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Wednesday 7th September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

It is so wonderful to have all the children back in school. They have settled well and we are already seeing children confidently beginning their new school year.

At the end of the previous academic year, many of you completed the online parent survey to provide your thoughts and feedback. Thank you to those who made the effort to complete these. Over the summer, I collated these responses and analysed the data provided. I will share this with you in more detail in the coming weeks.

In short, the overwhelming majority of feedback was positive, which was lovely to see, and we appreciate. However, even when comments were positive, a significant number of you identified a common thread that emerged about the challenges and improvements needed with communication.

In response to this, we have already made some decisions about improving this aspect of school. We are currently in the process of identifying a member of staff with the responsibility of developing and improving communication between school and our families. They will be liaising closely with you this half term to see how we can find a manageable, effective system that allows us to share information about your children's progress, celebrate their successes and notify you in a timely manner about upcoming events. We also want to provide more regular opportunities for you to give us constructive feedback.

We are able to invite you back into school now, with all parents being able to access the site. There was a definite reduction of the close relationships we had built up with our parental community, caused by the pandemic and the restrictions we had to put in place, which we can now re-establish, starting this afternoon at our 'Meet The Teacher' event.

Most notably, having taken on your feedback, we are streamlining our avenues of communication. Ironically these may cause some teething problems to begin with but essentially:

- Marvellous Me will no longer be used.
- Year Group emails will no longer be used.
- ClassDojo will now be the primary communication tool between school and home, as well as emails from the school office and Facebook notifications, for wider school notifications or individual correspondence.

ClassDojo

We are introducing ClassDojo. We feel it is a significant upgrade. It is user friendly and has the functionality for staff to communicate with you directly, instantly sharing messages, updates, events, and photos from class. It's simple, secure, and gives you a window into your children's school day, something many of you have asked for.

ClassDojo is also a reward system, which we will be using to recognise super behaviour and good manners as part of our Talbot Ten initiative. Children can be awarded Dojo points by the staff and once signed up, you will also know they've been successful as a notification will come through. The frequency of these points will vary from class to class and differ across the school as class teachers will agree with their children how it will work. The most important element of this, is that it enables staff to message you, directly to your phone app so that you are kept informed in an easy, accessible way.

Your children are already set up and enjoying being part of ClassDojo so it is time for you to join in. Attached to this letter are the instructions to get access, which you will see are very simple indeed. You can use it on any device: it's a simple and free mobile app for iOS and Android, and can also be accessed from your computer at classdojo.com. Please take the time to engage with the app, if you have any problems please come and see us and we will help you to get set up.

How to use ClassDojo

As shown on the information sheet attached to this letter, signing up on the ClassDojo app is straightforward. If you have more than one child at Talbot, please carefully follow the instructions as it will tell you how to add multiple children.

On the app itself, you will be able to see the information provided by your class teacher. These could be reminders, good work or general class news. You will also be able to see whole school information such as news or video updates from Mrs Curtis, myself or other staff. When children are awarded Dojo points, you will be able to see why these were awarded. Posts can be 'liked', which is very similar to some social media sites. Please remember that all classes will be awarding Dojo points to suit the needs of their class. So it is essential that you do not compare your children's ClassDojo experiences, they will vary.

You will have the facility to message your class teacher or class teachers associated with your child's class should you need to. Teachers will have the facility to message you directly, which is like how Marvellous Me operated.

On the app, you may see an option to purchase the 'full' Dojo package. This is not a requirement. You can continue to message your class teacher and see the class and school information for free.

Interestingly, if you can access ClassDojo on a desktop computer or laptop, you will be able to see many of the 'paid features' for free.

Messaging and responding to messages on Class Dojo

As with all communication, it is important to ensure that both sides are aware of the parameters we will be working within regarding expectations and conduct.

- All communication between school and our families must be respectful and polite in line with our behaviour policy and code of conduct.
- Teaching staff are with the children all day, so will not be able to respond to messages instantly
- Staff will only respond to messages in term time, between 8am and 5pm.
- If you have a serious issue to discuss, please use Dojo to highlight that you would like the opportunity to discuss this with your child's class teacher, so that an appointment to discuss face to face can be made.
- Messages are retained on the system and can be accessed by the Senior Leadership Team.

I will write again shortly with further information regarding the results of the parental survey and to give you further information about improvements in communication. In the meantime, please do get signed up on Class Dojo and let us know how you find it.

Kind Regards

Mr Browne