

Lydgate Junior School

NEWSLETTER

December 2018



Diary Dates

14 th December, 9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Y4 pupils' performance of Cinderella in the school hall, all parents are very welcome
17 th December, 3.15 p.m.	FOLA table top sale of unclaimed items of school uniform
19 th December, 7 p.m.	Carol Concert, with Nativity - St Mark's Church, Broomhill
21 st December	School closes for the Christmas holiday
7 th January 2019	School re-opens for the Spring term
10 th January 2019	All Y6 visiting 'Crucial Crew'

Autumn half-term highlights

We welcomed Ms Black, a teacher from Birkdale School, into assembly where she talked to us about Jewish customs, particularly the Hanukkah festival. Earlier in the term we also heard from a visitor who talked about Libyan traditions. We have really enjoyed hearing from our visitors: do you have experience of other faiths, particularly their celebrations? Would you be willing to share your customs with the children? Please contact Mrs Farrell if you think you can help.

Congratulations to our new school council representatives, who were elected this term. Thank you to all the children who put themselves forward, we were incredibly impressed by their campaigns and speeches. We borrowed some 'proper' polling booths and boxes from the council to add some authenticity to the voting procedure.

Year group highlights

Year 3 have been learning about Ramadan and Eid; they made (and then ate) 'diggers' which are a traditional Eid food.

In their science work they enjoyed planning and carrying out investigations about how far a toy car can travel on different surfaces.

They watched videos and read eye witness accounts of the Sheffield blitz in 1940 and imagined what it would have been like for them.

In maths they have started using the times tables 'Rock Stars' website to practice multiplication tables. Each child has created their own rock star character – they can use their login to practice at home too.

Year 4 are particularly proud of their children's sporting achievements this half term. Y4S/S and Y4S/D have completed their swimming lessons, with great success. They really impressed their teachers with the progress that they made. Now that Y4HN and Y4AW have started their lessons, we are sure that the rest of the Y4 children will do the same!

There are also many fantastic cross-country runners in Y4. Well done to those children who have been attending the cross-country races and doing a great job of not only representing our school, but also demonstrating great sporting ability. A big thank you to their parents too for braving the weather conditions and dealing with the very muddy kit afterwards!

Earlier this half term, a group of Y4 children attended an inter-schools dodgeball competition. They did brilliantly and came 2nd (only missing out from the top spot by 1 point) A fantastic effort - well done to all involved.

Finally, they are really looking forward to their production of 'Cinderella' for all Y4 parents and carers. They have been working really hard and are just adding the finishing touches. The teachers do really appreciate

all the support the children have been given in learning their words and getting costumes. Do come along before we start at 9:15am for refreshments, where there will also be the opportunity to donate to their chosen charity (CICRA).

Year 5 learned how to make bread as part of their DT topic. They tasted lots of different flavours and took inspiration from this to design and then bake their own recipe. They discovered that there are lots of star bakers in Y5!

They also attended the annual Sheffield University Christmastime Science Lecture for Children at the Octagon Centre where they learned about 'The Life of Birds' from Prof Tim Birkhead.

Finally they had the opportunity to take part in a 'Virtual Velodrome' challenge where they rode on a static bike and great fun was had by all.

Year 6 have been busy this half term! They enjoyed the Macbeth performance from the Young Shakespeare Company.

They have also done a history project on The Blitz spirit and propaganda (working with Ms McCullough from Tapton School).

The Y6 athletics team are through to the city finals of the schools' athletics tournament. We are incredibly proud of them, not only for their success in the early stages but also for the team spirit and commitment they displayed throughout. They will compete in the final in January – we wish them every success!

Y6 would also like to thank all the families who contributed to the bags2school collection. Money raised will be put towards the cost of the Edale residential trip in June.

Packed lunches and playtime snacks

Several children in the school have a nut allergy which can cause a severe reaction, in some cases. Could I therefore ask parents not to include nuts or nut products in their child's packed lunch or snack, to reduce the risk of cross-contamination? Thank you for your help with this.

Music news

Thank you to everyone who helped to make our choir performance at the Breast Cancer Care charity concert so wonderful. We were thrilled to take part and are very proud of our very talented school choir. Thank you to all the parents, grandparents and friends who attended and who helped to raise money for the charity by buying tickets.

The choir are still busy rehearsing for our carol concert on 19th December – everyone is very welcome to attend.

Please note that there will be no choir practice on Thursday 20th December. It will resume on Thursday 17th January 2019. Enthusiastic new members are very welcome, please talk to the school office if your child would like to join.

Foodbank collection

Once again we will be collecting donations for the local foodbank during the week of 17th – 21st December.

We would be very grateful for any of the following:

Milk (UHT or powdered); sugar; long life fruit juice; soup; pasta sauces; cereals; tea bags; instant coffee; instant mashed potato; rice and pasta/noodles; canned meat/fish; canned fruit or vegetables; jam; biscuits; snack bars; chocolate; toiletries.

Thank you very much.

Clean air area around school

You may have noticed some new road signage around school. On Manchester Road and Shore Lane, the council have put up 'no idling engines' signs. This forms part of their Clean Air Strategy. Enforcement Officers can issue motorists with a £20 fixed penalty notice if engines are not switched off.

