

Dear Parents,

With Christmas fast approaching, please find below details of what has been happening in school in November and our upcoming Christmas events.

Children in Need

Thank you to everyone who supported our non uniform day in November for Children in Need. We were really pleased to raise £158 for this very worthy cause.

Parents Evening and Parent/Carer Questionnaires

Many thanks to all of you who were able to join us at Parents Evening last month. We are also grateful to those of you who took the time to respond to our Parent/Carer Questionnaire, the outcomes of which will be circulated in due course once the responses have been analysed.

Christmas Lights Switch on at St. Helen's Church

Wednesday 6th December is the official turning on of the Christmas lights at St. Helens Church on Laithes Lane and we have been asked if some of our children would be interested in singing at this event. We look forward to seeing some of you there.

Christmas Dinner and Festive Non Uniform Day

On Wednesday 13th December Christmas dinner will be available in the dining room. To create a festive feel, this will be a Christmas themed non uniform day in school, in aid of Barnsley Hospice. For a contribution of 50p, children will be able to wear Christmas or 'winter themed' clothing, some tinsel in their hair or a festive head band.

Christmas Party Dates

On Party days, party clothes can be worn all day. Please ensure the children have appropriate clothing and footwear as they will still be playing outside. A reminder of Christmas Party dates.

F2 – Thursday 21st December

Classes 1, 2 and 3 – Friday 22nd December

Classes 4, 5 and 6 – Tuesday 19th December

Classes 7, 8 and 9 – Wednesday 20th December

Christmas Performances

We look forward to welcoming you to our Christmas performances. A reminder of the dates is below:

F2 Christmas sing-a-long – Thursday 21st December

KS1 Christmas Nativity

Monday 18th December at 9.15am for Y1 Parents/Carers

Monday 18th December at 2.15pm for Y2 Parents/Carers

KS2 Christmas Carols

Tuesday 19th December for LKS2 Parents & Carers

Wednesday 20th December for UKS2 Parents and Carers

Tickets for the Christmas performance will be limited to TWO per family only and will be distributed nearer the time.

Y5 Theatre Visit

As a result of a very generous donation, our Y5 children will be visiting Wakefield Theatre this month to watch the pantomime Sleeping Beauty. We are very grateful to our benefactor who has paid for the tickets and the coach fare. We are sure they will have a fabulous time.

Names on Clothing

To support our efforts to return lost clothing it is really helpful if you can put your child's name in all their clothing, including their coat and PE kit. We continue to offer uniform for sale for just 50p an item and if you are unsure about your child's uniform needs, please consult the policy.

Who should I speak to?

We very much hope that you will not have any worries or concerns. However, please can we take this opportunity to remind you that if you have any concerns about your child at all you should, in the first instance, contact your child's class teacher who has the most thorough knowledge of your child. If your concerns remain you should make an appointment to speak with a Leader of Learning (EYFS – Miss Pell, KS1 – Mrs. Wheelwright, LKS2 – Mrs. Belfield and UKS2 – Miss Stanley). If you feel that these members of staff have not been able to assist you sufficiently you should contact either Mr. Wheelwright or Mrs. Sanderson via the school office.

Attendance

At Athersley South we have high expectations of all children in relation to punctuality and attendance. The following is a reminder of the start and finish times for different parts of school. Please can we remind you that if your child is late they must enter school via the main school office, this includes any children in FS1 or FS2.

FS1 morning 8:40 – 11:40am FS1 afternoon – 12.25-3.25

FS2 8:45am – 3:15pm

KS1 8:45am – 3:15pm and KS2 8:50am – 3:20pm.

If your child cannot attend school for any reason please contact the office on (01226) 284223 before 9.30am.

Mrs. Smith will contact families if an absence has not been reported. This is because we have a statutory duty to ensure all children are safe. Mr. Scarth continues to be our EWO this year and his role is to work with school and families to offer support, advice and guidance where punctuality and attendance causes concern. In such cases, Mrs. Smith may contact you by phone or you may be invited to attend an internal school panel with Mrs Smith and Mr Scarth. Home visits may also take place as and when necessary. If your child will not be in school for any reason other than illness you will need to complete a 'Request for Leave of Absence' form, available at the school office.

Attendance

Raise Your Attendance – Raise Your Chances

We place a high importance on attendance at our Athersley South and feel every effort should be made to attend school regularly and to achieve 100% attendance. The greater your child's attendance at school, the more likely your child is to achieve their targets. The following information gives you some idea of what pupils should be working towards, and what action might be taken if you fall below accepted levels in line with LA guidelines. Government guidance dictates that the threshold for persistent absenteeism is below 90%.

Attendance %

100% Excellent – this is what pupils should achieve. It means they can be really successful and make lots of progress.

95% Satisfactory – This means a pupil has missed almost 10 school days in a year. In five years this is almost a full term.

Below 95% is considered 'Unsatisfactory' At this stage our EWO, Mr. Scarth, will be informed and a pupil's absence will be monitored. Parents may be contacted and may be invited to an internal school panel meeting in school.

90% attendance means a pupil has missed almost 20 days in a school year. In five years this is $\frac{1}{2}$ a school year. This now puts a pupil in the Government category of 'Persistent Absence' and the school is expected to put things in place to improve a pupil's attendance. Parents will be contacted and expected to attend a meeting in school with Mrs. Smith our Parent Support Advisor, Mr. Scarth our EWO and the Headteacher. At this stage parents can face further action such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

85% Poor – This means a pupil has missed almost 30 days in a school year. **In five years this is $\frac{3}{4}$ of a school year.** At this stage parents face the possibility of court action.

80% Very Poor – This means a pupil has missed almost 40 days in a school year. **In five years this is a whole school year off school.**

At Athersley South we fully understand that there are exceptional circumstances that can impact on attendance and Mrs. Smith works closely with families to offer the necessary support and advice. Ultimately we want all our children to attend for as many days as is possible to enable them to progress to the best of their ability and we hope to work with you to enable this to happen.