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| **January 2024 Newsletter**  Dear Parents and Carers    We hope you have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas. Happy New Year, we are all looking forward to a Happy and Healthy 2024. A big thank you to everyone for all your cards and gifts, they were very much appreciated.    Also a huge thank you for all your support in the autumn term. It has been lovely to see so many parents and carers coming in to school to help. A special thank you to those who walked with us to all the activities such as the choir and to the church. We couldn’t do the activities without your help and so it is much valued. We would welcome anyone else who would like to come in and help at any time.  We are hoping that the PTFA will be able to start running this term. A big thank you to all those who have come forward to offer support.  The children all thoroughly enjoyed their trip to the Pantomime - a big thank to the PTFA who helped with the cost. Without this support the price would have been considerably higher. The children were all a credit to you and we received several comments on how well behaved they all were.  Our Breakfast and After School clubs are being well supported and the children who attend are having fun with the activities. If you would like to book your child in for a session, they are £3.50 per hour. Breakfast Club at William Barnes is a relaxed and sociable place to have a healthy start to the day. No need to book, just pop along anytime from 7.30 a.m. Choose from healthy cereal, porridge, fromage frais, fruit and a selection of hot and cold drinks—all for £3.50 per child! Themed breakfast every half term e.g. Cowboy breakfast, French breakfast, chocolate week. Interested? Need any more information, please contact the office. After School club runs from 3.15—5.15 p.m. and we do ask that you book for this in advance if possible but in an emergency please phone the office to book.    We are having another “All eat together” day this month on Thursday 18th January and would like all Key Stage 1 children to participate in a hot school lunch that day. We appreciate that some children still prefer to have a packed lunch, and for those children who have not ordered a meal we have still booked a hot lunch so that they can try it as well as having their normal packed lunch.  **Winter Mini Challenge**  A message from Sturminster Library:  “It was lovely to see so many of you in the library over the Summer holidays taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge - Ready Set Read!  If you can't wait until next summer for the Challenge to start again, then we have really great news for you! The Reading Agency and Dorset Libraries have a Winter Mini Challenge.  Unlike the Summer Reading Challenge the Winter Mini Challenge is all recorded online, so skate along to their website ( [www.wintermini.org.uk](http://www.wintermini.org.uk) ) to sign up and see if you can read 3 books between now and February 19th. You will get virtual badges for each book you read and when you complete your Challenge there is a certificate to download and print. Let's see how many of you can complete the Challenge and bring your certificates into school to be presented in assembly!”  **Bookstart Baby Packs**  Did you know that all babies between the ages of 0-12 month are entitled to receive a free Bookstart baby pack, containing a bright and colourful board book and activities and resources to help bring stories to life? Dorset Library Service co-ordinates the delivery of the packs across Dorset and babies will usually receive this at their 6-month health check from their health visitor.  If you haven’t received a pack don’t miss out, you can pop into any Dorset library and staff will be able to gift a pack to you. You can also visit the online [Booktrust family hub](https://dorsetcouncil.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=c39535cf4f9d1ca66af8d2b44&id=1d4ede7602&e=9d908e6113)which contains a wealth of ideas and activities for discovering new stories and sharing books together.  **Residentials**  **PGL**  The interim payments for the Year 5 (when they will be in Year 6) visit to PGL in September are due by March 29th (£67), April 26th (£66), May 31st ((£66) and June 28th (£66). If you have not paid the £35 deposit for this trip, please pop into the office asap to discuss if you would like your child to attend.  **Leeson House**  For the Leeson House visit an initial deposit of £30 was due in November and further instalments of £65 by 26th Jan and 23 Feb. We sent out payment plans last term to help with costs so that they can be spread out throughout the year. Please try and keep to them and if you have any concerns regarding payment, please contact the school office as we expect all our children to attend.  **Carey Camp**  The Year 4 residential visit to Carey Camp is from Thursday 2nd to Friday 3rd May. A letter with more details and a payment card will be sent out in the next couple of weeks.    **Cycling Proficiency**  Last term a number of Year 6 children enjoyed completing their level 1 and level 2 certificates with our new cycling proficiency coach Ben Timberlake. During the summer term, we hope to offer a level  3 course to those children who are interested in dealing with heavier traffic conditions, similar to those we have in Sturminster in the mornings and after school. When the children have completed their level 3 certificate they will be allowed to cycle to school, if their parents write a signed letter giving their permission.  **School Closures**  We always try to keep the school open, but many members of staff have a long journey and weather conditions at this time of year can mean a large number are unable to get here. Hopefully it will not happen this year, but in the case of school closure due to adverse weather please listen to local radio stations for announcements or log on to [http://mapping.dorsetforyou.com/closedservices](http://mapping.dorsetforyou.com/closedservices%20) where a list of  closed schools is posted. We will text all parents so please check your mobile phones and ensure we have your updated telephone numbers.    Can I also remind you to ensure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoors – we expect children to go out to play and also learn in the outdoor environment, even when it is cold or a little wet.    I have attached the school term dates for 2024 with the training days. As you are aware, a few years ago the Government introduced strict rules about not taking holidays during term time. This means that I am unable to authorise any absence for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances so please make every effort to book your holidays outside term time. Of course it is essential to inform the school office of any absence for whatever reason.  **Consultation for School Admission Arrangements 2025/2026**  Dorset have entered into the statutory consultation on its School Admission Arrangements 2025/2026 running through to the 9th January 2024.    Details of the consultation will be available to view at [2025 to 2026 school admission policies - Dorset Council](https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/2025-to-2026-school-admission-policies)    Responses must be submitted either in writing to School Admissions Team, Dorset Council, County Hall, Dorchester, DT1 1XJ or by email to [schoolorganisation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:schoolorganisation@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk) by **Friday 9th January 2024.**    Upon the conclusion of the consultation period all responses will be considered carefully and a report will be presented to Dorset Council’s Cabinet meeting on **Tuesday 30th January 2024.**  **Governor Vacancies**  At William Barnes Primary School, we are looking for two co-opted governors to join our governing body. As a governor you will be a volunteer who makes a vital contribution to the success of the school. Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body rather than elected by parents.  School governors have three main roles.   * Governors ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction. * The governing body helps to set long-terms plans for the school, decide where improvements need to be made and how to make them. * Governors hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and the effective and efficient performance management of staff. * The governing body looks at the quality of education being offered and ensures the head is doing everything possible to improve results. * Governors oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure its money is well spent. * Governors examine budgets and spending proposals to monitor whether the school is getting value for money and ensure the money is spent in the right areas.   This role may be particularly of interest if you have skills in finance/accounting, human resources, data or education but we invite applications from anyone who is interested in helping the school be the best it can be. Full training is available and governors are encouraged to attend regular training sessions, usually online.  We are looking for someone who can attend approximately six full governing body meetings per year and around four committee meetings per year. Meetings are held on Teams or in school, usually on Monday evenings from around 6pm to 8pm. Governors also spend time in school during the day (around one visit per term).  You must be 18 or over to apply and all governors must have Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and complete safeguarding training in a timely manner. If you would like to find out more, please email c.dunkleyjones@williambarnes.dorset.sch.uk for an application form.  **Year 6 SATS**  Year 6 SATS week is week commencing 13th May. We are hoping to run our SATS breakfast that week. Mr Field will give you more information nearer the time.  **Parents’ evenings**  The next parents’ evenings will be held on Monday 26th and Tuesday 27th February. We hope you have found the Parent Pledge letter and meeting helpful. We will continue to tweak these. Any feedback will be much appreciated.    The next Family Learning Week will be the week commencing 18th March, the focus being our WE project. A letter with the activities available will follow next month.  Welcome back to what promises to be a very exciting and busy term. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you need any more information about any items in this letter. I look forward to seeing you all around school.  Warmest Wishes  Karen Wrixon  **Headteacher** |
| **Dates for Your Diary**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **January** | | | **Thursday 18th January** | **All Eat Together Day** | | **Thursday 18th January** | **Year 3/4 visit to Bovington – more details to follow** | | **February** | | | **Monday 12th - Friday 16th February** | **Half term** | | **Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th February** | **Parents’ evenings** | |
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