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To all Parents/Carers,

5/1/18

Welcome back and a Happy New Year to you all! I hope you had a restful and enjoyable break!

I'm not sure about you but Christmas already feels like such a long time ago and 2018 has started at a rapid pace! Despite the terrible weather yesterday morning (and today!) I did see lots of happy faces walking through the gate; it is nice to see so many children looking forward to coming back to school after such an exciting few weeks at home. Even though we have only been back two days there is quite a bit to get through in this weekly word!

Firstly, I wanted to draw your attention towards a new page which has been created on the website. Under the 'About Us' section you will find Assemblies (<http://www.markeaton.derby.sch.uk/Assemblies>). Every now and again any PowerPoints which have been used for specific assemblies will be uploaded to this page for you to share/discuss at home. Yesterday's, for example, was called 'What makes us happy?' and it sparked some very interesting conversations about what happiness is, how can we make ourselves happier and whether or not happiness be given away. Questions such as this stem from something called Philosophy for Children - a series of thought provoking lesson ideas which have been around for some time. There are no right and wrong answers in 'P4C' but what it does do is encourage the children to challenge what they know and what they think they know. Yesterday morning I came across a BBC News article about social media and some of the worrying issues surrounding 8-12 year olds who use websites like Facebook, Instagram etc:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42563173?intlink_from_url=http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/c207p54m4pdt/social-media&link_location=live-reporting-story

As I have said before, websites such as these insist on users being at least 13 years of age but I am aware of some of our Junior children who do have accounts. In the article it talks about 'likes' and the number of children who associate happiness, social standing and wellbeing with the number of likes they get for a post. It also talks about the responsibilities of schools and how lessons in social media and E-Safety can help children adapt as they get older and move into Secondary School. This is something we have already responded to and it will be a topic we revisit in the curriculum and assemblies frequently. Do take a look at the article as there are hints and tips for children and parents too. Also, we have our E-Safety Parent/Carer forum this term so watch out for the date in the next few weeks.

In other news, I am delighted to announce that the PTFA were successful with their Starbucks Bid and were granted £2000! This is absolutely fantastic news and when you add that to the Tesco and Lottery bids over the last 18 months we've managed to secure an additional £17k of funding for the school – all monies which have been spent directly on the curriculum and your child's education. School budgets, as I am sure you have read in the news, continue to be squeezed so efforts such as this are greatly appreciated and really help us to maintain those high standards.

And finally, I was informed by a Parent this morning that it is two years to the day since I arrived at Markeaton – time flies when you're having fun!

Have a great weekend

Mr I. Johnson