25 October 2019

Dear Parents,

Half term is already here, and we have had an action-packed, eventful first half-term with lots going on. A flavour of some of the activities that have taken place in and around school are detailed below. Have a wonderful break, and see you back on 4 November!

AROUND SCHOOL

Services Day

Well – what can I say about our fantastic day celebrating the terrific work done by some of our emergency services during the potential dam burst crisis in the summer? Due to the tenacity of Mrs Casey, refusing to take ‘no’ for an answer, her sterling efforts were rewarded with visits from DCC Rachel Swann and retired Chief Officer Terry McDermott. Not only did they do a brilliant assembly for the whole school, explaining what actually happened over that week in August, who was involved, showing drone footage of the area and doing a quiz with some amazing facts about sandbags and pipelines to name but a few, but they then stayed all morning and spent time with each class answering a wide variety of questions from the children; they even brought goodies for the them! To top it all off, Whaley Bridge fire station sent along one of their fire engines and crew, and stationed in the playground, the children had the opportunity to see inside the engine, turn on the lights and sirens, ask questions of the crew and even use the fire hoses!

It was a brilliant, brilliant day and we can’t thank enough Rachel and Terry for taking time out of their busy schedules to come and see us!
Art Competitions

Thank you to everyone who participated in the various art competitions that have been organised by various external organisations this term. We are delighted to say that we have some fantastic artists in the school who achieved recognition for their efforts as follows:

Whaley Bridge Community Bonfire & Fireworks (open to local schools) – 1st place: Magnus Ruston (who gets the chance to light the bonfire!) as well as other goodies; 2nd place: Holly George; 3rd place: Olivia Bradley.

In the ‘Postcard from the Future’ competition (open to all of Whaley Bridge) – Junior category winner: Georgina Vincent Bell; Infant category winner – Ernie Locke; Runner-up: Mya Burns. They all received book vouchers, and our school also received £40 worth of books for our library.

Well done to everyone who entered!

Lea Green Residential

What a fantastic week our Year 6 pupils had at the Lea Green activities centre near Matlock. The weather was reasonably kind to them, but whatever the weather, it didn’t stop them having an action-packed week full of outdoor activities including archery, bog crawling, high wires, team games and much more – a week full of making life-long memories!

Just Joshiing!

Once again, the school was treated to an entertaining, informative and thought-provoking performance from Firehorse Productions concerning bullying and its effects on bullies and those being bullied. We are sure everyone who watched it enjoyed it but most importantly, understands that bullying should not be tolerated.
**Cleaner Air Project**

We are working collaboratively with the Whaley Bridge Town Council and other local schools on this project, which first started off in London. Miss Farrell and Miss Cooling have co-ordinated our participation in this, and it is hoped our efforts will yield results. Years 4, 5 & 6 have been looking at the effects of particular gases on our air quality, and using diffusion tubes strategically placed around Whaley Bridge, will hope the samples collected can give us an idea of the quality of the air around us here. The tubes, which were in place for 2 weeks, will be used to check the levels of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide in the air, and these have now been sent off to a lab and we await the results so that the children can analyse them. Year 3 have been using ‘ghost’ wipes around school, looking for heavy metals on different surfaces – this data, too, has been sent off to the lab. Children in KS1 were involved in a variety of projects including being more aware of our environment (litter picking) and Reception children looked at the peppered moth, which camouflages itself according to its environment, and how it has evolved over time due to air pollution. It has been an enlightening and interesting project for all of our year groups.

**War Graves project**

Our Year 6 pupils have been undertaking research about local servicemen who fought, and died, in WWI and WWII. They have been making wreaths and poppies which will eventually be placed on gravestones, and inside the church, at Fernilee Chapel. The children will be going to the chapel after half-term to lay the wreaths themselves.

**Harvest Assembly**

It was Reverend Margaret’s last engagement with us before her retirement – we wish her well! – and what an array of produce you all donated, which was gratefully received by volunteers from New Mills Food Bank – thank you!

