

Headteacher's Blog

Friday 4th February 2022
Special attendance issue
(Please see page 3
onwards).



Dear Parents, Carers and Friends,

Welcome to this weeks special Blog where there are our usual updates and also some important information regarding arriving in school on time (8.45 for children who do not arrive by bus) and attendance. While we ask children not to attend school if they are ill we are seeing a pattern of children being off for minor ailments, having non-urgent medical appointments in school time or even having Mondays and Fridays off school so that families can go on long weekends. While we appreciate that we have all been prevented from going on holidays and so on due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this needs to be balanced against how much time in school children have missed when school was not open to all pupils for the summer term of 2020 and spring term of 2021. From the end of this half term onwards any children who have attendance (non COVID related) lower than 95% parents/ carers will receive an attendance notice letter and if more than one is issued in a school year we are asked to get the Education Welfare Officer involved so that can contact you to support you and promote good attendance. We will continue to be mindful of children who have had to be off because of isolating with COVID 19 so that children who have been genuinely unwell are not unfairly penalised. If you are concerned about your child's attendance and would like further support from school please do not hesitate to speak to Mr Charlton or I when we are on Gate Duty or via telephone or email.

Best wishes,

Belinda Athey - Headteacher.

Schools Vs Climate Change

Children throughout the school have been taking part in activities to raise awareness of climate change. Pictured are some children from Early Years and Class 1 learning about re-cycling and using our school grounds to find out about the impact our immediate environment has on the animals around us. Class 2 took part in a virtual live storytelling session (it is also National Storytelling week this week) with author Dan Freedman who has written books such as Skills from Brazil and Kick Off.

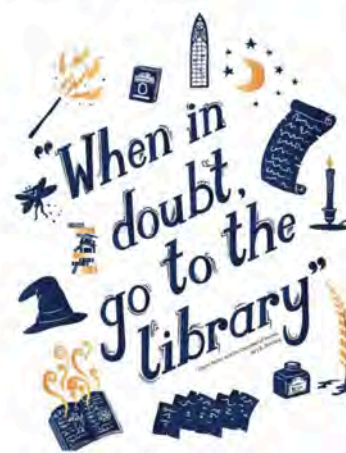
With reading in mind please don't forget to return your reading surveys back to school as soon as possible. The children in KS 1 and 2 have also been having their say about reading and we hope to share with you our actions from their feedback very soon.



While we are hopefully heading back to normality. We are looking to start our planned building projects to enhance our wonderful school!

We currently have a stone outbuilding which is ideal to convert into a library and well-being space for our pupils. If you are a builder who would be interested in pricing a quote for the works to be completed this school year please contact-

Admin@whittingham.northumberland.sch.uk to arrange to visit.



Fundraising and PTA

At the beginning of term I urged families to support **Your School Lottery** by purchasing a weekly ticket if they were able. Another way to support us is if you shop on Amazon - use **Amazon Smile** and choose Whittingham PTA as your chosen charity. If you do this every time you make a purchase a percentage of the purchase is paid into our school PTA account.

The same is the case if you load **EasyFundraising** onto your browser and click on the donation reminder that pops up.

It is even more relevant that we raise funds for school as we have lots of exciting building projects planned such as an outdoor learning space, improvements to our Daily Mile track as well as new library and well-being space and our PTA often provide vital financial support.



Reminder - World Book Day - Thursday 3rd March. We will be giving the children the opportunity to dress up as their favourite book character if they wish. However, we appreciate that some children may not wish to do so and that is absolutely fine. We will have reading based activities planned on that day so there will be lots of fun regardless!



COVID isolation reminder.

Day Zero is the day a positive test is received and Day One is the following day. On Day 5 your child needs to take a Lateral Flow Test if this is negative and on Day 6 they take a lateral flow test before coming into school which is also negative they can come to school on this day. If they are still testing positive they need to remain off school until they are testing negative. If your child is off school but does not have any symptoms or is not particularly unwell they will have home learning tasks set for them by their class teacher to help support their continued learning.

School Grounds in use.

As many of you will be aware, pre COVID our school grounds were open to our pupils after school to use and play in. We plan to have our new play equipment installed during the Easter Holidays and after that I will be discussing with the Governing Body whether our school grounds can be more fully used again. It is very important that our children have a safe space to play in as summer approaches. However, we also need to balance this with the fact that in the past when the school grounds have been open this way we have suffered a good degree of vandalism so some rules and restrictions may be enforced.

Well done team Whittingham!

A smaller than usual football team (the tournament games were played 6v6) headed out on Tuesday to play in the North Northumberland regional qualifiers for the Premier League under 11's competition. We had a fantastic time, winning 4 of our 6 games but unfortunately were beaten to a place in the North East regional heats. The Under 11's Alnwick Partnership League resumes in March. I have tried to contact a number of schools to see if we could have a hockey or netball league or even just some friendly matches but at the moment have not had a response. Hopefully this will soon change as we become used to being out of school and mixing with others.



Gung Hay Fat Choy!
Thank you to Mrs Arkle for preparing a special meal to celebrate Chinese New Year this week. Well done to Early Years who made a beautiful job of decorating the serving hatch.



Whittingham
Northumberland School



Grounds Maintenance Contract Review

We are in the position of reviewing our Grounds Maintenance / Gardening contract for our school grounds as this is done on a 4 year cycle. If you feel you can offer an excellent and competitive service please email:
Admin@whittingham.northumberland.sch.uk
for the attention of our Office Manager, Caroline Kennedy for further details and a copy of our work schedule.

