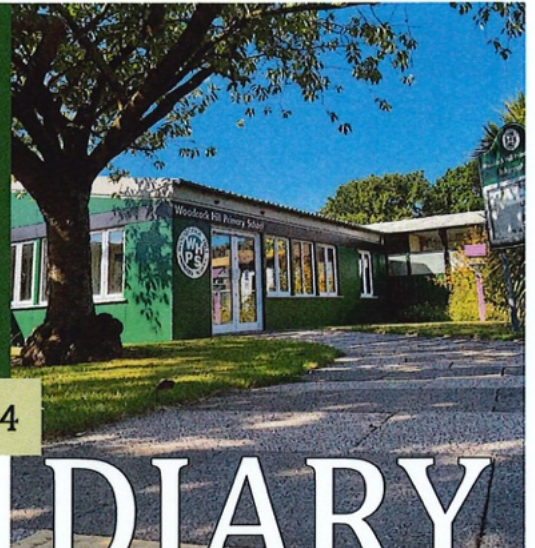


NEWSLETTER

Thursday 12th July 2024



HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the events we have held in school over the past couple of weeks. It has been great to see so many parents getting involved in school life.

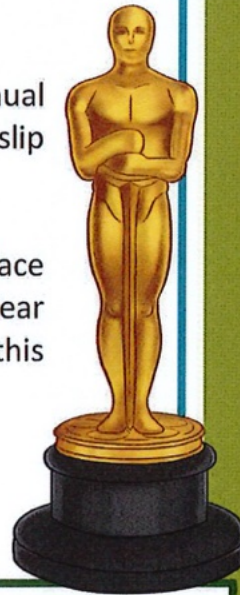
Yesterday, our Year Two pupils treated us to an amazing assembly reflecting on their time in Infants (KS1) and looking forward to next year with Mrs Beranová. Their assembly included artwork, singing, dancing and their excellent oratory skills all on the theme of friendship.

This week you will have received your child's annual school report; please do fill in the parents' comments slip as it helps us as a school to reflect on your views.

Next week, there will be a number of events taking place including Parents' Evening, Reception Graduation, Year Six Leavers' Assembly and our Year Six Prom, which this year takes on an Oscars Awards Ceremony theme!

With very best wishes

Mr Higgins



Goodbye and Thank You

Next week, we shall be saying goodbye to Mrs Kennedy, our Pastoral Support Manager, who leaves us to undertake a new venture. We would like to thank her for her dedication to the children of Woodcock Hill Primary School and to wish her well.

Woodcock Hill Primary School

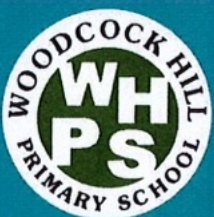
Far Wood Road

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DIARY

17th July
Parents' Evening

18th July
Reception Class
Graduation Assembly
Year Six Prom (PTA)

19th July
Year Six Leavers' Assembly

19th July
Last Day of Summer Term

22nd July
Teacher Training Day

2nd and 3rd September
Teacher Training Days

4th September 2024
Autumn Term¹ starts for children

28th October –
1st November 2024
Half Term Week

4th November 2024
Teacher Training Day

5th November 2024
Autumn Term² starts for children

23rd December 2024 –
3rd January 2025
Christmas Break

6th January 2025
Spring Term¹ starts for children

14th February 2025
Teacher Training Day

Free Bus Travel

StreetGames and Bring it on Brum! have been working with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) to promote the recently launched West Midlands Bus Scheme to local families. Our partnership with the scheme is designed to reduce the barrier of travel costs so that families can access summer holiday activities and travel around the City.

This scheme is offering 4 weeks of free bus travel over the summer holidays for parents, carers and older young people aged 16+ years. This offer is enabled by TfWM and the Department for Transport.

Those eligible for the Bus Scheme will be supported with free bus travel via Swift technology and the nBus multi-operator bus ticketing scheme.

The offer will get you a free 4-Week Regional nBus ticket, which allows travel on any bus in the West Midlands bus network.

To claim the offer, complete the application form (QR Code below) by midnight on Wednesday 17th July. You will then receive an email with a voucher code and instructions on how to redeem the voucher code and the bus ticket.