**Enrichment sessions**

Our year 3, 4 and 6 classes continue to enjoy sessions with Take Part in the Art and Being Outdoors Forest School. Whatever the weather, the children can be found outside having a marvellous time being inspired by nature and the surrounding environment, as you can see from some of the attached photographs – fantastic! Our Reception class has also been enjoying their regular ‘Wellie Stomps’ and being outside appreciating the wonders of autumn!
**TravelSmart**

This week we have been raising awareness about walking to school and the benefits of doing this for ourselves as well as our environment. Thank you to those of you who have taken part in our walking crocodiles, and to the staff who helped with them, ensuring that our children arrived safely at school.

**Black History Month Assembly**

Throughout the course of October, all year groups have been looking at issues surrounding race and colour, and how attitudes have, and haven’t, changed over the years. This culminated in a brilliant assembly where all the classes presented some of their work to the rest of the school. Children have been looking at characters such as Rosa Parkes, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela – to name but a few. Great research and great work everyone!

**Reception 2020 starters’ Tours & ER Drop In session**

We have once more offered timed appointments for those parents with children due to start school next September to come and have a look around school. One of them was this week, and the next one is on 6 November. Should you know of anyone who may be interested in joining one of the tours, please ask them to contact school in the usual ways – email or telephone. Details can be found on the school website.

We also have a drop-in session over in the Enhanced Resource unit for anyone who may be interested in a primary school place for their child, not just reception class age. This will be on Wednesday 6 November from 1.30-4.30 pm.

**High Peak Sports**

Some of our Y5 & Y6 children took part in a Football event and a group of Years 3-6 children participated in team and individual cross country events, all at Chapel High School. Well done to everyone who took part.

**Bags-2-School**

A reminder that our Bag-2-School collection will be on **Wednesday 6 November** and that bags should already have come home with the children. However, more can be obtained from the school office, or items brought to school in normal bin liners too. The more we collect, the more money we can raise for school.

**WBPS After School Club & Holiday Club**

The After School & Breakfast Club is always available for bookings. There will also be a Holiday Club running from Monday 28 October – Thursday 31 October 2019.

For more information, or to book a place, please ask a member of the After School staff or ring 07894 235778 or check out our Facebook page. Thank you.
PTA News

Thank you to everyone who has ordered their Christmas cards online with Cauliflower Cards this year - we look forward to seeing your children's creations in print! Thank you also to everyone who has joined the 50/50 club - there's still time to join, so please do get in touch if you'd like to be part of it. The more people who join then the bigger the prize pot every month for one lucky winner!

Upcoming PTA events –

Neon Disco - Thursday 7th November
Christmas Fair - Friday 29th November

As always we thank you for your continued support and hope to see you at our next events.
Anna, Jamie, Susan, Katie & Claire

Mid-day Supervisors

We are always on the look-out for Mid-day supervisors, so if you feel you have the requisite skills and time available, please contact Mrs Sowerby in the school office for more details on info@whaleybridge.derbyshire.sch.uk or ring 01663 732354.

HOUSEKEEPING/NOTICES

Communication

Our school website is a good source of information. There you will find updates on exciting events at school, the school calendar, inset dates, policies, medicine and leave of absence forms etc. The 2019/20 School Calendar has been updated on the website, including details of inset dates, so please take a look. http://whaleybridge.derbyshire.sch.uk/

Contact details

It is essential that we have up-to-date details for your child in case of emergencies, club cancellations, bad weather arrangements etc, so as a reminder, should your mobile telephone number, email or home address ever change, please make sure you let the office know at the earliest opportunity so we can update your child’s record. Thank you.

ParentPay

The ParentPay system is also working well now and we no longer accept payments by cash or cheque in school.
DCC and our school policy are still in place, dictating that dinner money should be paid IN ADVANCE and the school will be notified by ParentPay should your account fall into arrears. Similarly, please note that the two weeks’ notice, requested via the school office, is still required should your child wish to change from school lunches to sandwiches, or vice versa, regardless of whether they are eligible for FSM or UIFSM (key stage 1 free school meals).
Parking on school premises/collecting children from school

May we ask that all parents/carers note that the turning circle and new gate is strictly for the use of staff, visitors and disabled access. Parents must continue to park on the road and enter school down the ramp. No children, unless being dropped by authorised taxis or with prior permission for a specific reason, should be coming through the car park.

Also, when collecting children from extra-curricular activities, parents are requested to wait at the locked gated entrance and not walk into the school grounds. Only parents collecting children from After School Club in the creative classroom/ER building should be on the school grounds. We thank you for your cooperation in these matters.

