

Ox Close Primary School Newsletter



Dedicated to Excellence

October 23rd 2020 Volume 8

Amazing Half Term

Today marks the end of the first half term of 2020-2021 and it has been quite a unique one! The challenges that we have faced have been considerable but I would like to praise all of the children, staff and parents for their collective efforts in making it a very safe and successful half term. It has been intense and very tiring but the overwhelming sense of happiness which pervades around school is refreshing; school is almost like a parallel universe to the outside world. This week I have carried out a well-being survey and have been heartened by the positivity from the children and the trust which they have in their teachers and school leaders. We know that the next half term is likely to be even more challenging as the number of cases continues to grow through the winter months. There are rigorous risk assessments and procedures in place so that we are prepared for all eventualities and we must all seek to continue to work together as we move towards Christmas and beyond.

'Open the Window' and Harvest

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'. This week Brendon Renwick continued his work on preparing for our Christmas performance, while we also completed our messages of hearts of kindness and friendship. Today, Mrs Simpson made a wonderful display of the word 'HARVEST' with the hearts and I will deliver all of the messages to the various worthy causes. One of the causes is the Solan Trust and Mark Solan kindly agreed to take part in a special video assembly for Y5/6 as we begin an exciting partnership with the organisation. I have also spoken to Treetops at Durham University Hospital and to the Children's Heart Unit Fund and Ward 23 at the Freeman hospital. The children who are on those wards will receive messages of cheer, while we are also sending to Appleton Lodge and Lothian House, as well as 2 very special Ox Close volunteers. I will bring further news on this after half term!

Harvest donations to the St Paul's Centre

Rev. Matt Tarling also sent us an assembly based upon our theme of harvesting kindness and friendship and I also spoke to him about food donations. There is a Foodbank at the St Paul's Centre and they are still welcoming donations of food. Matt says that Friday mornings are a good time to deliver if you are in a position where you can donate some tins or vegetables etc. We understand that these are very challenging times and that things are tight financially but I thought that I would point out that the Foodbank is still in operation and that they would be most grateful for donations.

Wraparound Care

Bookings for next half term are now open on our online booking system. If you require a log in for this system, then you can collect a form from either the Nursery or School office. Please note that there is no Wraparound Care on Monday 30th November due to PD Day and no After School Club on Friday 18th December.

Halloween - Friday 23rd October

Today has been a very different day in school and the children have really bought into the Halloween theme. The costumes have been magnificent. The children have completed Halloween activities in classrooms and school lunch children had a Halloween themed lunch, provided by Karen and the team. We would also like to thank Kaye Roberts, who has provided a special treat for each child. All funds raised from today will go to the Ox Close Friends, who do such a great job.

Parent Consultations - 23rd, 24th and 25th November

Due to the current situation, we are not able to hold these as face to face meetings however we value the relationship we have with parents and still want to meet with parents and share how your child has settled in and is progressing in school. We have therefore decided to hold these via Zoom. After half term, you will receive a text to book your appointment in the normal way and then on the day of the appointment you will receive the information you need to log in to the call. If you do not wish to hold the meeting via Zoom then please let the office know and we can arrange for the class teacher to phone you at a separate time.

COVID-19

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.

Virtual Classroom

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. Mrs Harvey has started recording some Geography lessons and has almost finished 3/4 and will be moving to 1/2 and 5/6 to record some lesson starters for them soon.

EYFS and Key Stage 1 - Use of Seesaw

We understand that, in the given climate, communication between parents and teachers is very limited. This communication is very important, particularly in the early years of a child's education, and in an effort to address this, EYFS (Reception) and KS1 (1/2C, 1/2P and 1/2R) will be introducing the Seesaw app to parents after half term. You will all be sent a letter, after the holiday, with instructions about how to download the app for your child. It is a very simple tool which will enable you to see some of the activities that your child has been doing in the classroom. For KS1, this will also replace the homework emails you have been receiving. Homework will be posted on Seesaw each week and you will be able to upload photographs of your child's completed work for their class teacher to see. We hope that this will help you to feel more involved in your child's learning and also ensure that children are aware that the work they are completing at home is recognised and valued by their class teacher. Any children who need to isolate will also be able to post the work they are completing at home.

Meal Bookings - Please remember to make bookings in advance.

Thank you to those parents who have already booked meals for next half-term.

Class Charts

I am delighted to announce our Class Charts winners of the week and for the half term. In Reception, Scarlett M gathered the most points while our top scorer this week in 1/2 was Caleb W. In Key Stage 2 Harmony D scored highest in 3/4 and Katie-Mae S was the top scorer in 5/6. Over the half term, huge congratulations go to the highest points scorers who are as follows: Harry P (Reception), Caleb W (1/2), Lucy G (3/4) and Katie-Mae S (5/6). Well done all!

Attendance

Despite the particular challenges of COVID-19, our attendance has been excellent since the beginning of term. Once again, 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 97.6% while this week it has also been 97.6%. 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

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

A Bowden

Miss A Bowden
Head of School

D Harrison

Mr D Harrison
Executive Headteacher