And the offer doesn't end there! If you use the free ticket, you will also be provided a follow-on 25% discount for another 4-Week Regional nBus ticket and then a third 4-week ticket, again at a 25% discount.

Details on this follow-up offer will be emailed to you once you have redeemed your original free nBus ticket.

This offer is thanks to TfWM, who are working with the Department for Transport, local authorities and local bus operators to get the region moving.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Accompanying this week's newsletter are two documents from Birmingham City Council regarding new regulations that come into force from September to tackle children's absence from school. We strongly encourage you to read this information carefully and understand its implications for you if your child is absent from school.

Class Teachers 2024-25

Next year your child's class teacher will be as follows.

Reception Class

Mrs Harris and Mrs Winkett with
Mrs Rees and Miss Mills

Year One

Mrs Summerfield with
Miss Boswell, Mrs Evans and Mrs Meddings

Year Two

Mrs Shannon with
Mrs Davies and Mrs Meddings

Year Three

Mrs Beranová with
Ms Croft and Mrs Meddings

Year Four

Mrs Clarson with
Mrs Cullen and Mrs Winkett

Year Five

Mrs Keating with
Ms Falaschi and Mrs Meddings

Year Six

Miss Saunders and Mrs Nash with
Ms Silvester and Mrs Winkett

Our School Values: *We are respectful, ambitious, creative, inclusive, independent and we persevere.*

Celebration Assembly

Last week, in our assembly we celebrated the achievements of:



Reception Class
Esmeralda and Leo

Year One
Bobbie-Jane and Joana

Year Two
Ahmad and Muneeb

Year Three
Kailah-Rae and Rofayda

Year Four
Jewel and Willow-Mae

Year Five
Daisy-Mae and Rosalie

Year Six
Jayden and Krystal

Celebration Assembly

Today in our assembly we celebrated the achievements of:



Reception Class
Harli and Lily

Year One
Ailey and Logan

Year Two
Larna and Tyler-Jay

Year Three
Jessica and Salma

Year Four
Charlotte and Reggie

Year Five
Freddie and Taya-Loren

Year Six
Chloe and Corey

West Midlands Fire Service Woodgate Valley

On the 11th August, Woodgate Valley Fire Station are holding an open day to celebrate their 50th birthday, which will be running from 11am till 3pm. The open day will give the public the chance to visit the station, sit on the fire engine and watch demonstrations from the crew. There will also be a fair, games, face painting, hot food, cakes and various stalls. Everyone is welcome.



Cupboard Fillers

We have a large number of food items in our food bank which we would like to donate to families at our school.

On Thursday 11th July we will be running another **Cupboard Fillers** event where you can choose items from our food bank – free of charge.

What you need to do:

- ✓ Come to the infant hall from 3.00pm
- ✓ Bring a couple of carrier bags
- ✓ Select up to **15** food items
- ✓ Take them home

Thursday 11th July 2024
from 3.00pm in the Infant Hall

**Strictly limited to parents of children at
Woodcock Hill Primary School**

Our School Values: *We are respectful, ambitious, creative, inclusive, independent and we persevere.*

July 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence

I am taking this opportunity to write to inform you of some important changes the Department for Education is introducing regarding school attendance and the issuing of penalty notices when children are absent from school.

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices has been being introduced. The new regulations will come into effect from the 19th of August 2024. The aim is to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England.

The national framework includes:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of ten sessions (usually equivalent to five school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling ten school week period. The 10-week period may span different terms or school years. For example, two sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further eight during the autumn term.
- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at £80.
- A national limit of two penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal interventions).

This means that if you have applied for a leave of absence to take place from September 2024 and the school has not agreed to authorise it, you may receive a penalty notice at the level prescribed by the new framework.

Please be aware that new legislation does not allow schools to authorise any holidays in term time or authorise leave retrospectively.

The local authority is in the process of consulting with schools and partner agencies to develop a revised local code of conduct. The document will be published on Birmingham City Council's website.



 **RESET**

 **RESHAPE**

 **RESTART**

The Council believes good attendance is essential to support your child in getting the most out of their education and we thank you for your continued support.

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to contact the school who may be able to offer support for your child and family.

