

Newsletter 2

Date December 2017

Dear Parents and carers,

This newsletter has come round far too quickly. As we begin to prepare for the end of the Autumn term and the run up to Christmas, it's important to be organised and well prepared and so I hope you find the attached calendar of events helpful.

Raising the Roof

Great news! We have finally had confirmation that Durham County Council will be footing the bill for the school to have a brand new roof fitted. This means that, once fixed, we can finally replace any damaged ceiling tiles inside school and improve the overall appearance of the school building. The start date is scheduled for mid-December and will mean some disruption to the school building exterior and school carpark.

FREE Breakfast Club

At the beginning of this half term, we launched our FREE breakfast club for all pupils. This is a fantastic initiative set up by Greggs Foundation in partnership with local company, Warrens Plc. We are holding a Breakfast Club Launch where children, parents and staff can come along for a FREE breakfast and meet the Greggs Foundation mascot. So come along on Monday 20th November from 8am – 8.45am- everyone welcome.

Homework

Since we have introduced the new Homework Contract, we have seen a huge increase in the amount of children who are doing their homework and handing it in on time. This is fantastic and shows how committed parents are to supporting their children. We are hoping to have the same impact with parents reading with their children, as we know that reading at home can have a huge impact on children's reading ability. Can we ask parents to continue to communicate with teachers on Class Dojo when their child reads at home?

Pick up times

Lately, we have had an increased amount of parents turning up late to pick up their children after school, after after-school clubs or after morning Nursery sessions. I must reinforce to parents that by doing so you are holding up staff that may need to be elsewhere teaching or supervising other children or indeed stopping staff going home at the end of their working day. In addition to this, children who are left waiting can become anxious when they are the last child to be picked up. If parents regularly turn up late for their children then we will have no option but to start charging a fee for extra child care.

If, for some reason, you are going to be late picking your child up then can we ask that you call the school to say how long you will be.

Fond Farewells

As we come to the end of 2017, we say a fond farewell to some valued staff.

Firstly, we say farewell and thank you to our cook Jill Walton, who has cooked meals for children at St. Andrew's Primary School for many years. Due to a shoulder injury, Jill has had to make the difficult decision to step down from kitchen duties and take on a less physical role within Taylor Shaw. I'm sure you will join us in wishing Jill well and thanking her for keeping our pupil's tummies well fed and watered! Jill will be replaced by Karen Davies, who is keen to get to know the children quickly!

We also say goodbye to our Learning Mentor, Miss Bell. She has decided to take voluntary redundancy and pursue her career as a social worker. She will leave on the last day of term and I'm sure many of you, especially those families who have had help from Miss Bell, will join us in wishing her all the luck in the world at this exciting time in her career.

And finally, we say goodbye to teaching assistant Mrs Wilson at the end of the year. She has decided to take a career break from working in schools and plans to try something new. Mrs Wilson has mostly worked with our little ones and has the pleasure of seeing many of them grow up. I know she will miss them all, just as we will miss her.

Welcomes

Last week, I had the pleasure of attending the Institution of the new vicar of St Andrew's and St. Anne's church, Reverend Matt Keddilty. I welcomed him to our school community, on behalf of the pupils, parents and staff in the presence of the Bishop of Durham and look forward to him coming into school to meet the children.

This term we have appointed two new parent governors. Mr Yates and Mrs Carrick were successful applicants and both are very excited about taking our school to new heights.

Action Groups

The introduction to Action Groups has been a huge success. The groups have already met twice this year and have made some excellent decisions and positive changes to our school. To find out more, visit our website to see photos of each group. The next meeting is November 17th.

We are also starting a Mini Police programme with Year 6 pupils. They will be working on a Road Safety and School Parking project with members of the Youth Community Police Team and will be inviting all parents to come to an assembly about their work on Friday 15th December at 2:30pm.

Anti Bullying Week

Next week is national "Anti-Bullying Week." During the week the children will be involved with interactive lessons and discussions about bullying, as well as assemblies exploring the choices children make and the effects they have on others. We will also be helping children understand the difference between, "falling out with each other" and "bullying" as this can be a recurring problem in school. It is inevitable that children will fall out with each other as they grow up– it's part of life and it is important that parents recognise this too, whilst supporting school in providing children with strategies that help children cope at these times. That said, bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school and we take allegations of bullying very seriously. We have an Anti Bullying Policy (see website) that sets out the investigation procedure that is followed when an allegation is made.

Christmas is coming

Once again, we have a jam-packed calendar of events to help us all celebrate Christmas. Please take a careful look at the dates attached so that you can be fully prepared at this busy time.

First up, we have the Christmas fair on Tuesday 5th December and as always we will be asking you all for donations. The fair will not be a success without your support and donations, so please be as generous as you can. If you can help run a stall or would like to hold your own stall, please contact Miss Booth at the office.

During the last week of term, we have performances, parties and pantos and will finish off with a Carol Service at St. Andrew's church at 1:30pm, straight after our school Christmas lunch and wearing our Christmas jumpers. What a way to end the year!

The end of the year will be upon us before we know it!

Yours sincerely,

Mrs N James

Acting Headteacher