13th September, 2016

Dear Parents,

Termly Learning Conferences

Following our recent letter to you regarding our plans for your child’s Termly Learning Conference we have received a number of email communications from parents in response to this. As you know, we are always open to questions and suggestions from yourselves and are grateful for these. We have carefully considered the comments that we have received and in response to these have decided to modify our arrangements for these conferences this year. As a result the timings will now be:

Wednesday 30th November 4.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.
Thursday 1st December 3.30 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.

We hope that this supports our working parents and also allows all children to attend at an appropriate time for their age. We remain committed to the idea of holding Termly Learning Conferences within the school day and will be considering the possibility of using non-pupil days in the academic year 2017 – 2018 as suggested by some of you.

The remainder of this letter sets out the rationale and further organisational details regarding the conferences.

Pupil involvement
The high rate of success that our children achieve from year to year is based on a strong home-school partnership and we wish to further develop this by encouraging greater pupil responsibility for their own work. We feel that this will provide your child with essential skills for life-long learning and will prepare them more fully for secondary school and beyond which is an important part of their education.

We are keen to involve all our children in discussions which allow them to showcase work that they are proud of and to discuss their targets with the teacher and yourselves.

This discussion will include ways in which you can help them at home and an examination of their performance data. This data will comprise effort grades and attainment information which remains the same as that given to you last year.

There will be a follow-up sheet for you and your child to fill in at home and return to school.

We understand that this may raise the question “What if I have something to tell the teacher which I don’t want my child to hear?” Obviously there may be occasions when this is necessary at any time of the school year. Should you need to chat to your child’s teacher we would encourage you to ring the school office, pop in or email at reception@newlandsspring.essex.sch.uk in order to make an appointment to do so.
Timings
Appointments will be available to book electronically nearer the time. When booking your appointment you will need to allow ten minutes for your child to show you their work in the classroom before attending the conference with the teacher. We will inform you when bookings will be open well in advance via Parent Mail and via the school newsletter.

Video
We would like to offer you the chance to see a short video made by another school showing the process from start to finish. We will be showing this video in the small hall on Friday 30th September at 9.00 a.m. and would be pleased to see as many people as possible. Following this showing there will be a link to the video on the school website for those who cannot attend.

Feedback
The intention is to hold these conferences twice a year in the Autumn and Spring terms and to maintain our open evening during the Summer term.

We realise that this arrangement involves a lot of changes and we will be asking for your feedback on all aspects after you have had the chance to experience it once.

We will consider any feedback received in detail in order to work with you to make any necessary changes or adjustments.

Yours sincerely,

S.M. Edom-Baker

Susannah Edom-Baker
Headteacher