Yours sincerely

Sue Harrison

Sue Harrison
Strategic Director of Childrens and Families



National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence Birmingham City Council FAQs for parents – July 2024

Why has the Department for Education brought in a National Framework for penalty notices?

There was concern that penalty notices (sometimes called fines) were being issued inconsistently across the county with some Council's issuing multiple penalty notices to a family within a year and some issuing none at all. This created a postcode lottery for families, so the framework has been introduced to ensure more fairness and consistency.

What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice allows parents to discharge an offence by paying a one-off penalty without the matter being referred to court where they could receive fines of hundreds of pounds and a criminal record.

I've already applied for authorisation of leave this term but for a holiday in September 2024. If the school don't authorise the leave, will I have to pay £80 or £60, as I applied this academic year?

The new law will require any unauthorised absence from 19th August 2024 to be dealt with under the new regulations so it would be £80 for each child and each parent. For a family of four with two children, that would amount to £320 if paid within 21 days of receiving the penalty notice. If paid between day 22 and 28, it would be £640.

What if I have a family emergency or bereavement abroad?

Unexpected family emergencies do happen unfortunately and can be very upsetting. However, parents must notify the school themselves of the absence as soon as possible as messages from friends or relatives who don't have parental responsibility may not be accepted. Schools are not allowed to authorise leave retrospectively. Notifying the school doesn't mean the absence will be authorised though. In the case of a family emergency or bereavement abroad, parents are strongly encouraged to request authorisation from the school and ensure absence is no longer than 5 school days. The final decision about authorisation sits entirely with the Headteacher.

What if I receive a penalty notice and don't pay it?

The law states that the local authority must withdraw the penalty notices and prosecute the parents in court where they could each receive £1000 fine, a parenting order, a criminal record and various costs awarded against them.

What happens if I pay a penalty notice for unauthorised leave next term but then take the children on another holiday the following year?

The new framework means that for a second offence within a three-year period, the discount of £80 per parent for each child won't apply. For a family of four with two children, that would amount to £640. A third period of unauthorised absence within a three-year period means that the local authority will be unable to issue another penalty notice and may instead refer the matter directly to Court.



I want to visit family abroad for six weeks next year. If the school don't authorise the absence, will I be issued with a penalty notice?

Any level of absence can have a serious impact on children's education, but lengthy absence can be particularly devastating. For that reason, it's unlikely that a penalty notice will be issued, and the matter may be referred directly to the Court instead.

What is 'good attendance' and why is it so important?

Generally good attendance is considered to be at least 96% for most children. Some parents think 90% attendance is good but that means a child will have missed at least 200 lessons over a year, lessons that will never be repeated. Since the pandemic, attainment and progress levels in schools have deteriorated along with attendance levels. This could mean that children today may leave school unable to be as competitive in the jobs market, so its important children attend school as much as possible.

Absence from school of any length can also have a negative impact on children's wellbeing, including their mental health. Worries about not being able to catch up, not understanding lessons, or impacts on friendships are all common in children who are absent from school. Children are sometimes absent due to genuine extreme physical or mental health needs, requiring support. In those circumstances, attending school as often as they can be acknowledged and celebrated.

I'm struggling to get my child to school. What help is available to me?

Schools in Birmingham have staff trained in early help, special needs and mental health. Please contact the school and ask for a meeting to discuss your concerns. You can also access support for yourself and your family from Birmingham Children's Trust. You can find more details here: [Early help for families](#) | [From Birmingham with Love](#) | [Birmingham City Council](#)

My child has special needs and has lots of hospital appointments which I have evidence for. Will I receive a penalty notice?

No. Penalty notices can only be issued where there is unauthorised absence, and those absences will be authorised. If your child is going to school as often as possible as you are working in partnership with the school, you will be doing the best you can to ensure your child gets a good education despite the circumstances.

What happens to the money for penalty notices when they are paid?

Currently the law requires penalty notice revenue to be spent on the administration of penalty notices which generally means, for example, any online payment software, electrical equipment such as laptops for issuing penalty notices and staffing costs. From 19th August 2024, local authorities will be able to use the revenue to support school attendance more widely, including promotional materials, etc. Penalty notice revenue must be ringfenced for attendance and cannot be used for wider council funding.

July 2024

