



Headteacher: Mrs A Norman BA (QTS) Hons NPQH
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Newsletter 2 Monday 5th December 2016

Dear Parents and carers,

I cannot believe how quickly this term is flying by. I feel like my first day as Headteacher, back in September, was only yesterday, yet we have achieved so much in that time.

I would like to thank you all for the support you have given me and for welcoming me as your new Headteacher. I really enjoy talking to you all at the school gates, on a morning and would encourage you all to come and say hello if you have time.

The Autumn term has been jam packed with events and activities involving staff, children and parents. For the children we have been on numerous school trips exploring the outdoors and embracing nature. We have entered and won many competitions such as the Bishop Auckland Cluster Football League and the Samson's Shoes Enterprise award at the Stadium of Light. Parents have helped clear our outdoor area, attended Go Grow family sessions and taken part in Family Learning sessions with Callum from the Foundation of Light, as well as helping to plant over 200 trees with the Rotary Club and pupils. It has certainly been a term to remember and we have lots more to look forward to in the New Year!

Class Dojo

The relaunch of Class Dojo in September has been a huge success and now parents and carers are kept more up to date than ever, about events and news throughout the week. We now have 80% of parents signed up for Class Dojo but we desperately want all 100% of parents to be using this fantastic, free communication tool.

If you have not already joined Class Dojo, this is what our parents think about Class Dojo;

"A quick and easy way to keep yourself informed."

"A fantastic way of showing us what our children have been up to at school."

"I love the photographs – seeing my child enjoy, have fun and learn, gaining a great education is good for us to see."

"If we've missed anything or need to know something whilst we are at work, we can check Class Dojo at any time."

If you are one of the 20% of parents who have not yet logged onto Class Dojo, we have attached your personal password so that you can do it today. If you have any problems please see Mr. Orwin or Mr. Soppitt for help.

Road Safety

I am becoming increasingly worried about the sheer amount of cars pulling up to the school gates each morning. I am genuinely fearful that, one day soon, one of **your** children will be knocked over by a car trying to manoeuvre a three point turn in the back streets. Indeed,





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only last week, a car had a very near miss with a Reception child who was running across to the school gate.

I fully appreciate that parking is limited around our school entrance, however I would like to ask parents to consider parking along St. Andrew's Road or in the Red Alligator Pub car park and walking to drop off and collect their children, instead of trying to get as close to the school gates as possible. This would reduce the risk of a small child being knocked over. I am in contact with the local council and am in talks about enforcing more road restrictions on the road leading up to the school gates.

I ask each and every one of you to ask yourself this question;

“How would I feel if my child was knocked over by a car, just because someone didn't have time or couldn't be bothered to walk a short distance?”

I think we all know the answer!

In addition to this, can I remind parents that only staff, visitors and disabled parents or parents of disabled pupils may enter the school car park at any time.

PTA

This year our PTA have become a fund raising machine. Now that we have a goal in sight, it has made our volunteers even more driven to raise as much money as possible. With help from Miss Booth and Miss Pole, our target to raise money for a new Trim Trail for the school grounds will be smashed! The Christmas Fair this year was a huge success and with the added profits made from the sales of the Christmas Eve gift boxes you all raised £750! We are still collecting copper for our copper pots – this will be ongoing throughout the year. As soon as a class fill their pot, they will be rewarded with a tasty treat. Then, that pot will be emptied and the collecting will begin again.

The PTA are in contact with local supermarkets and are waiting to hear if we can organise a bag pack fund raiser and so will be looking for bag packing volunteers to give up an hour of their weekend to help raise more money. Remember, the more we raise, the more we can provide for the children.

Jack Waldock's dad, Gary, is doing a sponsored 18 mile walk over the Christmas holidays to raise more funds – if you would like to sponsor him please drop your donation in at the office. Good luck Gary!

Outdoor equipment update

We have been in contact with three Outdoor equipment suppliers and they are all working hard to secure our business. All three have come up with some fantastic designs but ultimately we will go with the company that provides the best quality and value for money. We will also be asking the children which they prefer.

Following a meeting with Governors, it was decided that we should also invest in a separate climbing frame aimed at our smallest pupils, so we are also awaiting designs for the Early Years outdoor area too!