Attendance

One of our key priorities is to improve attendance and punctuality for all children. Our whole school target is 97% and this year, our overall attendance is at 98.3% - this is above the national average, so keep it up to ensure we maintain our target throughout the year.

We continue to try and ensure that all children arrive to school on time, every day. If you are finding it tricky to get your children into school on time at 8:55am, please do come to us for help and guidance, we have lots of ideas and strategies to help make mornings a bit easier!

Notifying us of Absence

This can be done at any time of day or night via the following means:

- Email us – either via ParentPay or on info@whaleybridge.derbyshire.sch.uk
- Ring us – on 01663 732354 – you can leave a message on the answerphone if it is out of school hours.

May we ask that, even if you have let your child’s teacher know if your child is not in school or is being collected at a particular time for an appointment, you PLEASE INFORM THE SCHOOL OFFICE AS WELL.

If your child has an appointment and is not going to be in school for half a day or more, we will require a Request for Absence form completing and/or a letter from the doctor/hospital etc for our files. Forms can be downloaded from the school website or are available in the reception area of the school office.

Authorised absence can cover a bout of illness, appointments, a religious observance, close family bereavement or absence due to exceptional circumstances.

The fundamental principles for defining “exceptional circumstances” are that they are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. Holidays are therefore not considered exceptional circumstances as it is an event that could be rescheduled outside of term-time.

The DfE 2013 amendments make it very clear that schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless “exceptional circumstances” prevail.

Applications for a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances form can be found on our website obtained from our school office.
Is your child eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)?

Registering for free meals can raise an extra £1,300 for our school, to fund valuable support like extra tuition, additional teaching staff and after-school activities.
1. Is your joint family income under £16,190 per year?
2. If not, are you in receipt of any of the benefits listed below:
   - Income support?
   - Income-based Jobseekers Allowance?
   - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance?
   - Support from NASS (National Asylum Support Service) under part 6 of the Immigration/Asylum Act?
   - The guarantee element of State Pension Credit?
   - Child Tax Credit (with no Working Tax Credit) with an annual income of no more than £16,190?
   - Working Tax Credit run-on?
   - Universal Credit?

If you answered ‘yes’ to either of the above, then please come to us immediately. If you are eligible, rest assured that the information is confidential. We are very discrete – even your child will not know that you have registered – let alone anyone else. Help us to help your child – contact us if you believe you qualify.

Polite reminder

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the School, it is rarely appropriate to do so. As always, we are here to listen and help, so please do come into school and talk to us about your concerns. Please speak to the office to arrange an appointment if more convenient.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – October-January 2020

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25.10.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Break up for half-term</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.10.19-1.11.19</td>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>Half-term holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.11.19</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>School re-opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.11.19</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>School re-opens</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.11.19</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Bag-2-School collection</td>
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<td>6.11.19</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Reception 2020 New Starter tours ER Drop in Session 1.30-4.30 pm</td>
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<td>8.11.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Poppy/Remembrance Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.11.19-15.11.19</td>
<td>Monday-Friday</td>
<td>Anti-bullying Week</td>
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<td>12.11.19</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>SEN Quiet Swimming Gala</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.11.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Choir/LV singing at the Trafford Centre for Children in Need</td>
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<td>22.11.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Y4 Assembly</td>
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<td>29.11.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Y3 Assembly</td>
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<td>6.12.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Y6M Assembly</td>
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<td>6.12.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Y1&amp;Y2 trip – Macclesfield Museum</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.12.19</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>ER Trip to The Snowman, Buxton</td>
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<td>10.12.19-11.12.19</td>
<td>Tuesday-Wednesday</td>
<td>Nativity performances (both afternoons &amp; Wednesday evening – times tbc)</td>
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<td>12.12.19</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Key Strings</td>
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<td>13.12.19</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Christmas lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.12.19</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Panto in school</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.12.19</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Christmas party day</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.12.19</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>1.30 pm Carol Service, Trinity Church</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.12.19</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Break up for Christmas holidays</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.12.19-20.12.19</td>
<td>Thursday-Friday</td>
<td>Inset days</td>
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**JANUARY 2020**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Day</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>6.1.20</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>School re-opens</td>
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Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs Fay Walton  
*Headteacher*