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Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to you all! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, on behalf of Mrs Sims, Miss Sims and myself, for your generosity, kindness and continued support last half term. It has been wonderful to welcome the children back to school after what they told me was a lovely Christmas break.

This half term, we will be going on an adventure with the colours white, blue and yellow! Through these colour themes, we will be learning about seasonal change and exploring winter and spring. The children will learn where the polar regions are in the world and discover the animals that live in these cold climates and how they survive. We will enjoy learning about a variety of animals, including polar bears, seals and whales, and discuss how they survive in cold and wet habitats. We will also learn about the life cycle of an emperor penguin and how penguins keep their chicks safe and warm. The children have already been enjoying experimenting with ice and making simple predictions as we learn about melting and freezing. In addition, we will be learning about different celebrations from other cultures, including Chinese New Year.

In Maths, we will continue to develop strong number sense by exploring numbers to 10 in depth. Children will learn to represent numbers in different ways to help them understand the relationship between numbers and quantity. They will explore how quantities are composed of smaller parts using a 'part-part-whole' model and continue representing numbers using a ten frame. We will also begin adding and taking away quantities and learn to record our thinking using simple number sentences.

We have completed the first phase of our phonics learning and will now continue learning more digraphs and trigraphs across Phases 3, 4 and 5. Last term, we focused on early mark making and pre-writing shapes. This half term, the children will learn how to correctly form letters, compose simple words and captions, and read and write a selection of harder to read and spell words (HRS words). Later in the term, they will begin writing simple sentences using capital letters, finger spaces and punctuation such as full stops, question marks or exclamation marks. All children progress differently in phonics, and we will ensure that teaching continues to meet the needs of all learners.

The children have been loving Drawing Club, our writing approach. It has been wonderful to see how it enriches their language and imagination through the magic of stories and tales. Drawing Club incorporates maths, writing/mark making and conversation, with children adding symbols and passwords to their drawings, which further enhances their excitement and enjoyment for writing.

Reminders

PE

The children will continue to enjoy two PE sessions each week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Throughout the spring term, they will take part in dance, fundamental skills and games activities, and later in the term will continue swimming lessons. Please ensure that earrings are removed before school on PE days and that long hair is tied back. We are unable to remove earrings in school or ask siblings to do so. For health and safety reasons, children wearing earrings on PE days will not be able to participate.

Uniform

Please ensure that all items of your child's school and PE clothing are clearly named, including footwear

and accessories such as hats and gloves. Children should bring a filled water bottle to school every day containing only water (squash spillages are sticky and trickier to clean up). Class R children enjoy a daily snack of fruit and a carbohydrate item, so no additional snacks from home are needed. As the weather is cold, all children must come to school with a coat. As we spend a lot of time outdoors, a winter hat and extra layers are also recommended. We encourage children to practise zipping up their own coats and putting on their gloves (mittens are often easier), as this supports independence and helps us ensure children are not waiting in the cold whilst they wait for an adult to support them.

Tapestry

Please continue to check your child's Tapestry Learning Journey for updates about their learning. This is a great way to start conversations at home about what we have been doing in school. We welcome any home learning, experiences or special achievements shared on Tapestry – thank you for the lovely contributions so far. The children thoroughly enjoy sharing these with their classmates. Please like and comment on posts so we know they are reaching you at home.

Newsletter

Each week, we share a Class R Newsletter via Tapestry. This includes a summary of the week's learning, achievements, home learning and any important information. Please ensure you check this regularly to stay up to date with everything happening in Class R. We hope this supports learning at home and encourages discussion with your child about their school day.

Bookbags

Please ensure your child brings their reading book, reading record, phoneme book and word book to school every day in their book bag. We will monitor progress throughout the week and update phoneme and word books as needed. Reading books will continue to be changed on Fridays.

Homework

At this stage of learning, hearing your child read and practising phonics at home is essential for their progress. Please continue to play number games using the number cards provided last term, as well as any other number games you enjoy. Please support your child's learning at home at least four times a week to help build confidence and consolidate skills. Home learning is vital to support your child in keeping up with the fast pace of the EYFS curriculum.

School Website

Our Class R page on the school website contains essential information, curriculum overviews and useful resources: <https://www.blackmore.essex.sch.uk/reception/>

We hope that all children in Class R have a thoroughly enjoyable learning experience this term. We are very excited to share the wonderful learning opportunities we have planned. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to speak to us after school in the playground or contact us by email via the school office.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support this term.

Kind regards,
The Class R Team