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Newsletter 4 - March 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are past the half way point of the year now- it really is flying past and staff are already thinking ahead to the summer term.

The "Beast from the East," hit us hard last week, closing the school for three days in total. Thank you to those who sent photos, via Class Dojo, of the children in the snow and doing extra work at home. I will be making a book of their adventures as soon as possible.

Can I ask parents, who are still not on Class Dojo, to logon as soon as possible. You have missed out on important messages from teachers over the last week and if you're missing out – your child is missing out!

Keeping you informed

We are holding our spring term Parent's evenings next week. It really is important for parents to attend these meetings and I would encourage you to make every effort to make an appointment using the reply form or by messaging the class teacher on dojo. The meetings are aimed at keeping you informed about your child's progress, strengths and areas for improvement as well as being an opportunity for you to talk about any issues or concerns you may have about your child whilst at school.

We are asking parents to come at least ten minutes early to appointments to look through children's books in the hall, as there is not sufficient time to do this during the meeting and that children do not come into the meeting with parents. Our TA's will be on hand to supervise children in the hall if needed.

Can I ask that, if you have concerns about your child's behaviour at home, then an appointment should be made with Mr Orwin to discuss ways you can receive help with this rather than during this ten minute appointment. I have organised a "Behaviour At Home," workshop for parents in May that some parents may want to attend – more information to follow.

At the end of the term, you will also receive a copy of your child's end of term assessments.

Music to your ears

Following the success of the whole school Dance assembly last term, we are planning a whole school Music assembly on Tuesday 20th March at 2pm. Parents will be entertained by all children from Early Years to Year 6 and will include a performance from the Music Club and Guitar club – so lots in store. I hope you can all come along.



Fundraising

The Maddison family have made the difficult decision to cancel the fundraising plans for the Indiana Rose Memorial Fund – it was felt that it was, understandably, too much too soon. With their permission, we are still going ahead with the rose garden and ornate bench feature in the school grounds and will continue to raise money through the PTA to accommodate this. There is also a crowdfunding page for anyone who would like to donate specifically for this project and I will post the link on Class Dojo soon.

Roof work

The end is in sight for the completion of the roof work. We should be looking at the end of March for everything to be finished. We have had some ceiling damage caused by the work being carried out but that hasn't stopped us getting on with it.

Please can I thank parents, for being so patient with regards to the parking and drop off situation, during this time.

Attendance

Attendance remains to be high on our priorities as a school, as we strive to reach the Government's expected requirement of over 96%. We currently stand at 94.3% and so still have a way to go before the end of the year. I want to take this opportunity to outline a few points to parents regarding this issue;

- Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure their child attends school regularly and are punctual.
- Pupils that attend school 90% or less become **persistent absentees** and schools are required to act upon improving this figure.
- Parents of pupils with regular **unauthorised absences** will be referred to the Attendance Enforcement Team who will act with formal warnings, fixed penalty notices or even court proceedings depending on the severity of the absence and compliance of the parent to make improvements.
- It is at the **Head teacher's discretion** as to whether an absence is authorised or not. The head teacher has the right to request medical evidence of illness to support the decision.
- Should a parent not inform the school about the reason for a child's absence and staff are concerned about the child's welfare, a **home visit** can be carried out or a **Police Welfare check** can be requested.

We take attendance very seriously at St. Andrew's because we know those pupils who do not attend school regularly, are less likely to reach their full potential academically, socially or emotionally and I know that none of us want that for our children.

On a more positive note, we currently have 15 pupils who are on 100% and 27 with 99% or above, at this point in the year. Those pupils are on track to receiving a trophy and book voucher in July, if they can keep that up!

New Pupils

This academic year, we have had a record number of pupils start our school mid-way through the year. I recently asked new parents to the school about their thoughts on why they choose St. Andrew's Primary school, and their response was overwhelmingly positive. Many said the website information and Ofsted report helped them make the decision and others said that it was the welcoming and friendly atmosphere of the staff and pupils that helped them choose a new school for their child. It was also noted that parents had heard, "great things about the school from other parents," which is great to hear.

