announcements regarding its intention to implement a National Fair Funding Formula for schools from 2015.

However the budget allocations for April 2014 show that Cambridgeshire schools have once again lost out and another year of reduced funding **will** have an impact upon our schools. Cambridgeshire schools cannot wait for any relief from the implementation of fair funding arrangements and require immediate bridging finance to enable us to balance our budgets for the foreseeable future.

We all need to do what we can to keep the pressure on the government to give our schools – and, therefore, your children – a fairer share of national school funding. Please can I urge every parent to write to our local MP or go online & sign the secondary school's e-petition with the view that the Government will raise the funding for **all** schools in Cambridgeshire.

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/58898>

It is half term next week so we look forwards to seeing the children back at school on Monday 24th February.