



St Patrick's Catholic Primary Academy

Nova Lane, Birstall, West Yorkshire, WF17 9LQ

Telephone: 01924 423220

Website: www.stpatricksbirstall.co.uk

Headteacher: Mrs C Moulding

Deputy Headteacher: Miss E Gott

Email: office@stpatricksbirstall.co.uk



Wednesday 28th February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we start our new half term, I wanted to update you with some school information and celebrate some of the things our pupils have been doing over the Spring term so far.

Whole School Attendance:

Attendance Ladder



Overall school attendance September to February half term was 95.17%

C1 to Y6 was 96.46% (target to stay above 96%)

Attendance for each class from Tuesday 6th September to Friday 9th February:

Nursery 91.46%	Reception 94.54%	
Class 1 95.1%	Class 1-2 93.84%	Class 2 97.64%
Class 3 95.98%	Class 4 96.03%	
Class 5 94.85%	Class 6 94.70%	

Thank you for working hard to bring your children into school on time, each day. Following some attendance data analysis, I wanted to share the latest attendance information with you as we seem to have had a dip in attendance this academic year (as seen by the attendance figures above). I know that we had some winter illnesses just before Christmas that will have impacted however please let us now try to increase our whole school attendance so it is above 96% at the end of the academic year, if we possibly can.

The government expected attendance, that school is judged on, is 96% or higher and we currently only have three classes that are currently hitting those high attendance figures with some classes now dropping below 95%. Please let us all try hard over the next few months so that our whole school figure is above the expected 96%, continuing the great work that OFSTED recognised from our attendance over the last few academic years.

It is vitally important that in order to support all our pupils to reach the outcomes they are capable of and hit their potential, they are in school every day. Our levels of absence due to term-time holidays has again started to rise, please do not book holidays or extended weekends away in term time as this has a negative impact on children's learning and progress. All our staff are all working so incredibly hard to ensure your children have the very best learning opportunities possible every single day.

Please see the information below regarding leave of absence requests during term-time:

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME Guidance

Education (Pupil Registration, England) Regulations 2006 has been amended (as of 1 September 2013) to prohibit the Headteacher of a school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. The expectation of the Local Authority is that term time holidays should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be unauthorised and will lead to the issuing of a penalty notice (fine).





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Exceptional Circumstances

These are defined for schools as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis between the Headteacher, Safeguarding Governor who leads on attendance monitoring and support and .

The Headteacher will consider every above request individually but the following **will not** meet the criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half term holidays and may include refusal to attend wider family weddings and visits to see family abroad
- Difficulties getting parent leave from work during school holidays

Keeping your child healthy

This time of the year, is a good time for parents to familiarise themselves with some of the common illnesses that could disrupt children's studies or can even cause more serious illness during the colder months. The link below is to a blog by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) which covers some of the seasonal illnesses that tend to peak during winter, as well as steps you can take now and throughout the coming term to help protect your family, including from cold weather.

<https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2024/01/03/a-parents-guide-to-keeping-kids-healthy-this-school-year/>

It explores available vaccinations, how to recognise symptoms of common illnesses, and how to make informed decisions on whether your child is well enough to attend school or whether they should remain at home to get better and stop the spread of infection. I have added some of the information below in our newsletter, but please

take the time to look at it. Over the last few weeks we have had different childhood infections, such as chicken pox, slapped cheek and some vomiting, as you would expect in school so I wanted to share some guidance and support material so that we can all work together to keep our children and families healthy.

This table, from the UKHSA, shows the suggested actions for different childhood illnesses.

When should my child return to school/ childcare?				
Chicken Pox	Conjunctivitis	Diarrhoea or Vomiting	Flu	Glandular Fever
When scabs are dry	No need to stay out*	48 hours after the last episode	5 days after start of illness	No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth	Head Lice	Impetigo	Measles	Mumps
No need to stay out*	No need to stay out*	When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics	4 days after rash appears	5 days after swelling appears
Scabies	Scarlet Fever	Slapped Cheek	Threadworms	Whooping Cough
After first treatment	24 hours after starting antibiotics	No need to stay out*	No need to stay out*	5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness

This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document.

