

Friday 10th November 2017

Informal Parent Workshops, Maths Collaboration, Governors, Attendance, Headteacher Collaboration, Sport, EH4MH (Early Help for Mental Health), Anti-bullying and Kindness ('Different and Equal'), Live First Aid, Clubs, Remembering, PTFA Fireworks, Children in Need, Rubbish Appeal and Parents Evenings

Informal Parent Workshops

With no rule book to follow, we all know how challenging being a parent can be at times. Talking to other parents is often what we do most when searching for new ideas / top tips. So we would like to give you the opportunity to share your ideas in a collaborative supportive setting led by Jan Ray and supported by Rachel Johns. Jan has a wealth of experience in helping nurture children's emotional development and she has previously led one of these parent groups, which was very successful. We have scheduled the following three Tuesday evenings from 6-7pm, at school: 14th, 21st and 28th November. If you would like to join any or all of these, please can you let us know in the office. Thank you.

Maths Collaboration

On Wednesday, teachers visited Harbertonford Primary for our second collaboration meeting on Maths. Groups of teachers from different schools are working together on an action research project that involves team teaching, research, pupil interviews and observations. It's an exciting on-going project to help us provide the highest quality maths teaching possible.

Governors

The Resources Committee met on Thursday evening to review the school budget to ensure we aren't overspending and to make sure we can afford to fund on-going school improvement as well as continue to pay wages and bills. Thank you again to Richard Whiffin for his insights and knowledge in this important area.

Attendance

Following my review of attendance for the first half term, I would like to update you. Compared to this time last year, our overall attendance is less. This is due to an increase in illness and unauthorised absence. We also have a greater number of children labelled as 'persistent absentees'; defined by the DfE as those who attend for less than 90% of the time. Absence has a detrimental impact on learning. Key concepts are missed and programmes to help these children catch up have a negative impact on others. It also reflects negatively on how the school is viewed by external bodies.



I do, however, recognise the importance of keeping children off school when ill and the dilemma families face with cheaper holiday costs in term time. Please can I appeal to you to consider carefully if your child should be absent and if in doubt, contact me. I'm keen to work with you to find solutions that help you as a family and your child's learning. Thank you for your understanding.

Headteacher Collaboration

I've spent time this week working with another Head to look at school improvement and how best we can support each other's schools.

Sport

A PE specialist from Newton Abbot College has been working in school again this week, team teaching netball with Mrs Gill and Y3/4. Next week he will be working with Miss Wilson on a programme of gymnastics for Y1/2.

EH4MH (Early Help for Mental Health)

You have likely seen a lot in the news about *mental health* and the drive to remove the stigma that is often associated with this phrase. Schools have been taking a greater lead in this over the last 2 years. As you might know, Jan Ray is our school champion for this area. She keeps staff on their toes and ensures we keep the dialogue going with children. This week she was sharing work in assembly with some drama about 'mental health 5 a day'. Her message applies to children and adults alike. To stay mentally healthy, some top tips are to exercise, help others, eat / drink well, sleep and to find some time to slow down and live in the moment, what you might have heard referred to as *mindfulness*.

Anti-bullying and Kindness ('Different and Equal')

Next week is national Anti-Bullying Week. The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online

We are very lucky here at Abbotskerswell to have a very caring and kind community. Children are happy and respectful of others. However, we don't take this for granted which is why we continue to provide this support and life learning.

We have two children who are being trained by Mrs Ray as Anti-bullying and Kindness Ambassadors. We are focussing on the word *kindness* as it is a positive approach.

If you would like to see some of the resources, you can find them here:



<https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week/resources-schools/official-primary-school-pack>

Live First Aid

Last Friday, Kingfisher took part in St John Ambulance's Big First Aid Lesson Live. They joined a live stream with thousands of other children from across the UK, learning how to deal with burns, choking and how to handle emergency situations.

Clubs

We have a super range of clubs running at the moment. On Monday, Mrs Salt and Mrs Simmons' cookery club children were mixing up their Christmas Puddings. On Tuesday, Miss Wilson was running her netball club while Mr Lawrence had his coding club. On Wednesday we had our sporting club and joining the fray now, is Mrs Kerswell's Drama Club that saw over 40 children join last Friday. In addition, Tuesday and Thursdays still see the After School Activity Clubs thriving with a really lovely atmosphere.

Thank you very much to parents who have already started helping with Drama Club. Even at this early stage, I hear a large castle model / prop has been created and lives in somebody's bedroom. The children are really fortunate to have so much commitment and support.

Remembering

Today we held a 2-minute silence to reflect on the sacrifices made to help ensure we live in our free country. We spoke about the values that make Great Britain great and how we are privileged to live here. Thank you for your donations.

PTFA Fireworks

Many thanks to the PTFA for their hard work last Saturday at the village fireworks. They did an amazing job and were able to raise over £1000. An extra special thanks to Mike Tucker who gave time, resources and his skills to building the infrastructure of the stalls and lighting up the areas. His behind-the-scenes contribution was invaluable.

Children in Need

Next Friday, 17th November, is Children in Need Day. The theme is Spotacular so wear something spotty for a suggested donation of £1 per child. There will also be Pudsey Bear biscuits on sale for 50p at morning play.



Rubbish Appeal

We have acquired a pile of rubbish by our bins in the school car park that is too big for the council to take. If anybody is able to take a little of it away in their car at any time, it would be much appreciated and save us the cost of hiring a skip.

Parents Evenings

You should have received a letter about parents evening by now. On the evenings, teachers will be in the hall so you can wait in the foyer and computer area where you will have a chance to review your child's books.

In Kingfisher Class, I will be sharing examples of work from each year group. This will help you to see what is expected from the national standards and where we are trying to get your child by the end of the year. It should be particularly helpful in conjunction with looking at your child's work and discussing progress with the teacher to give you an idea of where they are against curriculum expectations.

I will also be sharing test papers so you can see what is expected in the statutory Year 1 Phonics, Year 2 tests and Year 6 tests. There will also be examples of the non-statutory tests that we use at the end of each year.

Enjoy a wintry weekend

Dates for your Diary

Date	Event
Mon 13 th Nov	Anti-bullying Week
Tue 14 th Nov	Parents Evening for children in Robin, Swift and Kingfisher
Wed 15 th Nov	Parents Evening for children in Robin, Swift and Kingfisher
Wed 15 th Nov	Children in Rec, Y1, Y2, Y3 and Y4 will be having the flu immunisation
Fri 17 th Nov	Children in Need – wear something spotty
Fri 17th Nov	Deadline for returning Christmas Shoe boxes – to be labelled and left in Reception please
Sun 3 rd December	PTFA Christmas Fair in the village hall – please see PTFA members if you are able to help s it's a big event and another good fund-raiser
Tue 5 th December	KS1 Nativity 2.45pm
Thur 7 th Dec	PTFA Christmas Shop morning
Mon 11 th Dec	KS2 church service 2.00pm
Wed 13 th Dec	Christmas dinner day
Thur 14 th Dec	End of term reward trip
Fri 15 th Dec	Christmas parties in class and last day of term
Wed 3 rd January	Children return to school

