

St Aidan's Newsletter

September 2022



Welcome Back

A very warm welcome back to you all. I hope you've all enjoyed a restful and relaxing Summer holiday. It has been wonderful to see the children back in school and there is a real buzz around their classrooms which I love.

Recruitment/Staffing Changes

I am delighted that we now have a permanent staffing structure in place as announced prior to the school holidays. In the last week of term, we hired two new EYFS Educator apprentices, Miss Halliwell and Miss Lawson. They will be working in our EYFS unit. Both are very keen to 'learn their trade' in our fantastic Nursery and Reception classes and I'm sure you'll make them feel very welcome. Both are also former pupils, so they know the school well.

Building Work/Boiler Work

Over the summer, the heating system and boiler works have been given a much-needed upgrade at a cost of almost £300,000. This has been very heavily subsidised and organised by the Estates and Finance team from the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust and we are very grateful that this much needed work has been carried out.

Unfortunately, the work has proved more challenging than anticipated and – although we expected the work to run on into the new term – it will likely continue until half term in October. Fortunately, the vast majority of work inside the classrooms has been completed and the focus will now shift into the boiler house and we have put plans in place to minimise disruption to learning.

This will mean that areas of the car park will be out of use for the workmen and skips etc. Please bear this in mind when dropping children off in the morning and ensure that they are supervised in the line prior to me meeting them. Due to site access over the summer, it also means that some of the other work I had planned to have done around the school/yard has had to be postponed. I'll update you further when I have more to share.

School Uniform

The children looked incredibly smart when they returned this week. Please ensure that correct school uniform – including PE kit - is be worn at all times.

Just a reminder that any earrings should be removed before entering school. Clear plastic retainers may be worn to preserve the holes.



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I am also aware that there have been a few delays regarding delivery of new school uniform and a few parents have spoken to me regarding this. I am going to speak to the supplier about these issues and see if there is anything that can be done to chase up any outstanding orders.

I am also considering alternatives in a bid to make our uniform as cost effective as possible for parents. A few parents have approached me in regards to licensing the school logo to an embroidery firm and allow parents to have the logo embroidered on generic, unbranded garments purchased from supermarkets etc. If this is something that would make our uniform better value for money, and there is a demand for it, I will certainly consider it.

Please remember, we have a significant amount of pre-owned school uniform, most of which is in excellent condition, stored in the caretaker's bungalow. If you would like to request some uniform – free of charge – please speak to Mrs Shortt or Mrs Jobling and they will be happy to help.

Cost of Living

Everyone will be aware of the cost of living crisis at the moment and I am sure that it is affecting people in different ways. As a school, we are always there to support our children and their families if they are struggling or need help. The cost of school uniform, trips, activities, clubs, school lunches, equipment for school etc. will never be a barrier to our children succeeding and achieving all they are capable of.

If you are struggling with any of these – or other problems -caused by the rising cost of living, please speak to a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the office staff, or email in confidence and we will look to see what we can do to support you.

Leave of Absence/Attendance

Our attendance target for this year is 97% - higher than our previous attendance levels have been historically.

I would ask that parents/carers only ever keep children off school as a last resort and are thoughtful around the scheduling of appointments to minimise disruptions to learning. Please note that, in line with our new attendance policy, no leaves of absence will be granted during term unless in exceptional circumstances. A family holiday taken during term time



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due to costs or shift patterns, will not qualify as exceptional circumstances. This has been the case for this entire year and will continue to be so.

I would also ask that children continue to arrive punctually.

Have you thought.....?

Minutes missed	Time lost in a week	Time lost over a school year
5	25 minutes	3 days
10	50 minutes	6.5 days
15	1 hour and a half	10 days
20	1 hour 40 minutes	13 days
19 days	2 hours and a half	19 days

Personal Development

At the end of last year, I asked you to provide us with some feedback relating to the skills you wish the children to attain outside of the classroom. We have used these to support us in designing our enrichment visits and trips etc. This year, we will be encouraging our children to:

Aspire to Inspire

It is our goal to ensure that all of our children have the belief and understanding that they are able to change and influence the world around them. Their talents and abilities should shine for all to see and, through sharing them, they should be role models for others, encouraging them to do the same.

Our curriculum enrichment will focus on giving children experiences which nurture them in their ability to do this.

From your feedback, the skills that you wished children to leave us with were:

Teamwork Confidence Resilience
Independence Leadership



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Our enrichment activities this year will look at building these skills for our children so they are able to inspire others.

This will begin on Friday, when our Year 6 children will be visited by their local MP, Ian Lavery. He will be speaking to the children about how he makes a difference for his local community in parliament and will come in very handy for any our Year 6 children who will be seeking election as Head Boys/Girls.

Clubs

Information regarding which clubs are available will be sent separately to this newsletter. Booking and payment will remain the same and there should be no cash brought into school wherever possible. There will be more on offer this year, particularly for children in KS1. They will begin from Monday 19th September – apologies for the delay, but not being able to access school until this week has set us back a few days.

Parent/carer feedback

At the end of the year I asked you for any suggestions that you feel you would improve the school. We serve you as a community and we always want to give our families the best possible experience during their time with us. Following the consultation, the following will be introduced this year:

You said...

More recognition for the children who don't always 'stand out' as much as others.

More extra-curricular opportunities for children in KS1.

We did...

The last assembly of each half term will now be our 'Unsung Heroes' assembly where we will celebrate the children who always follow the rules, try their best and go about all they do in a quiet and understated way.

We will also now publish a Google Form each week for any children who you wish to nominate for doing something fantastic outside of school. They may be the children who are too shy to share it on their own and might just like a mention from me or their name in the 'Stars of the Week' bulletin.

This year, we will have our Family Fitness club ran by the NUFC foundation open to parents/carers of children in KS1 where children can learn about health, lifestyles and take part in some sports activities.

Miss Dunning is also running 'Mini Movers,' a drama, dance and performing arts club for children in Year 1 and Year 2!



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I'm also looking into the possibilities of starting a running club for children and their parents/carers. It would be open to all abilities, but children would have to be accompanied.

More notice for school events.

All dates for this term are published alongside this newsletter, outlining all opportunities for any parent/carer involvement. We are arranging some really exciting trips and activities this year. We will always endeavour to give at least 8 weeks' notice to you all.

PTA

We are looking for volunteers to restart the PTA which had always been such a supportive group in our school. Unfortunately, there has been a drop off in interest since the pandemic. We envisage the group working alongside the School Council to raise money through events to support the school. If you feel you would like to be involved, please speak to myself or Mrs Robertson.

School Trips

We are currently looking into organising a number of school trips for the year. As mentioned above, we will always endeavour to give at least 8 weeks' notice to you for any trip. We are now in a position to confirm the following, bigger trips for the year: Year 6 residential to Robinwood in July, Year 5 trip to London (date tbc) and Year 3 and Year 4 Camp Out in June. As these trips may be more expensive than others, we are going to set up a payment schedule where you will be able to make smaller, regular payments to school to avoid having to pay a large chunk at one time. More information about this will be communicated in the next couple of weeks. Cost will never be a barrier to any child attending a school trip so please contact the school office or myself should you wish to discuss anything.

Thank you again for your continued support. It has been lovely to see the children back into their routines again. Their behaviour – as always – has been immaculate during the first few days back. We have had a few new starters to school this term in a few year groups and all of the children have made them feel so welcome. I'm incredibly proud to see how our children always adapt to this and make anyone new feel part of our community.



Mr M Moran

Headteacher



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