

Prior's Mill C.E. Primary School

Clifton Avenue, Billingham. Stockton-on-Tees, TS22 5BX

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AUTUMN 2 2021 NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Carers...

The clocks have changed, the nights are darker and I have heard that there are even some Christmas trees already up around Billingham! We are definitely in a new season. I love a leafy autumn walk, a frosty morning and the amazing colours of the trees at this time of year. They are a reminder to me of how God is always at work and the world is always turning which gives me a sense of security when other things can seem so changeable.



COVID & Christmas

I would love to write to you and say that Christmas in school this year will be completely normal. Sadly however, due to community rates of COVID, all Stockton schools have been advised by the Local Authority and Public Health to be extremely cautious about large events such as performances and visits this term. I am aware that similar communications have gone out to neighbouring local authorities also.

Cases in school are very low at present but we are mindful that this can change quickly at any time. I need to do what I can to keep staff well so they are here to teach the children and to keep children as safe as possible after they have missed so much. The last thing I want to do is increase the risk of infection close to Christmas and spoil much needed family time. Therefore, although we were planning to invite small audiences inside school for some performances and take KS2 out to a Panto performance, we have reshaped our plans and I know a number of local schools are doing similar.

If the weather is good to us, the plan is to invite you along to an outdoor Christmas sing song which will be organised in three phase groups: Y1/2, Y3/4 and Y5/6. We'd love the children to bring Santa hats, deeley boppers, tinsel scarves and anything else festive to wear and please feel free to wear the same! It will be a standing audience event on the playground for about 25 minutes but we will provide some seating for people who find it difficult to stand for this length of time. To help us ensure some social distancing measures we ask that no more than 2 parents or carers attend for their child's Sing-Song. Dates and times are below and more details will follow nearer the time. All classes, including Reception, will video some singing to share with you in case we are 'rained off'.

Monday 6 th December	2:15pm	Y3 & Y4 Classes 9, 10, 11 & 12	KS2 Playground
Thursday 9 th December	2:15pm	Y1 & Y2 Classes 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8	KS1 Playground
Monday 13 th December	2:15pm	Y5 & Y6 Classes 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17	KS2 Playground

COVID - Informing School

In order for us to closely track the number of cases or potential cases and patterns, please can I remind you to inform the school office if your child has had a positive LFD or PCR test result We use this information to assess whether there are any potential outbreak clusters that we need to address and report on. Thank you.

Fundraising

The School and Parent Association (SPA) have started to organise raffle prizes for a Christmas draw. We would be very grateful for any donations you might have for prizes. Please either send these in with your child or drop them off at

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the school office. Thank you very much in advance!

Collective Worship

As mentioned in my last letter, we have begun exploring the parable of the mustard seed with the children as this is the bible passage we have chosen to underpin our school vision. Why not take some time to talk to your child about what they can remember about the parable and what it means to them?

House Points



Congratulations to St George's House who achieved the most house points last half term! The children in this house team enjoyed an extra playtime reward. We also have a number of children who have achieved their Bronze award already which is given when they have reached 100 house points for themselves.

Reading, Reading, Reading!

One of our school priorities this year is reading. Key Stage 2 children are using Accelerated Reader quizzes to help them choose books that are closely matched to their reading ability stage. Children in Early years and Key Stage 1 have been introduced to a new phonic scheme called **Little Wandle** that has lots of new books to help them learn to read. There is a great parents information section on their website here:

<https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>

We very much appreciate your support with reading at home and ask that children either read with you or independently at least 3 times a week.

Labelling Clothes

We already have so many unnamed and unclaimed items, particularly jumpers, that have gathered since September. As we are unable to store lost property indefinitely, it is disposed of at the end of each term. Please speak to your child's

teacher or a member of the office if you think your child has lost an item and can I urge you to check your child's clothes are labelled.

Water Bottles in School

Please can I remind you that children must only bring **WATER** in their drinking bottles for use during the day. Children who have a packed lunch can bring a juice drink as part of their lunch but only water should be available in class.

Attendance

We strongly advise that any holiday in term time should be avoided due to the impact of lost learning time on children. If parents still wish to apply for a leave of absence, these forms can be requested from the school office. However, please be aware that leave of absence (holiday) during term time will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. It is school policy to refer any unauthorised absence due to holiday to the local authority who may issue a fixed penalty notice. This is a penalty of up to £120 per child, per parent and so can add up to a significant amount. The school does not receive any revenue from fines; the money is paid to the Local Authority.

Dates for the Diary

19 th November	Children in Need 'Get your Sparkle on!' Open the Book – Year 1
26 th November	Open the Book – Year 2
6 th December	Year 3 & 4 Christmas Sing-Song
9 th December	Year 1 & 2 Christmas Sing-Song
13 th December	Year 5 & 6 Christmas Sing-Song
17 th December	Last day of autumn term
5 th January	School re-opens
6 th June	PD Day – school closed to children
21 st July	Last day of summer term