

Weekly School News Roundup

Withycombe Raleigh C of E Primary School



Date: 5th January 2024

Mrs Emma Jones, Headteacher
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News from your Headteacher

Happy New Year! I hope that you and your family had a lovely Christmas with lots of tasty food and quality time with one another. The children have come back into school full of energy and excitement and it has been wonderful to welcome everyone back. It is going to be a fun-packed and busy term so please ensure you keep abreast of what is going on via our website, Facebook and newsletters as well as the other communications sent out by text and email.

Attendance and Lateness

We monitor attendance and lateness regularly and I am becoming increasingly concerned about the high numbers of late marks and persistent absentees. Research undertaken on attendance in schools, clearly shows that good attendance at school has a positive impact on children's academic achievements. A good level of attendance is essential for children to make the best progress in their academic, social and emotional development. Teachers regularly comment that children who are persistently absent (Attendance below 90%) find it difficult to catch up on missed learning and often do not meet their targets for the year. Everyone at Withycombe wants the very best for the children at our school and we want every single child to have the best chance to reach their full potential. When children are late to school this also creates significant problems for both staff and children as lateness causes delays to lessons and disrupts our daily routines.

Reporting absences

We operate a first day response system which requires parents/carers to ring the school absence line on the first day to report a child's absence. It is beneficial to school if parents can inform us via the absence line as early as possible. When you leave a message, please state your child's name and class along with a short description of why they are absent, including any symptoms. If we do not receive notification of a child's absence, we view this as a safeguarding concern and therefore the school office will make contact via text to ask a parent/carer to confirm the reason why their child is absent from school – it may also be necessary for us to make a home visit to check on the wellbeing of an absent child.

Medical Appointments

We ask please that medical appointments in the school day are avoided whenever possible. We understand that sometimes there may be a medical emergency where this is unavoidable. If you cannot avoid a medical appointment in the school day, parents/carers should inform the school office at the earliest opportunity, providing verification via a formal letter or an appointment card. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that any application for Term Time Absence must be made using the Absence Request Form and submitted to the office at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Guidance is clear that Headteachers should not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, this includes holidays.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill and we encourage children to attend school on time each day. If a child is just 10 minutes late each day, this equates to 50 minutes per week of missed learning. Over the year, these late arrivals will have a detrimental effect on the child's learning just as if they were absent from school.



Growing

Happy

Caring

Hearts

and

Minds



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The school gates open at 8:40am and they are closed promptly at 8:50am. Learning starts at 8:50 once the registers have been taken. Any child arriving after the register has been closed will be recorded as (L) Late. We ask that parents and carers make every effort to get their child to school on time to avoid missing out on important learning.

We employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance and we will continue to monitor termly attendance. Attendance concern letters will be issued to children with attendance below 90%.

Thank you in advance for working with us on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like some support or advice about how we can work together to improve your child's attendance or punctuality.



Collective Worship:

We gather as a community for collective worship that is inspiring, invitational and inclusive, reflecting the fact that we are a part of a diverse school family and the wider church community. This term, we begin a series of themes based on wise words – all of them from the Bible, all of them ancient advice about how to live, but in our modern world, they often sound surprisingly up to date!

Have a lovely weekend

Mrs Jones



Safeguarding

At Withycombe Raleigh Primary School we take our safeguarding duties very seriously. If you have any concerns about a child please let us know. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Deputy Headteacher Mike Smith. If you're worried about your own or about someone else's safety please contact the MASH Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub on 0345 155 1071, or email mashsecure@devon.gov.uk.

Our school website has pages dedicated to safeguarding information and updates, as well as a page about online safety. This week's update from National Online Safety is about *Managing Screen Time*, which might be helpful for families who have new devices in the home after Christmas. We'll include this along with many other useful guides on the website in case you'd like to access them.

Mr Smith
Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Contact us:

Please remember that there are many ways you can contact school staff if you have any queries. You can email your child's class teacher directly using the class email account - a reminder that you'll find these on your year group page on the school website, via <https://www.wrpschool.org/homeconnect>
Alternatively, you can email admin@wrpschool.org, or call us on 01395 263397.

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Wellbeing Update : Starting your day in a calm way

Returning to school can be an exciting time for many children but it can also create some natural anxieties. Here is a reminder of our top ideas for helping children re-engage with their schooling experience in a positive way. These are useful for any anxious child but particularly for those children who struggle to leave their parent/carer at the school gate.

So, how can we start the day in a calm way and reduce our child's anxiety?

It starts with the night before! Review your child's bedtime routine. Is it as calm as it could be? Predictable activities help - tea, talking time, bath, story, bed.

