



## Firthmoor Primary School Newsletter

**Date: Friday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to all the parents who were able to attend our Reception Class Phonics meeting. We hope to be able to arrange a time for you to come into school to see a phonics lesson in action soon. There are lots of events this half term so please take note of the events list at the bottom of this newsletter. The weather continues to be cold and wet. Please ensure your child is dressed warmly to be outside at playtime.

### Reminder

We will be sending newsletters out electronically from now on. I hope you are all able to access this newsletter as it will be emailed to you once a fortnight, uploaded to the school website and put on Facebook in order to ensure that everyone can see it. If you do require a paper copy, then please notify the school office so that this can be arranged. Please can you keep an eye out for information on all school events.

### Staffing Update

We are sorry to inform you that Mrs Pace (our Modern Foreign Languages Teacher), who worked with us on a Friday morning, passed away last week. We have sent our condolences to the family at this very sad time.

### Fruit for snack Key stage 2

Children in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 can bring a piece of fruit for a morning snack if they wish. This should be a piece of fruit only and not a packeted item. This can include berries or grapes as long as they are halved so that they are not a choking hazard.



### Harvest Festival - Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> October



Our children (including Nursery) will be celebrating Harvest with a whole school assembly this year. We will put on two performances so that all parents are able to come along. There will be a morning performance at **9.15am** and an afternoon performance at **2.15pm**. We will need parents to reserve a seat so that we can ensure we have room for everyone. Please contact the school office. Initially, we will be restricting seats to 2 seats per family to ensure fair access (we will review this nearer the time). There will be a raffle at each assembly with the money raised going towards subsidising our Pantomime visit in December so please bring some change along if you can. We will also be collecting donations on behalf of the local foodbank at Firthmoor Community Centre. We will welcome donations into school of tinned or packeted items from **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October**.

### Halloween Disco – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October

We will be having a Halloween disco for pupils and we will be selling tickets. The money we raise from this event will go towards subsidising our planned trip to the pantomime for pupils in Year 1



to Year 6 in December and to subsidise the cost of a show for our nursery and reception pupils in school.

**Rec, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils can attend the disco from 3.30pm - 4.45pm**

Pupils in Reception can come to school dressed in their Halloween outfits as they will be taking part in Halloween themed activities throughout the day. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 can either leave school to get changed at home or bring their costumes to get changed in class. We will need to know who is staying in school nearer the time.

**Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils can attend from 5pm – 6.15pm**

Tickets cost £2 per child which includes a drink and a cupcake.

There will also be sweets on sale and the money raised from selling the sweets will also go towards subsidising the pantomime visit.

Our Nursery pupils are invited to come to school in their Halloween outfits for a Halloween themed day on **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> October**.

**Pupil Attendance**



Our school attendance target is 97%. Attendance that falls below this needs to improve because it risks having a negative impact on the pupil, including how well they learn in school and how well they build secure and lasting friendships. As an example, a pupil with 94% attendance will miss nearly two and a half weeks of the

school year. That is the equivalent of missing more than 60 lessons. Letters will be going out to the parents of pupils whose attendance is below 90% to offer support around improving attendance. **If your child is absent then please remember to make a phone call to the school office every day that your child is absent from school.**

**Year 6 – Applications for Secondary School Places**

Please remember that you need to apply for a secondary school place for your child by **31<sup>st</sup> October 2024**. There is a link to a guide for parents which also

contains information about Open Events that you may want to attend:

[Secondary Guide for Parents \(darlington.gov.uk\)](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/secondary-school-admissions)



**Applications for Reception Class – September 2025**



Children born between 1 September 2020 and 31 August 2021 are eligible to start school in Reception in September 2025. There is a link to a guide for parents below. The closing date for applications is the **15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

[Primary School Admissions Guide \(darlington.gov.uk\)](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/primary-school-admissions)

**Sports Update**

**Autumn 1 – PE Kit Days**

Here are the days that your child will be taking part in PE lessons in **Autumn 1**.

Year Group and Teacher	PE Days
Year 1 Mrs Morrow	Tuesday and Thursday
Year 2/3 Mrs Irwin	Monday and Tuesday
Year 2 Miss Heslop	Thursday and Friday
Year 3 Mrs Blagg and Mrs Howland	Monday and Thursday

<b>Year 3/4 Miss Trainer</b>	Wednesday and Thursday
<b>Year 4 Miss True</b>	Tuesday and Friday
<b>Year 5 Miss Jamieson</b>	Wednesday and Friday
<b>Year 5/6 Mrs Walker</b>	Monday and Wednesday
<b>Year 6 Miss Murray</b>	Monday and ( <b>Swimming on Tuesday</b> )

If PE days change in Autumn 2, we will inform you nearer the time.

