



## Pioneers' Autumn Newsletter 2020-2021



Welcome back to school. I am so pleased to see all of the Pioneers back this week, I am so proud of how they have come into the classroom with smiley faces and positive attitudes. No-one could have predicted the events and impact of the recent months, and it is only natural we all have some reservations about coming back into our school environment. As such, Pioneers will be given lots of space and time over these first few weeks to explore their feelings, re-establish relationships within their cohort, wider school community and their local community. We will establish where the children are in their learning in order to plan for the best learning experiences throughout the school year. Most of all, we will re-engage the children with themselves as learners and as positive contributors to their school community.

The Pioneers will do this with a series of three Mini Adventures, all of which will place our SMILE initiative at the heart of their delivery:

1. **Reconnecting with myself.** Using the class novel 'All the things that could go wrong' by Stewart Foster as a springboard for discussion, the children will explore a range of key PSHE strands about positive relationships and mental wellbeing. They will engage in a range of daily activities to promote physical and mental health. We will also make extensive use of the school grounds to produce a range of therapeutic art projects, creating sculpture in the natural environment using the artist James Brunt as inspiration.
2. **Reconnecting with my school community.** Pioneers will spend this Mini Adventure re-connecting with our school values, exploring their meaning and impact upon their learning experiences. They will work together to educate and present the school values to younger children in school.
3. **Reconnecting with my local community.** Finally, we will begin to expand our outlook to our wider local community. The children will engage in a range of local geography field trips. They will embark upon their Young Leaders Award, following a programme run by the Archbishop of York Youth Trust, in which they will learn about themselves as leaders and discover ways they can have a positive impact within their wider community, despite the constrictions of social distancing.

### **Weekly routine**

Pioneers will be taught by Mrs Gamston on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday mornings, which are her days in school this year. The children will be taught by Ms Leithead for the remainder of the week (Thursday afternoons and Fridays).

### **Timetable**

The Pioneers' lunchtime slot begins at 1.00pm in order to maintain distancing between each pod throughout lunchtime. As we have a longer morning session, the children will always be encouraged to bring a snack for after morning break to keep them going.

### **Reading and Spelling**

Over the coming week, all children will have the opportunity to choose a reading book to bring home. Any reading done at home can be recorded in their planners (which will be shared with the children at the beginning of next week). Please encourage your children to read every day. Your child does not need to read aloud to you as their reading independence grows, but it would be valuable to discuss your child's reading with them. Once the children have finished their books, they will need to place them in the returned books box situated in the classroom. These will be returned to the class library after each weekend, allowing for adequate 'book quarantine' time! Of course, the children will not need to wait to choose their new book, this can be brought home the same day the old book is returned.

We will resume our daily Read, Write, Inc spelling sessions, including a weekly spelling check, when we have checked the children's current spelling knowledge. These checks will take place over the next few weeks and we will be in touch prior to spelling lists being sent home for the first time.

### **Homework**

After the success and high engagement with our online classrooms during lockdown, we will evaluate over the next few weeks the best format for homework this year. Please enjoy a few weeks of settling in, and we will be in touch when homework is set.

### **PE and The Felton Mile**

Being active as much as possible and enjoying the outdoors will be key to boosting our mental and physical wellbeing. Pioneers will take part in a 20 minute active wellbeing or PE session each morning as they arrive at school:

- Monday - Joe Wicks style sessions
- Tuesday - Yoga
- Wednesday - Mindfulness
- Thursday - Felton Mile. Pioneers pod only - we will require one parent volunteer each week to run (socially distanced of course!) please get in touch if you are willing to help out. Thank you in advance.

In addition to these sessions, the children will be having a cricket session led by a coach every Friday morning.

As the children will be active at the start of each school day, please can they arrive each day wearing their PE kits. They will need to bring their school uniform with them in order to get changed after the morning session. PE kits will go home each night for the children to return in it the next day.

### **Friday Forest Skills**

Please can we ask that your child comes to school on Friday ready for Outdoor Learning. The children can wear/bring:

- Warm trousers, in line with school uniform colours (ones that can get dirty)
- Warm socks/ welly socks
- A change of footwear (walking boots or wellies)
- Layered tops – t-shirts/long sleeved tops/jumpers (we do ask children still wear their school jumper or cardigan as their top layer)
- The school will provide waterproof coats and trousers

Here's to a happy, successful and positive year for the Pioneers! If there is anything you should wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Nikki Gamston