Plan ahead. Prepare as much as possible the night before eg. get uniform ready, pack lunch done, breakfast laid out for the morning - anything to reduce the busyness of the morning.

Create a visual timetable or checklist. Children function best with a predictable routine. Create a checklist together with your child about what needs to happen next - get dressed, have breakfast, brush teeth, toilet, get bag ready, put shoes on, out the door.

Using pictures can help young children.

Reward reluctant or anxious children when they are fully ready to leave the house. Keep rewards simple, cheap and short – a 5-minute cartoon or read a short story to them.

Be positive yourself. Talk about all the good things that your child enjoys at school, no matter how small. Keep conversation light, short and upbeat. If your child sees that you are ok with their anxiety, they may feel more confident. Look happy and smiley yourself!

Manage anxious talk. Children may want to talk about school worries in the morning, but doing this may only increase their anxiety. Encourage them to talk about their worries the day before. Create a Talking/Worry Time for your child each day after school. Choose a time when they are not hungry or tired, perhaps after tea. Keep the time short - 15 minutes at most. Use paper and pens if your child likes writing or drawing. Tell them this is a time to chat about anything but also to talk about any worries for the next day.

Distract, Distract, Distract! On your journey to school, help distract your child's worry thoughts. Play I-spy, use songs or rhymes, use your senses (tell me 5 things you see, hear, smell, touch), use exercise if you walk (do 5 hops, 4 jumps, 3 skips etc).

Use transition objects. Give something to your child to help them know you are thinking of them when they separate from you to go into school - something they can keep safely in their bag just to know it is there. A picture of you, a piece of soft material that you have both cuddled or a little note to say you love them. If your child has packed lunch you could put a different note in their box each day saying something lovely about them.

Create a quick and positive good-bye ritual together with your child. 'One kiss, one hug, one fist pump' do a 'high-five' etc. Remind your child that you will see them very soon and if you have something to look forward to after school, remind them of that. Prolonging the good-bye will only serve to increase anxiety. Keep it short and sweet.

Stories can help. We recommend 'The Invisible String' by Patrice Karst. You can find this story read for free on YouTube. It looks at how a child is always connected with their parent/carer, even if they are not together.

Mrs L Jones
Wellbeing TA



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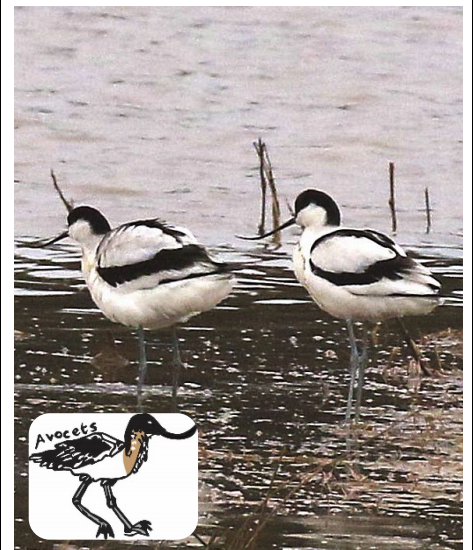
If you have any good news to share about sports or other achievements, please email a photo and brief explanation to admin@wrpschool.org. We'll include as many as we can!

Tilda from Beech Class achieved her 25m swimming certificate and Jessie in Dragonfly Class achieved her 10m swimming certificate before Christmas.

Well done to both of you!



The takings from the Christmas Fair were counted, and over **£5700** was raised! An absolutely amazing amount of money which will be put towards equipment and activities for all the children.



Interesting Fact! Clinton Devon Estates shared this great photo on their Facebook page.

Avocets (our Y5 class name) are becoming a more regular visitor to the regenerated Otter Estuary Nature Reserve, with three different sightings in the last few weeks!

Well done to Bodhi, Elliot, Imogen, Isabelle, Freya, Matthew, Alice, Poppy and Aria who all performed in the Beauty and the Beast Panto at Exmouth Pavillion over Christmas.

The children have had to rehearse for several weeks to perfect the dances for the show.



Over the Christmas period, Imogen (Kestrels) and Matthew (Hazel) took part in Beauty and the Beast at the Exmouth Pavillion. It was Imogen's third pantomime with them and Matthew's first. Imogen also performed in the pantomime Red at The Blackmore Theatre, and took part in Exmouth Youth Theatre's production of Christmas at the Musicals! Amazing!



Thank you so much for supporting JUST ONE Tree again this year so that together we can combat climate change and biodiversity loss.

Because of our school, a further 438 seeds will be chosen and planted.

Our school's forest of **1095 trees** will remove approximately **337.26 tonnes of carbon dioxide** from the atmosphere over the next 25 years!

