



WILLIAM BARNES PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bridge Street
Sturminster Newton
Dorset DT10 1BZ

Tel/Fax: 01258 472257
E: office@williambarnes.dorset.sch.uk
W: www.williambarnes.dorset.sch.uk

February 2024 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers



January seems to have flown past yet again.

You will have received the letter from Chris Jones, our Chair of Governors, confirming the appointment of Ms Fiona Locke as Headteacher from September 2024. I feel very sad to be leaving but I know that William Barnes Primary School will be in very safe hands with Ms Locke.

Ms Locke will be visiting our school over the next term to meet children, parents and staff.

With this newsletter is a leaflet explaining about Family Hubs. These will be valuable sources of support for you and your child.

Weather

The weather remains cold and wet so please ensure your child has a coat every day. Also please listen out on local media and check [Closed services in Dorset - Dorset Council](#) for updates on any possible school closures. We will text all parents before 8.00am if school is closed. To this end, please ensure that there are current telephone numbers held in the school office so that you can be contacted either if school is closed early in the morning or if we need to close school earlier than 3.15pm.

On icy mornings the car park and driveway can become very slippery so please do take care. We will put grit down as much as possible. Please can adults ensure the children do not slide on the ice.

Internet Safety

You may have heard the Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, talking about the worry of primary school children accessing inappropriate material on internet and social media sites. We talk about online safety at all times in school. If you have any concerns or would like support, please come and talk to myself or your child's class teacher. We have useful links on our website for you to look at. Please can you apply parental filters and check all that your children are accessing if they have access to the internet. It is important for children to know that they can always come and speak to you if they see anything upsetting. We know seeing inappropriate material too young has an effect on a child's wellbeing and so by working together, we will be improving all our children's well-being.

Safer Internet Day is on Tuesday 6th February and we will be talking about keeping safe online.

Attendance

As you may be aware, the government has announced a big drive on attendance, the slogan being 'Moments Matter, Attendance Counts'. We have attached some posters and information for you. From the first day of term to the last, the small moments in a school day make a real difference to your child #attendancecounts.

The local authority is also running an attendance campaign, 'In This Together', please see the attached poster.

The link between attendance and attainment is clear:

- In 2018/19, just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards, compared with 84% of pupils who were regular attenders.
- And 36% of PA children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and Maths GCSE, also compared with 84% of regular attenders.

And it's never too late to benefit from good attendance:

- More than half (54%) of pupils who were PA in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11 passed at least 5 GCSEs, compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.

But attendance is important for more than just attainment:

- Regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.

What YOU must do:

Try to telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.

Tell the school in advance of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.

If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.

Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport; call on a family member, neighbour or friend.

If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

What WE will do:

Check your child's attendance every day.

Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.

Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.

If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

Pancake Race

We are once again hoping to hold a Pancake Race with SturQuest. This will be held in the Recreation Ground on Tuesday, 20th February at 1.00pm. We hope you can join us and take part in the parents' race!

We ask that if you take any photos that you do not upload any to social media which contain other children. We will ask SturQuest to only publish photos we have agreed.



Book Fair

The Scholastic book fair will be at the school from 26th February to 1st March. Please note that we can only accept cash payments. More details will be shared with you nearer the time.

World Book Day

We will be holding a World Book Day event on Monday 11th March. We are giving children the opportunity to dress up or bring in a prop. You will receive more information about this soon. The children will have their World Book Day vouchers to spend at the book fair.

Design a Book Cover Competition

Local Food Links invites budding artists to use their imagination and design a cover to celebrate World Book Day. Entries must be submitted by Friday 23rd February, full details on the flyer sent with this newsletter.



Parent Pledge

We really hope you found the Parent Pledge meetings useful for those children not on track for Age Related Expectations. We have parents' evenings in February and invite all parents to come in and discuss their children's attainment and progress.

Y6 SATS

Mr Field will be holding a meeting for parents to discuss the SATS on Wednesday 13th March at 2.30pm.

Rising 5s

Following the GDPR act, we cannot contact prospective parents for September 2024 before a place is offered at our school in April. We would still like Rising 5s to commence in the summer term. The children who are starting with us in September 2024 are invited to come into our Reception class every Wednesday afternoon from 1.10-2.10pm. If you know of any parents who have given William Barnes as their first choice school and do not attend Stepping Stones, please ask them to contact the school office for details.

Please be aware that when a child leaves our school and when Year 6 moves on to the High School we pass on all children's records including copies of letters, relevant emails, meetings, and concerns. If you have any questions, please come and see me to discuss.



Policies

Just a reminder that our Positive Behaviour policy is published on our website. Also a reminder that I am the e-safety champion, anti-bullying lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead in the school. Mr Russell Field is the Deputy Safeguarding Lead.

We have a critical incident policy where if we need to leave the school building we will go to the Exchange. Part of our critical incident policy is, if necessary, to congregate in the school. We hold a practice for this as well as our usual fire practice.

Family Learning Week

We will be holding Family Learning Week entitled WE Week the week commencing 18th March.

Leeson House

Year 5 pupils will be going off for their residential visit to Leeson House from Wednesday 6th to Friday 8th March accompanied by Mr Field and Ms Bates. We wish them a fantastic time and look forward to hearing all about their adventures when they return.

Consent forms will be sent home in February, payments should be made online through ParentPay. If there are any concerns or problems, please contact the office.

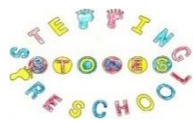
0-5s Learning Together sessions at Sturminster Library

Sturminster Newton Children's Centre are holding free 'Learning Together' Sessions on Thursdays from 10.00 to 11.30am for children aged 0 to 5.

These popular term-time sessions involve fun with books and stories to support speech development and school readiness. Booking is essential: either phone 01258 474036 or email northlocality@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

Red Nose Day

Red Nose Day is on Friday 15th March. This will be a non-school uniform day; a donation page will be available on ParentPay nearer the time. We will be selling Red Noses, more details to follow nearer the time.



Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones are now taking bookings for the 2024/25 academic year. If anyone would like spaces, please contact them for a booking sheet. Contact Telephone Number: 07778 336928.

I would like to wish you all a wonderful half-term when it comes. Hopefully, March will bring better weather. Thank you all once again for all your support. As ever, if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to come and see me.

Warmest wishes

Karen Wrixon
Headteacher

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 6th February	Safer Internet Day
Monday 12th - Friday 16th February	Half term
Tuesday 20th February	Pancake Day
Monday 26^h February to Friday 1st March	Scholastic Book Fair
Friday 23rd February	Last day for entries to LFL World Book Day competition
Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th February as arranged by your class teacher	Parents' evenings