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A fantastic start for our new Nursery

The first term in our new Nursery has, not surprisingly, gone extremely well. All of the children are embracing learning through play and I know that Mrs Castledine and her Early Years team are delighted with how the children have settled in. We will be welcoming two new little ones starting after Christmas and currently have 4 Nursery places available to start in January. We can offer places to 3 year olds and rising 3's, (children who will turn 3 during the next school term.) If you have a rising 3 or 3 year old in the family or know someone who is looking for a Nursery place, please ask them to get in touch and find out more about what we offer.

Absences

We had a really successful Attendance Week at the beginning of this half term; however it wasn't to last long. Unfortunately, we were struck with a bout of chicken pox and a sickness bug that hit many children and therefore affected our percentages greatly. You will have seen the Attendance graph updates on Class Dojo just how poor attendance was. It seems like most of the children affected have had a full recovery and are back in school.

The Government have set the target for attendance at 96% for all pupils and children who are below 90% are classed as persistence absentees. I will be sending individual letters to parents of children who have triggered the "persistent absentee" category, to alert them of their child's percentage. I hope to work with families to improve their child's attendance over the year.

Punctuality

We are also closely monitoring children who are repeatedly late for school. If your child is late for school, an adult must accompany the child to the school office and sign in, giving a reason for the child's lateness. This way, we can monitor the frequency of lateness and offer support to the families who need it the most.

Please consider the impact of being late has for your child and the children in their class;

- Pupils miss out on essential instructions and this can reduce achievement
- Pupils may feel awkward arriving when everyone else is settled
- When one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class

Guide to Christmas week

Christmas is arriving quickly and will be here before we know it. This year, we have organised a busy programme of Christmas Festivities to entertain our pupils. By cramming everything into the last week of term, it means that we are limiting disruption to lessons and learning in the run up to the end of term.

You will find a "Guide to Christmas Week" attached to this newsletter and look out for reminders on Class Dojo throughout the week in order for the festivities to run smoothly.

New Year, New You

Next year we will be promoting healthy lifestyles and choices – we all over indulge over the Christmas period and the new year is the perfect time to change for the better. We will be hosting Healthy Lifestyle assemblies for children, offering free healthy breakfasts at our





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breakfast clubs, introducing P.E homework and offering a free Healthy Lifestyle course for parents where you can learn to cook and provide healthy nutritional food for the whole family , that will end with Healthy Banquet event for the whole family – look out for more information to follow!

I hope I can count on parents and carers in supporting our children in making better and healthier lifestyle choices.

All that leaves me to say is to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing you all in 2017 and hope you will join in me in thanking all the staff for their continued hard work and wish them all a fun and very well deserved Christmas break.

Yours sincerely

Mrs James

Acting Head Teacher





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Diary Dates

December

- 12th – Year 3 and 4 Christmas carol singing at local old peoples home
 Christmas performance 1 1:30pm start
- 13th – Whole school and family pantomime event (afternoon performance)
- 14th – Year 5 and 6 Christmas carol singing at local old peoples home
 Christmas performance 2 1:30pm start
- 15th – **Reception and KS1** Christmas party 1pm -3pm **KS2** Christmas party 3pm – 4:30pm
- 16th – Whole School Carol service at St. Andrew’s Church 1.15pm
 - School Closes for Christmas holiday

January 2017

- 3rd – Teacher Training Day
- 4th – School opens for pupils
- 6th – School Council begin junior Road Safety Officers project
- 11th – Dental talk for Reception to Year 5 pupils
- 11th- Healthy Heart talk for Year 6

February

- 3rd – Whole school maths day – parents welcome
- 7th – Safer internet day
- 17th – Ks1 and Ks2 Gymnastics Festival
 School closes for half term
- 27th- School reopens for pupils

March

- 24th- Red Nose Day
 - Recycling demonstration – whole school

St Andrew's Primary School Holidays 2016 - 2017

Holiday	Closing Date	Return Date
Christmas	Friday 16 th December 2016	Wednesday 4 th Jan 2017
Spring Half Term	Friday 17 th February 2017	Monday 27 th February 2017
Easter	Friday 7 th April 2017	Monday 24 th April 2017
May Day	Friday 28 th April 2017	Tuesday 2nd May 2017
Summer Half-Term	Friday 26 th May 2017	Monday 5 th June 2017
Summer	Friday 21 st July 2017	Tuesday 5 th Sept 2017
Autumn Half-Term	Friday 20 th October 2017	Tuesday 31 st October 2017





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