### PE Kit

Pupils should wear a plain red t-shirt, plain black shorts, leggings or tracksuit and trainers.



Physical Education

No jewellery to be worn on PE days. Earrings need to be removed for PE.

Our Uniform Guidance can be found on our website in the school prospectus.

Children in Year 2 to Year 6 can come to school dressed in their PE kits on their specified PE days.

Children in Reception and Year 1 will continue to change into their PE kits at school. Please bring kits in a school drawstring bag.

### Y4MT – TAG Rugby Festival

Pupils from Miss True's class will be attending a TAG Rugby development festival on **Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2024**. Pupils will be transported to and from the event, which takes place in school time. Pupils are asked to wear their school PE kit but also wear plain black tracksuit bottoms over their shorts in case of cold weather. Pupils must bring a warm, waterproof coat in case of poor weather too. Pupils will be provided with a Firthmoor hoodie to wear on the day.



### Music Lessons

Violin lessons will take place on Tuesdays in school.

### Birthday Celebrations



A reminder that parents can make a payment of £2 to the school office if they wish to have their photo taken with 2 friends next to the birthday flag. They will need to let the school office know in advance so that we can arrange to have the flag raised. Children can bring sweets in for their class if they wish to on their birthday. These must be in sealed packets that can be sent home with the child (e.g. mini rolls, Haribo's, fun size chocolates).

### Trustee Vacancy

We are looking to recruit a parent trustee to our board of trustees in school. There is a separate attachment with all the relevant information. If you are a working parent then some companies do support this volunteer role in school so it may be worth finding out from your employer whether this is the case. If you have any questions around the role then please contact the school office who can arrange for you to speak to the Head Teacher or the Business Manager about this.

### Darlington FC

This is a reminder that we have a school season ticket for Darlington FC which was donated to us by the football club. This is for one adult and one child to attend. It is

worth noting that children aged 12 and under do get free entry, so the child season card could be used for an older sibling. If you would like to add your name to the list to use the season ticket then please contact the school office.

### Diary of Events:

Event	Date	Year Group	Parents Invited
Tag Rugby – wear PE kit with tracksuit bottoms and waterproof coat	Monday 14 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 4 – Miss True	No
Harvest Festival Assembly	Wednesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October AM – 9.15am PM – 2.15pm	Nursery to Year 6	Yes
Early Years Halloween Day – Come dressed up if you like!	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> October	Nursery and Rec pupils	No
Halloween Disco	Thursday 24 <sup>th</sup> October	Rec, Y1, Y2 – 3.30pm – 4.45 Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6 – 5pm – 6.30pm	No
Pantomime at Darlington Civic Theatre	Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 1 to Year 6	No

### Safeguarding Information for Parents

Please see below some links to useful websites with safeguarding information for parents.

Online Wellbeing

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-wellbeing/>

Facebook

<https://swgfl.org.uk/assets/documents/facebook-checklist.pdf>

Parent Controls

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

National Crime Agency's CEOP Education Programme provides information for the children's workforce and parents and carers on protecting children and young people from online child sexual abuse.

Childline/IWF Report Remove is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online.

**Term Dates:**

**FIRTHMOOR SCHOOL CALENDAR**

**2024 - 2025**

2024	July	August	September	October	November	December
Mon			2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30
Tues			3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31
Wed			4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Thurs			5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26
Fri			6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27
Sat			7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28
Sun			1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29

2025	January	February	March	April	May	June
Mon	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Tues	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Wed	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Thurs	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Fri	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Sat	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Sun	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29

2025	July	August	September
Mon	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 30
Tues	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23
Wed	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24
Thurs	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25
Fri	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Sat	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Sun	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28

**Teacher Training Days**

- Monday 2nd September 2024
- Tuesday 3rd September 2024
- Friday 20th December 2024
- Friday 21st February 2025
- Monday 21st July 2025

- Public Holidays
- School Holidays
- Staff Training



## Helping parents to understand the changes to fines for term time holidays

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued for unauthorised holidays recorded by schools **after 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024**.

### Who may be fined?

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent who allows their child to be absent from school.

For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent who allowed the holiday receiving 3 separate fines.

### National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

For example: a 5-day holiday would meet the national threshold.

The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for an unauthorised term time holiday the fine amount will be:

£80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Increasing to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

### Second Offence

(within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent (who allowed the holiday), per child, payable within 28 days.

### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and local authorities will need to consider other available measures to address the absence concerns. This may mean that cases are presented before a Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.