

### Dear Parents,

Happy New Year to you all. We look forward to working with yourselves throughout 2024.

### Staffing Updates

At Christmas we said goodbye to Miss Reynolds and Mrs Walch, both of whom have dedicated themselves to the school during their time with us. Prior to Christmas we held a lovely leavers assembly for them, to thank them for their work. We wish them every success in their new roles. Mrs Abbott has now joined our F2 team and has been settling in this week. We also welcome Ms Mallett and Mrs Gillott to the EYFS team until the summer. Mrs Grange has also returned to ASPS as our Learning Mentor and the children have been excited by her return.

### Christmas Lights Switch

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Christmas lights switch on at St. Helen's Church before Christmas. It was lovely to hear your singing and to see the tree light up.



### Barnsley Hospice

Thank you for supporting our non uniform day in December. As a result of your contributions we were able to donate over £160 to Barnsley Hospice to support the wonderful work they do.

### Y5/6 Viking Day



Our Year 5/6 children were joined by a Viking named Bjorn for the day on Wednesday, as the children began their new history topic. This was a fantastic day and the children found out all about the daily life of a Viking and Viking Gods. The children also got to try out some viking games and to handle real Viking artefacts.

### Parents Evening and Parent/Carer Questionnaires

As you will recall, prior to Christmas we sent out a Parent/Carer questionnaire. This week a letter was sent out with details of the responses and actions we intend to take as a school in response to the questionnaires. Thank you to everyone who completed the questionnaire.

### Shared Learning Events

We are looking forward to welcoming KS1 and KS2 Parents and Carers into school in the coming weeks for a number of shared learning events. We hope you enjoy the opportunity to see your child's learning in action. Another event is planned for the summer so if you are unable to attend on this occasion, you will have another opportunity.

### Y5 Theatre Visit

What an absolutely fabulous time our Y5 children had at Wakefield Theatre when they watched the Pantomime Sleeping Beauty before Christmas. We are very grateful to a benefactor who funded this visit.



### 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 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February School Closed for Half Term  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February INSET Day, school closed to pupils.  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March-Friday 5<sup>th</sup> 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.