EVERY MINUTE COUNTS



EQUALS

From Monday 7th February if your child in Year 1 - Year 6 arrives after 8.45 (unless the buses have caused the delay) please bring them to the main school entrance where they will be taken to their class by Mrs Athey or Mrs Kennedy. As you will be on school grounds a face covering will need to be worn. This ensures their safety as teaching and support staff will be no longer be waiting outside as we feel that the best use of staff is to be working directly with the children as early in the morning as possible.



LATENESS = LOST LEARNING

*(Figures below are calculated over a school year)

5 mins late each day

3 days lost!

10 mins late each day

6.5 days lost!

15 mins late each day

10 days lost!

20 mins late each day

13 days lost!

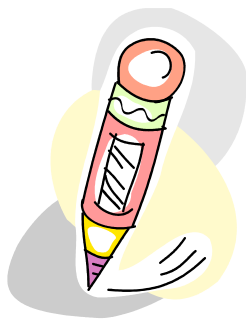
30 mins late each day

19 days lost!

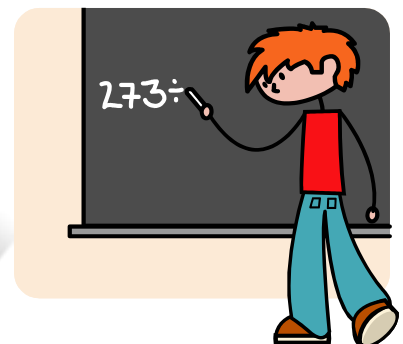
DANGER ZONE: AS FEW AS 19 MISSED DAYS over the school year reduces your chances of success. **YOUR SAT or GCSE results could drop by one grade across all subjects!**



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HOW MUCH LEARNING I MISS WHEN I'M ABSENT		
% ATTENDANCE	DAYS LEARNING MISSED	LESSONS MISSED
100	0	0
99	1.9	11.4
98	3.8	22.8
97	5.7	34.2
96	7.6	45.6
95	9.5	57
94	11.4	68.4
93	13.3	79.8
92	15.2	91.2
91	17.1	102.6
90	19	114



10 Tips to help you and your child make going to school easier

- 1 Help them get their school bag packed the night before
- 2 Make sure their uniform is ready especially after the holidays or weekend
- 3 Get them to bed at a reasonable time so they have a good nights sleep
- 4 Set the alarm clock early enough to allow plenty of time to get ready properly
- 5 Make sure they have some breakfast
- 6 Remind them to set off for the bus or start walking early enough so they won't be late: **punctuality is important**
- 7 Check to make they have everything they need — books, PE kit, bus fare, dinner money etc.
- 8 If your child is finding the work too hard speak to the teacher
- 9 Talk to your child about what they did in school today
- 10 If you or your child are unhappy about the way they are treated by staff or other pupils, contact the school straight away

- ◆ Every school in Northumberland has an allocated Education Welfare Officer who visits or contacts the school regularly.
- ◆ The school may refer your child to the Education Welfare Officer if their attendance or punctuality is causing concern. The Education Welfare Officer will then contact you either by phone, letter or with a home visit to discuss the school's concerns and how the attendance or punctuality can be improved.
- ◆ You can contact the Education Welfare Officer for your child's school via school.

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School Attendance Fact Sheet For Parents



**Everyone wants
the best start
for their child**

Some facts about school attendance...

The Government regard **95%** as the minimum satisfactory attendance for a secondary school pupil.

Keeping children away from school for no good reason is a criminal offence.

Some parents have been given a prison sentence for continually failing to send their child/children to school.

80% attendance is the same as having a day off every week.

Looking after other children or shopping for new clothes are not good enough reasons to keep your child off school. The schools will not authorise absences without a good reason for your child being off.

Most children should routinely have attendance rates of **97%** or more. This is the equivalent of 6 days absence a year. **BUT 100%** is achieved by many pupils every year in both primary and secondary schools.

If you take a two week holiday in term time your child's attendance will automatically be reduced to less than 95%.

Remember the only legally accepted reasons for not being in school are illness, holiday approved by school or a day of religious observance.

90% attendance is like having a day off every two weeks.

It is the school and not parents who decide whether or not to authorise absences. The parent's note is necessary because the reasons given need to be considered by the school.

If your child does not go to school regularly and you fail to work with the school and the Education Welfare Service then you may be fined up to £2500 or be given a Parenting Order.

Keep an eye out for early signs of your child not wanting to go to school, such as moodiness, headaches, or stomach aches, especially at important times like the transition into year 7 or after the school holidays. Act upon these signs **early**, please don't be frightened to speak to someone in school or ring the Education Welfare Officer allocated to the school.

If you take a 2 week holiday every year in secondary school your child will have missed 10 weeks worth of education by the time they sit their GCSE's (assuming they haven't had a single day off for illness).
If your child misses 10 weeks of school do you think it will affect their exam results?

A 2 week holiday each year in primary school means a total of 14 weeks teaching time missed— this could have a real impact on their basic literacy and numeracy skills.

The Government regard **95%** as the minimum satisfactory attendance for a primary school pupil.

Prolonged absence from school can lead to loneliness. It can make it harder for your child to get along with other children and make friends.