We still have places in some year groups and the more children we have, the more funding we receive from the government to pay for staff and resources. So, spread the word – **St.**

Andrew's Primary school is the place to be!

Early Years change of hours

Following a request from a parent, the Governors and I have agreed to trial a change in how we offer the 15 hours allocated for Nursery pupils. We are now going to offer 5 mornings or 2.5 days. This also means that we will be able to offer more places and we especially have places for Wednesday afternoon, all day Thursday and Friday. If you know any parents looking for Nursery places please signpost them to our school office, who can provide more information.

School Meals

During the chaos of having no kitchen available for a month, our new cook – Mrs Duff- has begun her post with gusto. She has done a fantastic job of cooking the meals offsite and keeping them hot in transport for the children. Mrs Duff has lots of plans for the rest of the year, once she is settled into her new kitchen, which include a parent taster day and introducing a self-serve salad bar.

Next term, she is introducing a range of sandwiches on the menu each day. These will include fillings like tuna, cheese, egg and ham and will come in a range of bread rolls, wraps and baguettes. If your child already has packed lunches and brings sandwiches, why not try them on school dinners and choose the sandwich options. Dinners are now £ 2.40

ParentPay

Following the launch of ParentPay after half term, we have seen a pleasing 62% of parents sign up for the scheme. For those who have not signed up, can I ask that you do so as soon as possible as the school will be going completely cash free from September and we would rather iron out any problems before then.

If you are having problems logging on to ParentPay, please see Miss Booth at the office.

I have attached a list of diary dates to this newsletter but don't forget that the same diary dates are on our school website if ever you need them when out and about or you lose your calendar.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs N James
Acting Head Teacher

Diary Dates

Here are some dates for your diary that we have this term so far.

March

9 th	Class 3 & Class 4 to see 'One Item Only' at Darlington Hullabaloo Theatre
12 th	Delivery of ready to hatch chicks to Reception & Nursery Class
12 th	Mother's Day Book Morning 11am-12pm
12 th	Mother's Day Lunch 12pm-1pm
12 th -13 th	Parent's Evening
16 th	Lads & Dad's Day
20 th	Whole School Music Assembly – All parents welcome
21 st	Class 1 & Class 2 Dance Festival
23 rd	Sport Relief - Wear Sports Clothes for a donation of £1.00
27 th	Easter Bonnet Craft Afternoon – Parents Welcome 1:30pm start
29 th	Easter Service at St Andrew's Church - 1:30pm Start
30 th	Good Friday – School Closed

Easter Holiday: Monday 2nd April – Friday 13th April
School Re – opens: Monday 16th April

April

16 th	School re-opens after Easter Holidays
17 th	Class 3 & Class 4 Visit to Bishop Barrington - Community Outreach
18 th	All Stars Cricket Workshop for Key stage 1 only

May

1 st -31 st	Key Stage 1 SAT's Testing throughout May
2 nd	Year 5 Enterprise Team to King James
4 th	Year 6 Resilience Talk
7 th	School Closure – May Day
8 th	School Re-Opens as normal
11 th	Year 4 & Year 5 Be Safe Talk
14 th -18 th	Year 6 SAT's Week
24 th	'Effective Behavior Strategies' workshop for Parents - £5.00 per parent (parents from other schools also welcome)

Summer Half Term Holiday: Monday 28th May – Friday 1st June
School Re-Opens: Monday 4th June

June

4 th -8 th	Fitness Week
5 th	Year 5 Puberty Talk
6 th	Class 5 Rounder's Festival
7 th	Skip2Bfit & Box2Bfit Day
14 th	Year 6 Leavers Service at Durham Cathedral & Chinese Buffet
20 th	Super Splash Heroes Performance for Whole School
25 th -29 th	Year 5 Curriculum Week – More info to follow
29th	School Closure – Staff Training Day

July

2nd	School re-opens as normal
6 th	Year 6 Puberty Talk
7 th	School Summer Fair
11-13 th	Year 6 Transition Days
18 th	Sports Day
19 th	Year 6 Leavers Assembly

Summer Holidays: Monday 23rd July – Monday 3rd September 2018

School Re-Opens: Tuesday 4th September 2018