



HOWLETCH LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL END OF HALF TERM NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2021.

It has been another busy term so far and we have faced quite a few challenges relating to COVID once again. With the latest situation worsening on a national level, the governors and I are very pleased that we kept our bubble regime in place which has no doubt stopped further spread. We continue to follow the hand sanitising regime which has been in place since March 2020 and the staggered entry, exit and lunchtimes are all helping to curb the spread of infection. We are very grateful for your cooperation and patience at times like this in trying to keep the children and staff safe and well in school.

GOODBYE TO MR DAVIES – Today we are saying goodbye to Mr Davies one of our caretaking staff. Mr Davies has been a highly valued member of the Howletch team, helping the school greatly with his excellent maintenance and DIY skills and knowledge and also seeing our children safely across the road near the Sainsbury's car park each day. We are very sorry to see him leave us but we wish him well for the future. Our new caretaker Mr Sheppard will start work with us after the holidays.

HARVEST FOODBANK COLLECTION - Thank you for the wonderful selection of foods sent in for our Harvest foodbank collection. These were very gratefully received by the staff at East Durham Trust.

ENGLISH TOURING OPERA - This week, the children in years 3, 4 and 5 enjoyed a short performance by the English touring opera company. They performed a piece of music specially written to engage children which was called 'Back into the world'. The children were captivated by this experience.

PARENTS' EVENING – Most parents who returned their forms have received a phone call from class teachers this week about their child's progress. Miss Berry and Mrs Avery will make their calls following the half term break. More details will follow in the first week of November.

HEALTHY SNACKS AND PACKED LUNCHES - Reminder that children in KS1 are given a piece of free fruit each morning. Older children can bring in a healthy snack, ideally a piece of fruit, a healthy cereal bar, but no crisps or chocolate bars please.

PE KITS - Please send your child in our school PE kit as follows: plain, dark coloured track suit bottoms or leggings (shorts in fine weather) plus a plain white t-shirt. If children are outside, a plain hoodie in a dark colour (blue or black) can be worn. Please send a school jumper or cardigan into school on PE days so that the children can wear this before and after PE. We do not allow cropped tops or football tops.

KS1 GATE - We recently started to allow Yr 1 and Yr 2 pupils to enter at the same time from the side gate in the morning from 8.50 – 8.55am. The weather is changing and to avoid people having to queue up in bad weather and stand on muddy grass we think this will improve the situation and allow both pupils and parents to get to where

they need to be more efficiently. All entrance gates will be locked at 9am. If you arrive later than 9am please go to the main entrance.

ATTENDANCE - Our attendance has dropped quite significantly at times this term but this is understandable given the COVID situation. At present we are aiming to reduce the amount of pupils arriving late at school. Please try to get your child to school on time. Our attendance officer will also be looking at persistent absentees and trying to work with parents to improve the situation as well as those whose attendance is below the expected national percentage of 96%. We do understand that COVID cases in families have had a huge impact on attendance which is often beyond your control.

STAFF TRAINING DAY – Monday November 22nd will be an additional staff training day this year. The school will be closed to pupils on that day. School closes for the Christmas holiday period on Friday 17th December 2021. Children will return to school on Wednesday 5th January 2022. (Tuesday 4th January is a staff training day).

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a restful and enjoyable week's holiday next week. We look forward to seeing the children back in school on Monday November 1st.

Best wishes

H Adair
Head teacher.