



WHITEHILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Although February is a shorter month, we have been busy at school with lots of events to supplement our children's curriculum. On Friday 3rd February, the children came to school ready for NSPCC number day. The children had a great time exploring maths throughout the day. Children learnt about famous mathematicians and statisticians and how maths is so important for everyday life. The children discussed how maths is used in almost all jobs and they could see the value of learning about maths. It was a great day. Part of the day was, of course, to raise awareness of the NSPCC and the children learnt about the NSPCC and how it supports children and safeguards them. Through your generous donations we raised £250 which will go directly to this worthy cause.

On the last day of term, Year 1 celebrated Chinese New Year and looked amazing in their outfits. The whole school had a wonderful start to the morning with a Chinese lion dance in assembly. Year 1 parents were invited into school to see their children perform. It was lovely to see how many parents attended. Many thanks to Alfie's parents who supplied some wonderful Chinese food for the children to sample.

Year 3 visited a synagogue last week and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. It is so important our children get the opportunity to visit different places of worship and learn about different faiths. Reverend Sarah was in school yesterday leading an assembly on Lent. She has asked if we could continue to support the local food bank at St David's in Kingsthorpe. I would like to do this in the last week of term from 27th March. If you have tinned items, pasta, cereals, toiletries, these would be gratefully received.

World Book Day

On **Thursday 2nd March**, this week, Whitehills will be celebrating World Book Day. Children can come to school in their pyjamas and enjoy lots of activities linked to reading. Last week, I sent out a Parentmail with all the details you need. Some parents may have purchased outfits or made them in preparation for the day. If this is the case, the children can come to school in them. However, I do not want children coming in football kit as an option. Most children will be in pyjamas as will the staff.

Outside Equipment

If your child plays on any equipment before or after school, please could they be supervised by an adult. We do not have capacity at the start and end of the day to oversee the children. The wooden walk through area of the large swing bay by the EYFS base can become slippery when it is wet, so please take care.

I am pleased to inform you that we will have some further play equipment installed in the Year 3 and 4 playground around the large willow tree. We hope this work will start by Easter. I will keep you informed.

Attendance

It is imperative that children are in school daily as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. I have included information about attendance in this newsletter to remind all parents about the importance of regular attendance. As a parent, ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence and may result in the issue of Penalty Notices and fines, and eventually prosecution.



If your child is not well enough to attend school, we expect a parent to contact the school office as soon as possible giving a specific reason for the absence. Please ring 01604 843780 and give your full child's name and reason for their absence. Ring on each day of the absence. You may leave a message, but if you do so, please say your child's full name, their class and the reason for their absence.

Because we have a duty of care for safeguarding your child, we will contact you if we do not receive a call on a daily basis.

Government guidelines state that attendance figures of 90% or less is classed as 'persistent absence' and is a cause for concern. The government expects that in order to reach a child's full potential, they must attend school for a minimum of 96% of the year. At Whitehills Primary, we will now inform you each term of your child's attendance rates.

We will also notify you in writing if we feel that attendance should be improved to prevent further action being taken.

If your child attends school between 96% and 100%, they have the potential to achieve their best educationally, socially and emotionally. To put this into context, please see the table below:

0 days absence	100%	excellent
4 school days absence each year	98%	
7 school days absence each year	96%	Good
9 schools days absence each year	95%	Needs to improve and will be monitored
12 school days absence per year	94%	
1 month absence per year	90%	Cause for concern
2 months absence per year	80%	Serious cause for concern

Reducing continuity of education.

What does this really mean? Significant unauthorised absence percentages can result in a fixed penalty notice being issued. Also, secondary schools do look at attendance levels when offering places on appeal, in particular, the rates of unauthorised absence.

At Whitehills, lessons are built on prior learning and are sequenced. For those children who miss days from school, they are missing the continuum of learning within their class and this can put them at a disadvantage to their peers. Being ill may prevent your child from coming to school, but, if they can get out of bed and play or enjoy TV, or visit the shops, they should be in school. Coughs and sneezes are not an excuse to miss school and feeling tired is not an illness. Looking after your child is very important to us and we will, of course, contact you if we feel they should be at home. Should your child's attendance falls below 90% due to illness, we will ask that you provide a doctor's certificate / records of appointments to verify absences. If this is not provided, they will be classed as unauthorised.

Leave of absence is not permitted during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Taking a leave of absence without prior discussion or consent will result in an unauthorised absence. Family holidays will very rarely be considered as 'exceptional circumstances' and if they are five days or over, the local authority will be notified and a fixed penalty notice will be issued, which could be £120 per child, per adult.

Lessons start at 9.00am. Our doors open at 8.50am for all classes and learning activities are provided from this time. Some of our children are regularly late and this impacts not only on the learning of those children, but also of the others within the class.

We understand that there can be challenging times and so we offer our full support with any attendance issue; keeping us in the loop is the key. If there are problems, we will do everything that we can to make



attending school as simple as possible whilst ensuring your child is happy and reaches their full potential.

If there are ever any problems, please do not hesitate to come and see us.

Marathon Day

On the last day of term, 31st March, we are having a school marathon day. All classes will have an opportunity to run a ‘marathon’ to raise money for Cynthia Spencer Hospice and to support Mr Duffy in his training for the London Marathon. We will invite parents to take part with their child. I will send out a separate Parentmail with the details next week.

With best wishes,

Mrs James

Dates for your diaries

MARCH	
2 nd March	World Book Day – pyjamas
3 rd March	Pre-loved school uniform collection
8 th March	Year 5/6 Netball festival at Benham Sports Centre
13 th March	School individual photographs in hall
15 th March	Possible strike action
16 th March	Possible strike action
20 th March	Cricket engagement day Years 2-6
22 nd March	Quikstix Hockey Years 3 & 4
23 rd March	Termly Learning Conference – a Parentmail will follow with details on how to book.
27 th March	Food collection week for St David’s foodbank
28 th March	Termly Learning Conference - a Parentmail will follow with details on how to book.
29 th March	Year 5 visit to St Marks Church
30 th March	Young Leaders conference
31 st March	Whitehills children and parents sponsored marathon
31 st March	School closes for Easter and re-opens Tuesday 18th April
APRIL	
12 th April	Cut off day to book school meals for the week after Easter
17 th April	Training Day for all staff
18 th April	8.50am children return to school
21 st April	Pre-loved school uniform donation
25 th April	Year 5 & 6 SAS project
28 th April	Pre-loved school uniform collection before and after school