Attendance at school

Average attendance for this term stands at 98%. I am delighted to report that 282 pupils (from a total of 481) have 100% attendance; 15 pupils, unfortunately, have attendance of less than 90%. This may well be for genuine reasons, however it means that they are classed as a “persistent absentee” by the Local Authority. What this means in practical terms is that the attendance officer is watchful of any absence, and the reasons for it. Letters are sent home to inform the parents of schools’ concerns regarding their child’s attendance. Parents may be asked to provide evidence of medical appointments to support the reason for the absence and we may ask parents to attend meetings to discuss the problem, to agree a way forward to improve the situation.

Parents should also be aware that holidays taken in term time (even if authorised due to exceptional circumstances) add to their child’s absence percentage. If parents fail to ensure their child’s regular attendance at school, this may result in a fixed term penalty notice.

Ultimately we know that pupils who have attendance of less than 90% generally do less well at school.

On a similar note, several pupils regularly arrive late. The teacher on duty blows the whistle at 8.35 a.m. and the children then go into their classrooms so they have 10 minutes to hang their coats, put away their bags and lunchboxes and say good morning to their friends before 8.45 a.m. when the register is taken and teaching begins.

The problem with children arriving late is not just that they miss the register and any important information that is given out about the day; I am just as concerned about the disturbance to the rest of the children in the class and to the teacher who invariably has to then repeat everything that s/he has already said.

Round table discussions

Thank you to those parents who joined me recently to discuss the subject of school opening during adverse weather conditions. After listening to their opinions and answering their questions, I can now publish our policy and procedures:

As a general rule, you can assume that Lydgate Junior School will be open, and remain open, even during times of adverse weather. We have been able to do so continually for at least the last ten winters and so expect to do so this winter unless some significant degradation occurs to site, services or staffing.

We will do this in order to provide continuity of education for the children, and so parents can have confidence in being able to continue with their daily plans and work commitments.

We give the safety of our whole school community the greatest priority and accord it serious consideration at such times. We do not open without careful reflection and survey of site conditions, sufficient staffing and proper services.

The vast majority of our school staff live fairly close to school and so can and do get in on time even on days with poor or challenging weather conditions. It may be that some of our staff has difficulty in reaching us on time for the start of the school day: if this happens, it may result in some disruption to the normal timetable. Staff do, however, make every reasonable effort to be here on time (as parents and pupils do). We have never in the last ten years had a class without a member of staff with them at the beginning of the day. Our long experience tells us that we will almost certainly be able to open.

If there is a decision NOT to open, or to open later than normal, we will text parents, post on the school [website](#) and on the council website (opt in to receive alerts [here](#)) and use local radio. The city council website is the one central information point for school closures.

If there is no announcement of closure, parents / carers should assume school is open as normal.

Please do not telephone school to find out if we are open as it ties up a member of staff when we need to be planning and preparing for the day. You do not need to telephone to ask – we either will not have made

a decision at that point (hence no announcement) or we have decided to open as normal. Be assured that we will inform you if we do have to close or not open as usual.

Many families have children at more than one school. The other school might make a different decision about opening to us – maybe they will open later. You might decide it is not practical to get to both schools for different start times and so only make one journey. A late arrival here will be understood (even though it will be marked as 'late').

We do understand that some parents, especially those who do not live within easy walking distance, may feel that it is unsafe to try to get children to school. In these situations, please make your own decision with the best interests of your child in mind. Whatever that decision is, we will be supportive. However, all pupil absence will be recorded as such. In line with the Attendance Policy a decision about authorising absence is made by the Headteacher.

Please ring (0114 2669500) or email enquiries@lydgate-jun.sheffield.sch.uk to let us know about absence.

Other than in highly exceptional circumstances school will not close during the course of the school day. There will always be supervision of children until the end of the normal school day. We would never allow children to go home without clear parental consent, which includes going with another parent / carer, unless we have specific agreement.

We would like all children to leave at the normal end of school time, where possible. Please only consider collecting them early if you are unable to ensure your child is collected safely at the normal time.

If you are going to be late, or are unable to make arrangements for someone else to collect, please telephone to let us know and we will obviously provide safe accommodation inside school until you arrive.

We will do our best to enable the children to play in the snow if it is safe. The children are asked not to make slides on snow or ice in the playground, but our intention will be to go outside, if only for a portion of the breaks. We ask, therefore, that you send your child appropriately dressed to play out in the snow (perhaps even provide a change of clothes) and that they have waterproof footwear and a coat.

We may let the children out when there is ice on the playground; we may cordon off areas deemed unfit to use, we will provide necessary additional supervision and we will ask the children to be extra careful.

We hope that the children can enjoy the snow while ensuring that their education is not disrupted.

Well done to...

Oscar (Y3), who spent a day at the zoo looking after the animals. He cleaned out their enclosures and was an extra pair of hands – he told us, his ambition is to be a zookeeper.

We wish everyone a very happy and restful holiday. School closes at 3:15 p.m. on 21st December and re-opens for the spring term on Monday 7th January 2019.

Yours sincerely



Headteacher