

Dear Parents,

Welcome to this month's newsletter detailing what has been happening in school as well as upcoming events.

Staffing Updates

Our new staff who joined us at Christmas are settling in well, thank you for helping us to make them feel very welcome. At Easter we will be saying goodbye to Mrs Hale from F1 as she leaves to embark upon a new business adventure. Mrs Hale has been at Athersley South for over 20 years and we wish her well. A recruitment process has now begun to source a replacement and we will update in due course.

NSPCC Rocks!



It has been fantastic to see children (and staff) participating in our NSPCC Rocks day, everyone looks fab. Our KS2 children have been working hard in their times table challenge competition, fingers crossed we achieve well against other schools, especially those within our family of ECM schools. Thank you too for your donations which will be donated to this very worthwhile cause.

Shared Learning Events

A huge thank you to everyone who was able to join us for our Shared Learning events. We have really enjoyed welcoming you into school to see the wonderful work your children do, day in, day out. We hope that you too enjoyed your visit. We will be repeating this event in the summer term and hope very much to see you all again.

Viking Visitor

We welcomed a Viking visitor to KS2 recently. As you would expect, he was incredibly knowledgeable and it was a great day. Photos are on our website and worth a look to see what fun our Y5/6 children had!

Car Park

Please can I politely remind you again that the use of our car park is restricted to blue badge holders at the beginning/end of the school day. Parents and Carers dropping off at breakfast club or collecting from after school clubs MUST park in a marked bay and you should accompany your child to the reception door, or collect them from the door. This is for safety reasons and I must ask for your cooperation in this matter. Please do not abuse staff who are enforcing this policy, they are trying to keep ALL children SAFE and should be treated in a respectful manner. If our car park policy cannot be adhered to, we will have no option but to remove the use of the car park completely.

Bernard

We are disappointed to have to let you know that, unfortunately, due to an ongoing injury, Bernard will no longer be able to visit our school. We have all come to know and love Bernard and we will miss him enormously. We are grateful for the time he did spend with us and wish him better health in the future. His owners have always been full of praise and admiration for our children and we will miss them too.

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.

Dates for your Diary

Monday 12th – Friday 16th February School Closed for Half Term
Monday 19th February INSET Day, school closed to pupils.
Monday 25th March-Friday 5th April School Closed for Easter

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.