



AYCLIFFE DRIVE NEWS

Head Teacher Newsletter #1

17th September 2024

Aycliffe Drive Primary School

Head Teacher's Message



Dear Parents/Carers

I hope that you feel that your child has settled well into their new classes following our second week of the new academic year.

It is a pleasure for me to begin my new role as Head Teacher in such a positive and vibrant manner. I have enjoyed welcoming children and parents in a morning whilst standing on the gate. I have spent lunchtimes and in class getting to know as many pupils as possible, along with learning a few new skills - I can now skip with a hula hoop thanks to pupils in Chestnut class.

We do not underestimate the importance of working closely with parents to ensure we achieve the very best outcomes for our children. Our 'Meet the Teacher' sessions at the end of last week and beginning of this week were well attended and feedback received from parents was positive. We appreciate parents were split between classes due to have siblings in other year groups, we will look into how we can organise this in a better way for next year. PowerPoints from these meetings will be uploaded to the website for parents who were unable to attend. We have started to plan parent workshops to provide you with information on how to further support your child at home. Once dates for workshops have been confirmed, we will communicate these with you.

Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th November are the dates for our Parent/Teacher meetings at school. The meetings will be 10 minutes per family, and the evening will start at 3pm and finishing at 6pm. Information on how to book your meeting will be sent to you towards the end of this half term. At this meeting, targets will be shared with parents.

An area where we will continue to focus this academic year is attendance. We know that children with higher attendance tend to make better progress. Our attendance for 2023-2024 **was below the national attendance at 92.1%**. The national attendance figure was 94.4%. We aim for our attendance to be at least 96%. So far this year our attendance has risen to 94.4%. We can keep increasing this and get closer to 96% again. Thank you parents for your continued support so far! In addition, there are too many children below the 90% threshold, the threshold at which the government define children to be 'persistently absent' If a child misses out on 10% a year of school it means they miss 19 days of education-around 95 lessons! If a child's attendance is 96% this means they have missed around 7.5 days. -around 37 lessons. As a school we will continue to not authorise leave for holidays, this is in line with the new government guidance on attendance in school.

Punctuality is also important. A child who arrives 10 minutes late everyday will miss 158 hours of education a year. We understand that sometimes being late is unavoidable. However we do have some children who are regularly late. Please make every effort to arrive at school on time by 8.30am. Any time after this is defined as late.

We have been busy reviewing our school values and have created a fun and memorable way for staff, governors, parents and pupils to remember them. We are aiming to associate each letter of the name Aycliffe with a value trait. So far we have A = ambition; C = courteous; L = learning; I = integrity; F = friendship; F = fortitude; E = empathy. We struggled to think of a value for Y, however have been supported with suggestions by staff, parents and governors. This will now be voted on and a value will be allocated by the end of September. Keep an eye out for the winner on our website!

Finally, the PTA have a MacMillan Coffee and Cake Morning organised for **Friday 27th September 8:30 - 10:00am**. I am very much looking forward to meeting and getting to know more parents, and to sample some amazing cakes - I hear we have some great bakers at school. We welcome any donations you can make on this morning, and ask that you drop them to our school hall. All proceeds on the morning will go to Macmillan Cancer Support.

I hope all our families have a wonderful first half term.

Mrs Atkinson

Headteacher

Safeguarding



Safeguarding Team

Our safeguarding team is:

- Mrs Atkinson - Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Miss Fitz-Simmons - Assistant Headteacher & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Mr Channa - Assistant Headteacher
- Mrs Long - Assistant Headteacher
- Miss Rumph - Mental Health Lead

All members of the Senior Leadership Team complete Level 3 training. If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child please speak to one of the members of the team.

Miss Robson is our attendance lead, and will be in contact with you if concerns arise over your child's attendance. Remember there are new regulations on school attendance, which came into effect as of 1st September 2024.

Key Dates



Dates for your diary:

20/09 - Macmillan Coffee Morning 8.30am-10.00am

25/09 - Van Cols Individual and Sibling Photos

03/10 - Year 6 Height and Weight with the school Nurses

11/10 - Christmas Card Design deadline

28/10 - 01/11 - October half term

12/11-13/11 - Parent Consultation evenings

18/11 - Flu Vaccinations

19/11 - Year 6 TLM with the school nurses

29/11 - PTA Christmas Fair from 3.00pm

06/12 - Occasional day (school closed)

09/12 - Mop-up Flu Vaccinations

20/12 - School Closes at 1.30pm for Christmas Holidays

PTA News



Our fabulous PTA have signed our school up to CASHPOT for schools in association with Asda. All you need to do is download the Asda Rewards App and select our primary school. Asda will donate a percentage of your shop to our school out of their profits. The money raised will be donated to use

for us to spend on valuable resources for our children! Happy shopping and remember to use your Asda Reward app. This event will run until 30th November. [Asda Cashpot for Schools](#)

On Friday 20th September between 8:45 and 10am, we are hosting a Macmillan coffee morning in our school hall. This is a chance for us all to indulge in some delicious cakes, with tea and coffee available as well. All proceeds will be donated to Macmillan Cancer Support - a charity that is very dear to our community. Please come along and join us for the morning. All donations are welcome also. [Macmillan Coffee Morning](#)

Thank you very much to our amazing PTA team.