*No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.

remind the children about washing hands properly for 20 seconds, using tissues for coughs and sneezes, and stay away from others when sick, whether in school or at home.





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There are other types of illnesses to watch out for at this time of year, including bacterial infections such as scarlet fever. Although we see cases throughout the year, cases usually peak in the late winter and early spring. The most common symptoms of scarlet fever include sore throat, fever, swollen neck glands, a bumpy rash on the chest and tummy with a sandpaper-like feel, flushed cheeks and "strawberry tongue". If you suspect your child has scarlet fever, contact your local GP. Stay at home for 24 hours after the first dose of antibiotics, or until the child feels well enough for school.

Viral infections such as chicken pox can also spread in schools at any time of year and are highly contagious. It usually gets better by itself after one to two weeks. Chickenpox has a sudden onset with fever, runny nose, cough and a generalised rash. The spotty rash starts with fluid filled blisters which then scab over and eventually drop off. The blisters crust up and fall off naturally within one to 2 weeks. Pupils cannot be in school until all blisters are scabbed over, with no new appearing and they feel well enough.

There can also be cases of slapped cheek syndrome around at this time. The most common symptoms are noticed a few days into the infection. A slightly high temperature (fever) of around 38°C, a runny nose, sore throat, headache, possible upset tummy and feeling generally unwell. Some adults may also feel joint pain or stiffness. After a few days, a distinctive bright red rash on both cheeks ('slapped cheeks') normally appears. By the time this rash develops, the condition is no longer contagious. The rashes will normally fade within a week or two.

Across the UK, we are currently seeing the number of cases of measles and mumps increasing. Measles in particular can be a very serious disease for some children and tragically it can even cause fatalities (although this is very rare). The initial symptoms of measles are similar to those for a cold (runny nose; a cough; sneezing; a high temperature; and red, sore, watery eyes) this is followed by white spots in the mouth a few days later, and by a rash on the face and body a few days after that. It is very unlikely to be measles if your child has had both doses of the MMR vaccine or they have had measles before. If your child has not had the vaccination please consider it and contact your GP.

Sacrament of Confirmation for pupils in Class 6: **CONGRATULATIONS**



Congratulations to the **19 pupils** in Class 6 who celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation with Bishop Marcus on Thursday 1st February at Holy Spirit Church. We are very proud of each of them, who worked very hard on their preparation, both in school and at home with their families.

Thank you to Miss Gott and Mrs Walker who made sure the pupils were ready and well prepared for such an important sacrament in their faith journey.





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Sacrament of Reconciliation for pupils in Class 3:



32 pupils in our Class 3 are preparing to receive the very special sacrament of Reconciliation. They were presented to St Patrick's parish on Saturday 20th January. The pupils are doing very well with their preparation which takes place in school on a Friday afternoon – if I could please remind parents to make sure the preparation booklets are in school every Friday for the session. The pupils will celebrate the sacrament with father Eamonn, in school using our beautiful prayer room, during the morning of Thursday 14th March.

Let us all keep these pupils and their families in our prayers during this time.

Staffing updates:



Mrs Justine Dunne, who has been a very valued member of our staff team for nearly 9 years, has made the decision to further a new opportunity in a different career. We would like to say a huge thank you and good luck to Mrs Dunne as she looks ahead to beginning a new and exciting chapter in her life when she leaves on Thursday 7th March. We know she has touched the lives of many pupils and families across her time here. We will miss her greatly and hope that we will see her again at different school events. I have no doubt you will all join with the staff and governors to thank her immensely for the years of dedication she has given to the pupils of St Patrick's – we wish her all the very best. **THANK YOU**

Mrs Tracey Marsden, who has been a very valued member of our staff team for nearly 9 years, has made the decision to further a new opportunity in a different career. We would like to say a huge thank you and good luck to Mrs Marsden as she looks ahead to beginning a new and exciting chapter in her life when she leaves on Friday 22nd March. We know she has touched the lives of many pupils and families across her

time here. We will miss her greatly and hope that we will see her again at different school events. I have no doubt you will all join with the staff and governors to thank her immensely for the years of dedication she has given to the pupils of St Patrick's – we wish her all the very best. **THANK YOU**





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We will be advertising the different EYFS ETA and 1-1 support opportunities. These are advertised on a new website called MyNewTerm (following the BPS Trust recruitment procedures) and you can also find the adverts on the school website, under vacancies. If you know anyone who may be interested in these opportunities please advise them to look at our website where there is a link to the MyNewTerm adverts.

