

Dear Parents,

We hope that you will find this month's First Friday useful in providing an update on what has happened in school in recent weeks and upcoming events.

Staffing

We are delighted to welcome Miss Kershaw to our EYFS team. With extensive experience working in early years, we look forward to her contribution to the team.

Children in Need – Advance Notice

On Friday 19th November we will be having a non-uniform day in school to support the BBC Children in Need Charity Appeal. For a contribution of 50p, children can come to school in their pyjamas. Further details will follow.

Parents Evening

You will, by now, have received a letter detailing Parents Evening arrangements with the option of a face to face or virtual meeting. We strongly encourage you to make an appointment as we look forward to sharing how your child has settled in school and their targets moving forward.

Uniform Sale

We are pleased to inform you that on Tuesday 16th November, during Parents Evening we will be holding a used school uniform sale, with items priced at just 50p each. We have a large selection of both boys and girls clothing in a range of sizes. If you are not attending the face to face meetings but are interested in buying some school uniform, please call the school office with details of what you are looking for and the size required and we will see if we have any items matching your requirements.

Christmas Preparations

We are currently preparing for Christmas, planning for different circumstances as we remain unsure about the level of covid restrictions in the coming weeks. A letter will be sent out next week with dates for your diary and further details of our plans, including Christmas dinner day, parties and, fingers crossed, Christmas concerts.

PE Lessons

PE is a statutory element of the national curriculum. As such, all children are required to join in lessons. Please ensure your child has a PE kit in school and that their earrings are removed on PE days. Please can we also remind you that only stud earrings are allowed in school.

Car Parking

Please can we politely ask you to be courteous to our neighbours both on Wakefield Road and Wingfield Road when bringing your child to school by car. Unfortunately, within the last few weeks we have received complaints about Parents parking inappropriately. Please do not use Hammertons car park as this is private land or block resident's driveways. New Lodge Club are happy for you to use their car park.

Hello Yellow Non Uniform Day

A HUGE thank you to everyone who supported our fundraising efforts on Hello Yellow day. It was truly fantastic to see the sea of yellow in school 😊. We raised over £120 for Young Minds, a very worthwhile cause. It was also a pleasure during the week to see children engaging in activities to help them relax, including meditation with Mrs Walch and other craft activities.

Barnsley School Catering Services

Our school catering provider has launched a brand new, three week winter menu this week and it looks scrumptious! You can now follow the Catering Service on social media...



Covid-19

Covid-19 continues to be prominent in our local community and we continue to take appropriate precautions in school, in line with Government guidance. We have had a relatively few number of cases in school but would ask that you continue to be vigilant with regards to your child's health and where necessary take them for a PCR test as we are unable to accept results from a lateral Flow Device (LFD).

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 8:45 – 11:45am FS1 afternoon – currently closed

FS2 8:50am – 3:00pm

KS1 8:50am – 3:00pm and KS2 8:50am – 3:05pm.

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

Miss Crossland will contact families if an absence has not been reported. This is because we have a statutory duty to ensure all children are safe. Our EWO this year will be Mr C. Buckle. His role is to work with school and families to offer support, advice and guidance where punctuality and attendance causes concern. In such cases, Miss Crossland may contact you by phone or you may be invited to attend an internal school panel with Miss Crossland and Mr Buckle. 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 from school.

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 Buckle, 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 Miss Crossland our Parent Support Advisor, Mr Buckle 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 Miss Crossland 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.