



## **Willow Wood Community Nursery and Primary School**

### **Weekly Newsletter 17.9.21**

Get yourself a brew, find somewhere comfortable to have a seat and take some time to have a read through this week's newsletter. It has been another great week at school and there is lots of important information to share with you.

#### **Go Red For Mr Kirk**

Today was one of very mixed emotions for everyone associated with the school. There were lots of smiles today, as we all wore red and remembered our amazing colleague and friend Mr Kirk. There was of course sadness, as we also remember just how much we all miss such a wonderful and special person. Thank you all for your amazing support today. Everyone looked fantastic in red, with lots of you making extra special efforts with things like messages on the back of T-shirts and hearts painted on faces. I would also like to thank you for the incredibly generous donations that we will put into hampers to be raffled off next week. Strips of raffle tickets will be sold in school each day and will also be available to be bought on the main playground at the start and end of each day.

#### **COVID**

The landscape in relation to COVID is now very different to that seen last term. As you know, we no longer send classes home to self-isolate, as the guidance from the government is that close contacts of positive cases do not self-isolate (if they are under 18) unless they show symptoms or test positive. Inevitably this will lead to there being more cases in school. Therefore, please be reminded to be extra vigilant for the 3 main symptoms of Covid. Do not send your child into school if they have any of the symptoms and immediately get them tested using a PCR test. Do not use a lateral flow test if your child has symptoms as they can often show as being negative, especially in the early stages of COVID. The 3 main symptoms are: A high temperature, a new and continuous cough and a loss or change in the sense of smell/taste.

#### **PTA (parent teacher association) at Willow Wood:**

We do not currently have a school PTA! The previous incarnation of a PTA (FOWWS) disbanded a couple of years ago and due to the pandemic we have not tried to set up something new.



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### **PTS continued**

Now things are a little more settled, I would love to organise a new school PTA. A PTA is a group of parents/carers and school staff who work together to organise fun events for the benefit of the school and children. Typically, a PTA might organise things like the Christmas Fair, Summer Fair, school discos, Easter Bingo etc. Events like this are a great way to raise much needed funds for the school. They are also a way to offer some lovely events for everyone associated with the school, especially the children. We would like our first event to be a Halloween disco in October. If you would like to become a member of our brand new PTA, please let me know by either catching me on the playground, emailing me ([head@willowwood.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@willowwood.cheshire.sch.uk)) or by giving me a call at school. Everyone is welcome! We would look to have our first meeting in a couple of weeks (I can promise a nice brew and lots of chocolate biscuits!).

### **School Governors:**

This week we held our first school governors meeting of the year. I am delighted to announce that we formally appointed two new governors, who bring with them a wealth of experience. Nicola Bainbridge, a special educational needs expert, who currently works in a primary school in Cheshire joins us, as does Robin Barfield. Robin is our wonderful local vicar and long-time supporter of the school. Robin will bring his huge passion for our community and wide ranging skillset to the governing body. Governors play a vital role in shaping the strategic direction of the school, as well as holding the leadership to account for the impact of their actions. We currently have two parent governors: Sam McNeil and Kerry Hadley, who attend meetings on your behalf. If you are not sure who Kerry and Sam are, I will be posting photos of all of our governors on the website in the next week or so, so please keep an eye out. Sam and Kerry will be happy to listen to your views and share them at meetings, so please seek them out if you have something to share that you feel would improve the school.

### **Online safety:**

Last week I emailed you all about an app called 'National Online Safety' that can be downloaded onto your phone. If you haven't yet done so, I would urge you to as soon as you can. The app is a comprehensive hub for all things related to online safety and is invaluable for parents. If you need any further information please visit <https://info.nationalonlinesafety.com/mobile-app>



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### **What to do if your child is absent:**

If your child is going to be absent because they are ill, please let us know first thing that morning by either; ringing the school office (01606 593896) or by emailing [closed@@willowwood.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:closed@@willowwood.cheshire.sch.uk).

Please remember to include the name and year group of your child and the reason they are absent. It is important we know if a child is off so that it doesn't raise any safeguarding concerns e.g. that something has happened to them on the way to school! If we do not hear from you, it means our office staff have to spend time ringing every parent of a child who is absent and not informed us. As you can imagine this is very time consuming if parents do not contact us.

### **Vouchers:**

Following our questionnaire to you all last term, yesterday Mrs Tolley issued supermarket vouchers to you all (based on the number of children you have in school). These should reach you via your email address in the next day or so. Sometimes these find their way into your junk folder, so please check these. In the past, when we have sent these out, they have taken a couple of days to reach everyone so please don't ring school if you haven't received a voucher until towards the end of next week.

### **Give your views about our school:**

We have recently been made aware of some wonderful comments about our school on some of the Winsford forum pages—thank you to all of you who have posted such lovely messages, it is hugely appreciated. If you have time, we would love you to share your views with OFSTED, via their parent view page. We are expecting Ofsted to visit Willow Wood this year and it would be wonderful for them to read our parents views. You can complete the questionnaire by following the link below. We will also be sending out our own questionnaire towards the end of this term.

<https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/login?destination=give-your-views>

### **Finally.....**

Last week I shared lots of information about how we have changed and improved how we teach reading at Willow Wood over the last 18 months or so. Today I share below all of the changes and improvements we have made to how we teach writing.

- Children are taught joined (cursive writing) formally from Year 1. Every child uses a special handwriting book, with line guides, as their English book to make sure they are able to form their letters correctly and neatly.



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- Over the last 12 months we have seen an amazing change in the pride our children take in the presentation of their work as well as their presentation.
- Children work towards getting their special 'handwriting pen'. These are very special pens that the children treasure once they receive them. Children are awarded their pen when they have really mastered their handwriting. It has been wonderful to see the children's sense of pride when I give out a handwriting pen to a child who has really worked hard to make their handwriting as good as it can be.
- Just like in reading, our writing across the school is now inspired by really high quality texts. Children follow a sequence of learning for each writing unit; they are initially immersed in a high quality text—when they enjoy, explore and respond to what they read (this usually takes 3-4 days). Next, they analyse the text they are reading—identifying the effect of language, different text structures and develop knowledge for them as the writer (typically this lasts for 3 days). After that, the children gather their ideas and plan for a piece of high quality writing (usually 1-2 days). Finally, the children apply their writers skills and knowledge through guided, shared and independent writing. The children will write, edit and revise their work over about 7 days.
- When appropriate, we now try to link our high quality texts with other curriculum areas that the children might be studying. This allows children to gain a deeper understanding of the topics they are covering and make useful links between different areas of the curriculum.
- As a school, we now have a huge focus on the use of a wider range of vocabulary (the words that children use). Our use of a really wide range of high quality texts, means that children are now much more familiar with a greater variety of words. When we now look at children's books we see them using incredible language which has made them really accomplished writers.

Hopefully, just like last week when I shared all of our improvements to the teaching and learning of reading, you can see that we have done a huge amount to make our children much better writers. We can't wait for you to be able to come back into school to see the work your children have undertaken in their books. I know you will see a big difference!

As always, if you have any questions or comments please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Have a great weekend

Mr Bell