

February
2024



WITHYMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Newsletter

Dates for your Diary

Friday 8th March - Mother's Day assembly - Year 1 and 2
Wednesday 20th March – Parent Consultations
Thursday 21st March - Easter extravaganza - Pre-School and Reception
Thursday 21st March – Parent Consultations
Friday 22nd March– School closes for the Easter break
Monday 8th April – School opens for the Summer term
Thursday 2nd May – **School closed for Local Elections**
Monday 6th May – **Bank Holiday**
Monday 13th May – Thursday 16th May – Year 6 SATs
Friday 24th May – children break up for the half term holiday
Wednesday 19th June– Sports Day
Friday 19th July - End of term
Monday 22nd July – **INSET – school closed to pupils**

Children's Mental Health Week

Thank you to everyone that took part in our events at school during this week's Children's Mental Health Week. Like last year, it has proved to be such a successful and enjoyable week during which everyone has been involved in activities related to "My Voice Matters".

On Tuesday, and as part of this special week, we celebrated Safer Internet Day. During the day, learning for all year groups was based around the theme 'Inspiring change? Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online'. Safer Internet Day is the UK's biggest celebration of online safety and we take part every year because it is such an important aspect of our pupils' lives – we need to keep them safe and help them to keep themselves safe. As parents and carers there are a lot of resources and advice out there to help you if you have a concern. Please see the links below;

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

There are some things that can help support your child that are really simple to do – but at primary school age are really important....

- Ensure there are parental controls on your child's devices
- Check your child's device at least once per week – including photos, messaging and search history
- Talk to your child about how to stay safe online – see if they can tell you the rules that we teach them to follow in school



Mrs Smith , Mr Brown, & Mrs Coulter

I am sad to inform you that we will be saying goodbye to three members of staff at Easter – Mrs Sue Smith from Pre-School, Mr Brown from Year 6 and Mrs Coulter from Year 4. Mrs Smith and Mrs Coulter have both made the decision to retire, and Mr Brown is looking forward to starting a new venture. Although individual classes have been informed directly, I wanted to share this news with the whole Withymoor Primary School community as all three members of staff are known and loved by so many families.



Mrs Rose, who returned from maternity leave a few months ago, will be replacing Mrs Coulter in Year 4, and we are currently going through the process of recruiting new staff for Pre-School and Year 6.



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Absence and Lates

The Department of Education has made it clear that schools must be stricter when dealing with families whose children are persistently absent or late for school. A child's absence from school can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, if they are too poorly to attend or if they have a medical appointment that cannot be made outside school hours.

If your child is persistently absent or regularly late for school, whatever the circumstances, a referral may be made to Dudley Education Investigation Service, and this could result in a fine. Children are classed as 'persistently absent' when their attendance is below 90%.

If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, or to school on time, please contact the school office so we can offer some support.

Please note that school will not authorise holidays during the school term and that our policy is to refer such absences of 5 school days or more to Dudley Education Investigation Service who may issue a fine.

At the end of the day, if you are going to be late to collect your child, please let the school office know as soon as possible. If a child is not collected at the end of the school day, he/she will be taken to the school office where, if a message has not been received, attempts will be made to contact parents/carers using the listed emergency numbers.

For more information, please refer to our school attendance policy: <https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/withymoor-primary-school/UploadedDocument/bd13d355-111b-4585-a8c2-96e1aaa75bf2/revised-attendance-policy-may-2022.pdf>



School Lunches

When we return to school after half term, we will have a new catering provider - a company called Caterlink. As previously advised, Dudley School Catering will soon cease to operate, so we have had to find an alternative provider. Despite the change of provider, I am pleased to inform you that our lovely kitchen staff will remain the same and there will be no change to the way parents need to book school lunches for their children, so please continue to use the School Money app, as before. However, please note that from 19th February there will be a slight increase in the cost of school lunches; the new cost will be **£2.65** per lunch. Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, along with those children who qualify for means-tested free school meals, will continue to receive their entitlement.

To check if your child is eligible for free school meals, please visit:

[https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/child-related-support/#:~:text=Universal%20Credit%20\(you%20must%20have,to%20receive%20free%20school%20meals.](https://www.dudley.gov.uk/council-community/cost-of-living/child-related-support/#:~:text=Universal%20Credit%20(you%20must%20have,to%20receive%20free%20school%20meals.)

Mid Term Reports

As we break up for February half term holiday, your child will bring home their mid-term report. This is a short report that reflects the assessments carried out at the end of last term and early this term. A full report will be sent out in the summer. Please speak to your child's class teacher after half term if you have any queries or concerns about your child's progress.

Children naturally get upset when personal belongings such as lunch boxes, bags, bottles and stationery items are lost in school, especially when things cost a small fortune to replace. As children wear or bring similar or identical items into school, please make sure that **all** clothing, lunch boxes, bottles and other items are clearly labelled as this makes it so much easier to reunite children with their property.

Thank you for your support in this matter.



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PE Kit/Jewellery/Toys

We are seeing an increase in children coming to school on PE days wearing inappropriate clothing. Please ensure your child wears the correct Withymoor PE kit on PE days, including suitable footwear that meets our school requirements. Brightly coloured tops, crop tops, hoodies and trainers and clothing bearing logos or phrases in big writing are not allowed for PE. Also, all earrings must be removed prior to PE – either by the pupil in school or at home. Please note that we do not allow the small, flat, plastic ‘holder’ earrings that some children have started to wear for PE.



Details about our school uniform can be found here:

[withymoor-uniform.pdf \(primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://primarysite-prod-sorted.s3.amazonaws.com/withymoor-uniform.pdf)

Jewellery should not be worn by children on any day in school, apart from small stud earrings and a modest wrist watch. Please do not allow your child to come to school wearing a chain/necklace/bracelet etc.



Furthermore, please do not allow your child to bring a toy of any kind into school unless it is a special ‘toy day’. Toys can get damaged/cause arguments and distract children from their learning. School cannot be held responsible for toys that are broken or disappear. This includes Pokemon cards/football cards/dolls/cars etc.



Football Fundraiser

Thank you to those families who have been able to support this event which takes place in the week after half term. Although this will be for all children to enjoy, we do understand that not all families are in a position to support with sponsorship. This challenge is run by an outside agency that organises everything related to the event and is an opportunity for us to try something fun and different to raise money for our school. Whilst there are incentives provided by the company for those children who have raised money, all children, regardless of sponsorship, will be able to take part if they want to, and will receive a certificate, medal and children’s ticket for Gulliver’s Kingdom. There are lots of children in school who are excited about the challenge and we look forward to it being a great success and enjoyable for all.



Parking around school

Parking is an issue for many schools nationally. When dropping off and collecting by car, please park responsibly and avoid parking on the yellow lines/zig zags outside school or on the kerb opposite our school gate. We have had complaints recently about parking, including parking across people’s drives, and have been informed by the local Council that parking wardens will be patrolling around our school. Thank you for your co-operation.



I hope you have a restful February half term and thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing everyone back in school on Monday 19th February.



Alison Wootton
Headteacher

