

**St Mary’s CE Primary School**

**Parent Newsletter**

**November 2016**

**Christmas Celebrations**

Please find below a list of the key dates for our Christmas celebrations throughout December:

**FOSM Christmas Fair:** Friday 2nd (5.00 – 7.00).

**KS1 Theatre Visit:** Monday 5th (during school day).

**KS1 Christmas Performances\*:** Mon 12th - 9.30 (dress rehearsal, this is open to families to attend).

Mon 12th – 2.00/Tues 13th – 9.30.

**Acorns Christmas Carol Service (Choir singing):** Tues 13th – 6.30 (at St Mary’s Church)

**Christmas Parties:** Weds 14th (afternoon)

**KS2 Christmas Performance\*:** Thurs 15th – 6.00 (at St Mary’s Church)

**Term ends:** Friday 16th (3.20/3.30). **Pupils return on Wednesday 4th January.**

***\*****A further letter will follow very shortly with details of tickets.*

Date for your diary: **Friday 18th November 2016** – Anti-bullying /Children in need day – **non uniform day**.

Donate 50p and come dressed in blue or super hero costume.

**Attendance and Punctuality**

Our attendance rate continues to be above the national average. However, we wish to take a more proactive stance regarding pupils who are ‘Persistently Absent’ (attendance below 90%) and with those pupils who are persistently late in arriving at school.

**Please be aware that any child arriving after 9.20 will be marked as ‘absent’ rather than ‘late’ and this will have an effect on a child’s attendance figure.** Families of children who are classed as ‘Persistently Absent’ will then become subject to the procedure known as ‘Spotlight’ which is a school’s means for dealing with attendance issues via a legal route. This is a very important change and further details are contained in a letter on the reverse of this page.

**Lost Property**

A reminder that the lost property store is in the cube at the start and end of the school day if your child has lost any items.

**A Prayer**

Dear God,

As we approach the time of Advent, please help us to consider those less fortunate and prepare us to reach out and help them in any way we can.

Amen

**Forthcoming Events at St Mary’s Church**

**November**

**6th Service of Memory (4.30pm)**

A service to remember our loved-ones who have died.

**13th Remembrance Day Service (10am)**

With bugler.

**27th Advent Sunday (6.30pm**)

Advent Carols and reflections.

**December**

**18th Main Carol Service (6.30pm)**

With mince pies and punch.

**24th Crib Service (5pm)**

A traditional retelling of the Christmas Story for children)

**Midnight Communion (11.30pm)**

The first ‘mass’ of Christmas.

**School Office**

As the school expands in pupil numbers, so do the demands on our office team. We are making adjustments to some of our practices and one of these is that office staff will no longer take items forgotten by children to classrooms until morning break at the earliest. Please be aware of this and encourage your child to develop their independence so they have everything they need for the day ahead.

**FOSM**

Many thanks to all who supported the recent discos. Together they raised a total of £679.12 – an excellent start to the year. We appreciate the efforts of all those who volunteered to make these events such a success. Planning is well underway for the Christmas Fair on Friday 2nd December between 5.00 and 7.00. If you would like to get involved in supporting any way, please contact the school – any help, no matter how small is always appreciated.

**Spotlight On Attendance Letter**

St Mary’s Church of England Primary School is working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance.

**We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

It is a parent’s legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence. Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Those children who do not attend regularly:

-do not achieve well in exams

-find it difficult to maintain friendships

-are more likely to become involved in crime

-miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work.

Absence can only be authorised by the Headteacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration. Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

**Legal action that may be taken include:**

**Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

**Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

**Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

**Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record. How does your child compare?**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Attendance during one school year…** | **equals this number of days absent…** | **which is approximately this many weeks absent…** | **which means this number of lessons missed.** |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 200 lessons |
| 70% | 57 days | 11.5 weeks | 290 lessons |

**Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.**

If your child’s level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance.   After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

We will improve attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable.   You will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and the level of fines.

**Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.**

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Smith

Headteacher