

DATE
September
2023



A warm welcome back to all our children and families, and to all our new Reception children who have started school for the first time. It is great to see you all! I hope you had a wonderful summer.

We are so pleased to see how quickly all of the children throughout school have settled into their classes and we look forward to a happy, positive and successful year here at Withymoor.

School Apps



Please remember to use the app to pre-order school lunches by midnight at the latest for the following day. We apologise that there have been some problems with both the school app and the lunch app – hopefully these have now been rectified.

If you have any difficulties, please speak to our staff in the school office and they will assist you.



schoolmoney

Communication with teachers and other staff in school

Class DoJo is a great tool to use to message class teachers, and teachers aim to respond to messages within two working days.

Please keep Dojo messages brief and please do not use Class DoJo for urgent messages eg relating to safeguarding, changes to collection arrangements or to advise about a child's absence that day. For urgent messages/absences please call the school office on 01384 818530. School also has an email account that is checked regularly between 8.15am and 3.45 on school days. The address is: info@withymoor.dudley.sch.uk If you have a concern, please message/call or speak to your child's Class Teacher in the first instance. If your concern remains unresolved, an appointment should be made to speak to one of our Phase Leaders – Mr Brown (Year 3 – 6) or Mrs Dulson (Reception – Year 2). If a matter is still not resolved, please make an appointment to speak to Mrs Barrett or Mrs Billingham, who are both Assistant Headteachers in school.

To contact Phase Leaders or one of the senior leaders in school, please email or call the school office and a member of staff will get back to you to make an appointment. Please do not use Class DoJo to message senior leaders in school. If you wish to contact Mrs Wootton, Mrs Tong, Mrs Billingham or Mrs Barrett, please contact the school office by telephone or email.

Please note that Mrs Billingham (SENDCo – Special Needs Lead) works Monday – Thursday so cannot be contacted on a Friday.

Although we aim at Withymoor to get everything right and please everyone, this is not always possible. We understand that sometimes parents and carers might be unhappy about something in school, and we will always look at ways to resolve issues or concerns. When speaking to teachers or other members of staff, please do so with respect, as we are here to help you and do our very best for your child.



Finally, Governors have agreed that, from this term, I can reduce my hours so that I work 4 days a week instead of 5. The days I am in school will usually be Monday – Thursday, although this may change occasionally, according to the needs of our school. On my non-working days, (usually Fridays), Mrs Tong (Deputy Headteacher) will be in charge in my absence.

Thank you.

Alison Wootton
Headteacher

Dates for the diary

Our INSET days for the new academic year are as follows: Monday 4th September, Tuesday 5th September, Monday 6th November, Friday 9th February 2024, Monday 22nd July 2024
School will also be closed on Thursday 2nd May as Dudley have directed our school building to be used for voting in the Local elections.

October Half Term - 30th October - 3rd November
Christmas - 22nd December (last day of term) - 5th January
February Half Term - 12th February - 16th February
Easter - 22nd March - 5th April
6th May - Bank Holiday
Whitsun - 27th May- 31st May

Uniform

I am proud to see our pupils looking so smart when they come to school. Please support us by ensuring your child wears the correct Withymoor uniform every day, unless it's a MUFTI day or their birthday. This also includes on PE days when children can come to school in Withymoor PE uniform. Please note that brightly coloured tops or hoodies, or clothes with big logos/writing are not part of our uniform. Only black/dark-coloured pumps or trainers are suitable for PE days. Thank you for your co-operation with this.



Please note that if your child attends an after school club on a day that isn't their P.E day they will need to bring their sports clothes to change into at the end of the day.

Please label clearly all clothing, water bottles and lunch boxes.

Last year we had an **enormous** amount of unnamed items that we were unable to return to the owners.



Attendance

Just a reminder that we are unable to authorise absence for holidays during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Unfortunately, reasons given such as holiday cost, annual leave restrictions at work, birthdays etc are not classed as 'exceptional'. All unauthorised absence of 5 days or more – this can be a one-off absence, or cumulative over a number of weeks - will be referred to Dudley Education Investigation Services. This may in some circumstances result in fines being issued by the Local Authority.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year - Less than 30 Hours of Learning Lost

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best levels/grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school which will help in the future.

95%: 10 days absence a year - 50 Hours of Learning Lost

These pupils are less likely to achieve their target levels/grades and will start to find it difficult to maintain a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2-week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.

90%: 19 days absence a year - 95 Hours of Learning Lost

The Government classes pupils in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work and achieve their target levels/grades. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by Dudley Council, including the issuing of Penalty Notices and Fines.