Our Sporting Opportunities and successes across the Spring term so far:

- KS1, Y3/4 and Y5/6 Sports hall Athletics Festivals at Batley Sports centre
- Kirklees Cross Country finals – 49 pupils across KS2 attended the finals
- Year 5 Sports Leader training
- Local Sports Champions event at 10 Downing Street, London
- Y3/4 friendly football match against Orchard Academy, Dewsbury
- A KS1 and KS2 Multi-skills sessions supported by North Kirklees Sports Partnership
- Y5/6 Netball Festival at BSC
- Y5/6 friendly football against Holy Spirit Catholic Academy
- KS2 Blessed Peter Snow Trust football tournament at St John Fisher's
- 7 pupils went to the West Yorkshire Cross Country final – WOW! Super achievement!
- Y6 boys Spen Valley League football against Hightown
- Y6 girls cricket festival at BSC



Well done to everyone who has represented St Patrick's in sporting events over the across Spring term so far – what a range of opportunities! Boys and Girls, you always try your very best, work very well in a team, show super sporting skills and are great ambassadors for sportsmanship, well done and thank you!. It is of course lovely to win, but the most important thing is to have fun, enjoy the experience and represent our school in the very best way. We always receive such wonderful feedback from the organisers due to the behaviour and sportsmanship of our pupils – well done!

Please do take a look at the Sports and PE page of our website with lots more information about these events:

<https://www.stpatricksbirstall.co.uk/ourschool/our-curriculum-1/physical-education>

We also have our page on X (formally known as twitter) that Mrs Abbott likes to celebrate our events and accomplishments on – please do have a look by following [@StPatricks_PE](https://twitter.com/StPatricks_PE).

If you enjoy helping at these events and would be happy to become a St Patrick's Sporting volunteer, helping at events, please contact Mrs Abbott or the school office.





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Phonics Workshop for Parents of Pupils in EYFS and Year 1:

On Wednesday 31st January we held a phonics workshop for parents of pupils in EYFS and Year 1 which was well attended – thank you for coming.

Phonics is such an important part of the way we teach pupils to read and write and has far reaching implications to pupils life-long learning. Mrs Cheetham (Phonics leader) and Miss Gott (Deputy Head) were able to support parents with the phonics curriculum, showcasing an example phonics sessions and making sure parents build the knowledge and understanding needed to support their child at home.

Please remember there is a link to the parent Little Wandle resources on the phonics page on our website I know how much the parents valued the workshop and the quality resources that were used, which will be available on the phonics page of our school website for anyone who was unable to make the workshop:

<https://www.stpatricksbirstall.co.uk/ourschool/our-curriculum-1/our-phonics-learning>

Spring Parent Consultations

Week beginning Monday 11th March

A letter is being sent out on Thursday afternoon this week, **across the school jotter app**, detailing the up-coming Parent Consultations which will take place in school as face to face meetings this time.

Please make sure you have sight of the letter and message your child's class teacher with your choice of day and time slot options so that the bookings can be made in good time. **Each class have different days and times so please do look carefully.**

I am sure you will enjoy the opportunity to come into school for the meetings and see you child's classroom. As we did, KS2 pupils **only** are able to join those discussions, if parents would like that, to ensure they understand what is being expected of them both by school and their families, working in partnership. If you have a child in EYFS or KS1 please make alternative childcare arrangements wherever possible to allow quality discussion in the meeting. Thank you.



I hope everyone had an enjoyable half term break and we look forward to seeing the pupils in many further exciting events and opportunities as we go through the second half of the year.

With kind regards

Mrs Clare Moulding (Headteacher)