Parent Governor Vacancy



We would like to hear from parents!

We need to recruit a parent to join our governing board.

School governors have an important role in helping the school run effectively. They have three core functions:

- Planning the strategic direction of the school
- Overseeing financial performance of the school and ensuring money is well spent
- Holding the headteacher or school leadership to account

The governor role is strategic rather than operational. Governors do not get involved with the day to day running of a school, instead they support and challenge the school's leadership team to drive school improvement.

A governor's role includes attending meetings in the evenings and visiting the school when learning is occurring to support with the further improvement. Being a school governor is a commitment and a responsibility but offers you the chance to see first-hand the impact you can make in improving education for children in your community.

As a parent governor, your role is:

- To bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed – you are not there to speak 'on behalf' of the parent body

At Aycliffe Drive Primary School we are committed to equality, diversity and inclusion for all applicants and the wider community. We want to create an environment which represents the surrounding communities. We would like anyone who is familiar with attending meetings and giving viewpoints to consider applying. We encourage applications from all members of society, regardless of background, gender, ethnicity, disability or age (as long as you are over 18).

Please do contact Rosamund Russell, the Chair of Governors, to discuss the role if you are interested in putting yourself forward for election. Please do this by 5pm on Monday 23rd September 2024. Email address: admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk

Road Safety



We have an ongoing challenge of road safety during drop off and pick up.

We have an increasing amount of cars parking on the yellow zig-zag no stopping zones, which is causing potential danger for our children. We have received a number of concerns from parents and residents regarding this, and I urge that we all be more considerate when bringing children to and from school.

Suggestions to help the situation:

1. Do try to walk, scoot, cycle to limit the amount of traffic on the roads.
2. If driving, do try to park a little distance away (there is parking available on the main road and in the shopping area).
3. Use public transport or car share if possible.

I do accept that some parents are forced to drive to avoid being late for work but hopefully we can work together to alleviate the risk to our children. If parents have any suggestions to help with traffic please do notify our school office team. Also, if you witness any dangerous driving please ring 101.

Thank you for your support and understanding on the safety of our children

Pupil Premium Entitlement



If you have ever been in receipt of the following:

- **Income Support**
- **Income-based Jobseekers Allowance**
- **Income-related Employment and Support Allowance**
- **Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999**
- **The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit**
- **Child Tax Credit** (as long as you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and you don't get more than **£16,190** a year)
- **Working Tax Credit run-on** (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- **Universal Credit** (with annual earned income of no more than **£7,400** after tax and not including any benefits you get)

OR

- **currently known to be eligible for free school meals**
- **have received free school meals in the last six years**
- **pupils who are looked after**
- **pupils who are previously looked after (adopted from foster care)**
- **pupils who have parents serving in the armed forces.**

Please let us know as soon as you can, as we may be able to provide further support for your child's learning experience whilst at Aycliffe Drive. Please contact our school office for more information on this. You will be required to provide documentary proof of being in receipt of any of the above. A reminder for all parents in all year groups to please apply for [Free School Meals](#).

School Information



Van Cols Individual and Sibling School Photos

Our school photographers will be in on Wednesday 25th to take individual and sibling photos. Please ensure your child is wearing the correct school uniform, including house badges and hair tied up. If your child usually has PE on Wednesday, please **DO NOT** send them in their PE kit. Please ensure children arrive on time for school as photos will start at 8.30am. Please be aware that we are unable to work around children's individual appointments.

Census Day Menu

On Thursday 3rd October, there is a special Burger Day menu in place. The options are a chicken burger or a Quorn Pattie burger. This will be shown on SchoolGrid within the next day or so. Please ensure meals are ordered as soon as possible. Please note, if you have already ordered a meal for this date, you will need to order again to be in sync with the new menu.

Arbor App

Please ensure you have the Arbor app downloaded to your smart phone. This app allows you to pay for breakfast club and other clubs or trips. The upcoming Parent Consultation appointments must also be booked via the app (available at the start of October). If you have any issues, please contact the school office.

EYFS



The children in Reception have settled in beautifully and have been working hard to learn the new routines in the classroom. They have also started Phonics lessons and have been introduced to the first set of sounds.

- This week, all children will be bringing home a reading book and Reading Record. Please read with your child at home and write a comment in their Reading Record each time you listen to them read. Reading books should be brought into school every day.
- Our P.E days are on Tuesdays and Fridays - the children can come to school dressed in their P.E kits.
- A reminder to please ensure that all of your children's belongings are clearly named!