

# Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

October 9<sup>th</sup> 2020 Volume 6

## **Farewell Miss Clark**

This week Miss Clark, who was working as a Teaching Assistant in Year 1 and 2, has started an exciting new position in another school. Miss Clark was with us for a year and did a superb job at Ox Close. Although she was sad to leave Ox Close, she has taken up an unmissable opportunity. I would like to thank Miss Clark and we all wish her every success in the future.

## **World Mental Health Day**

Today we celebrated World Mental Health Day. The children and staff attended school dressed in yellow. Mental Health has always been a huge priority but this is especially the case at the moment with the COVID situation.

## **Testing**

If you or anyone in your family are displaying COVID-19 symptoms then the following link is useful in order for you to be able to book a test: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. Alternatively, you can also call 119. Under these circumstances, please keep us informed. It is also important that if anyone in your household, child or adult, displays symptoms or has a test all within the household self isolates. This means that all siblings who live with a child or adult who is displaying symptoms should not attend school until the end of the self-isolation period or after the affected person has had a negative test. Please check by calling the school office if you are unsure. Thank you.

## **'Open the Window'**

The COVID situation requires us to think of creative solutions for a host of Ox Close events and traditions. As we are unable to go out into the community or to have parents in school, we must seek ways to continue to showcase the many wonderful things which go on in school. This initiative is termed as 'Open the Window'. I am delighted to say that I have made arrangements with Brendon Renwick, the popular music specialist, to work with the children in small groups separately between now and the end of the autumn term and this will culminate in us being able to jigsaw together a Christmas performance, which will go on the website. I have other ideas in the pipeline around Christmas too. We are also going to make a virtual tour video to show prospective parents. News on other arrangements will follow when they are in place.

## **Halloween - Friday 23rd October**

Normally, we would come together as a whole school and celebrate Halloween through parties, discos and dressing up. We may not be able to celebrate Halloween in the traditional Ox Close way but we have discussed with Ox Close Friends how we can make it special for the children this year. On Friday 23rd October (last day of term), the children are invited to come to school in Halloween themed clothing - this could be dressing up, orange/black/green clothing or just non-school uniform. We are not asking that you go out and purchase anything new - use what you already have. In school, we will then complete Halloween activities in classrooms and for those children on school lunch, have a themed lunch provided by Karen and her staff in the kitchen. The OCF will provide school with resources and also a special treat for each child. To help raise funds for OCF, we ask for a £1 contribution on the day if possible. We are sure that all the children will enjoy the day and have lots of fun.

## **Drop off and Pick up**

This week the Nursery had a visit from the Local Authority Leadership Adviser and, as part of the agenda, we were asked about the arrangements for the collection of children. We respectfully ask that only one parent accompanies the children to and collects the children from school. In addition, in the interests of minimising the risk of the spread of the virus, we ask that parents do not arrive early at school and that they leave as soon as they collect the children. While schools do not have jurisdiction over parents off site, the advice from Durham County Council is that parents may choose to wear a face covering or mask if they feel as though it is difficult to maintain social distancing at the school gate. Thank you for your continued co-operation and for working with us to slow the spread of the virus, something which will inevitably eventually affect all schools.

## Ice Cream Vouchers

At the end of the last academic year, all children in Oxclose Nursery and Ox Close Primary received vouchers to get a free ice cream from the fantastic Sweet Rose Ice Cream Parlour in Spennymoor, Miss Smith's business. This was courtesy of the Ox Close Friends. Miss Smith contacted us recently to say that some people had not used their vouchers yet. If you have an unused voucher then you still have until the end of half term to redeem it (November 1<sup>st</sup>).

## Virtual Classroom

As mentioned above, our Virtual Classroom continues to be available on our school website. There are some children that, as we go through the term, may need to self-isolate for numerous reasons. To ensure that these children are still learning whilst at home, we will upload planning on a weekly basis. These plans contain suggested activities to complete with your child and links to useful websites. In addition, we are also making arrangements to COVID-proof our curriculum in case of further significant longer-term lockdowns.

## School Photographer in School on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Due to COVID-19 we will be taking individual photographs only this year.

## Class Charts

I am delighted to announce our Class Charts winners of the week. In Reception, Rowan D gathered the most points while our top scorer this week in 1/2 was Reid F. In Key Stage 2 Robbie Y scored highest in 3/4 and Evie S was the top scorer in 5/6.

## Attendance

Despite the particular challenges of COVID-19, our attendance has been excellent since the beginning of term. I would like to thank parents for their support with this and also to pay tribute to the children and the staff.

Class 1/2P had the highest attendance this week with 100%. The overall school attendance this year is 97.5% while this week it has been 96.9%. The threshold for what is termed as persistent absence has been determined as 90%. **Unfortunately, we are also unable to authorise term time holidays as we have to follow the Government and Durham County protocol. The Durham County protocol explains that penalty notices must be issued 'in instances of unauthorised holidays in term time (where the holiday gives rise to 7 days or more unauthorised absence in any period...).** The school processes absences and then the County Council pick up on unauthorised absence. The Government have now reinstated fines for unauthorised absences and their expectation is that all children will attend school.

## Dates for the Diary

Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> October 2020	Phototronics – school photos
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> October 2020	School closes for half term
<b>October Half Term</b>	
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2020	Children back to school
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Flu Vaccination Day
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> , Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> November 2020	Parent Consultation Evenings – these will be held virtually and more information will follow.
<b>Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020</b>	<b>PD Day – School Closed</b>
Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> December 2020	School closes for Christmas holidays
<b>Christmas Holidays</b>	
<b>Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021</b>	<b>PD Day – School Closed</b>
Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2021	Children back to school

*A Bowden*

Miss A Bowden  
Head of School

*D Harrison*

Mr D Harrison  
Executive Headteacher