

## September 2024 Newsletter

### Welcome

A warm welcome back to all our families and to all our new starters. It has been great to see everyone back in school and enjoying time with friends and learning together in the classrooms.

During the first week of the new school term, we have been working hard on our behaviour curriculum as learning time is so important and we have high expectations for our children. As rewards, we continue to offer Dojo points, star of the week and hot chocolate with the headteacher (this was set up and will continue as a reward for children who are always role models in school and show exemplary behaviour all of the time).

#### Our Vision and Values

'Our vision is to empower everyone to be brilliant every day, releasing their inner superhero so that they can flourish and thrive.' We are also working hard as a team to develop our values, helping everyone to be **kind, resilient, honest and inclusive**.

#### Priorities for the year

This year we will be focusing school improvement actions in the following areas. **Writing** is our key focus and we are developing our writing routines including a focus on grammar and sentence structure. Secondly, we are looking at our provision for pupils with SEND and pupils identified as disadvantaged as well as developing a greater understanding of protected characteristics. In addition to this we continue to develop our online safety and acceptable use of ICT to ensure that everyone is safe, respectful and kind whilst online. The governing body and the school leadership team continue to look at the strategic direction of the school and build further links with other educators.

#### Home School Agreement

As a school, we are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers. To help support this, we are re-introducing our Home School Agreement which sets out how we hope everyone can work together to ensure each child can achieve their full potential.

This week, the school will send home a link to complete the Home School Agreement electronically. We ask that this is completed by all parents by the end of September.

#### Attendance

At Firfield, we have really high expectations for all of our children and we expect children to attend school regularly to give them the best chance for success. Attendance is a



national priority and although as a school the overall attendance is good and persistent absence (less than 90%) is lower than the national average, we want to continue to improve our attendance and punctuality. Our knowledge-rich curriculum is based on the principle that learning is well sequenced so if children are missing learning time, then they find it harder to keep up with their peers and fall behind.

There have been significant national changes to attendance which came into force in August and these were shared by Mr Thurgood at the end of the summer term. As a school, we will always seek to provide support for families with attendance issues and we encourage all parents to work with the school to improve attendance. For most parents, they will see little impact of these changes as most of our children have fantastic attendance of over 96%. We also understand that for some children with particular medical needs, attending school regularly is more challenging and we will continue to help to support these families.

From September, the penalty notices for persistent absence and term time holidays have increased as shared by Mr Thurgood. The school is expected to issue penalty notices where attendance hasn't improved despite support and/or where unauthorised term time holidays have been taken. Term time leave must be requested using a yellow form which can be collected from the office. Term time leave will only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances**. The school may issue penalty notices for unauthorised term time leave or where the school suspects that a child may be on an unauthorised term time holiday.

If you have any questions about attendance or want to discuss your child's attendance in more detail, please contact Mr Thurgood via the school office.

Thank you for your continued support in emphasising the importance of school and for promoting regular school attendance.

## Welcome

This term we welcome Miss Crowder (Year 5 Teacher), Miss King (Year 1 Teacher) and Mrs Pearce (Teaching Assistant in Year 2) to the Firfield team.

## Homework

We have introduced our new Homework Policy this academic year based on the feedback you gave us last year.

We expect that:

- Every child reads at least 4 times a week and records it on BoomReader. We have prioritised reading as regular reading gives the children the biggest chance of academic success.
- Children complete their Brain Gym sheet.
- Optional extras – For children that want to do even more, we have a range of optional apps such as Spelling Shed, TTRockstars and Numbots.

Homework will be given out weekly on a Friday. Teachers will upload answers to the Brain Gym sheet on Class Dojo by Wednesday the following week. **We expect that homework is marked at home and there is no expectation that the homework sheet comes back into school.** Teachers will see the impact of the homework sheet through the children making quicker progress in class and being able to retrieve more information in the wider curriculum.

SEND pupils will receive homework that is focused on their emerging needs and this may look slightly different to their peers.

## Pick up and drop offs

Please can we remind you that children must be supervised on the playground until 8:55am when the whistle goes and they are collected by their class teacher. Children then need to be collected at 3:30pm at the end of the school day. Year 6 pupils are allowed to walk to and from school, and from the summer term Year 5 will be able to do so too with permission of parents and carers (after completing a permission form). A reminder that children cannot be dropped off or collected by a sibling that is under 14. We appreciate your support with this.

## Safeguarding Team

The four designated safeguarding leads in school are James Yellop, Rachel Tittershill, Adam Thurgood and Kirsty Shepherd. If you have any concerns about a child at Firfield Primary School, please speak to one of the leads. If you have immediate concerns that a child is suffering or at risk of harm, please call Starting Point on 01629 533190. After the annual changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (June 2024) we have updated our safeguarding policies and documents. These will be available on the school website at the end of the month.

## School Leadership Team

A reminder of the members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). This consists of Mr Yellop as Headteacher, Mr Thurgood as Deputy Headteacher who leads on the Quality of Education and Miss Tittershill as Assistant Headteacher who leads on behaviour and nurture support. Miss Trigg continues as Special Needs Coordinator and Miss Neasham is our School Business Manager based in the office.

Finally, our Key Stage Leaders, who can be contacted via Class Dojo or the school office, can help with any questions or concerns you may have in the year groups they lead.

Mrs Tolson is our Reception lead (EYFS) and is responsible for phonics and reading. Mrs Tomlinson now leads Key Stage 1 (Year 1&2) as well as writing and Mr Tolson leads Key Stage 2 (Year 3-6) and maths.



## PTA – ASDA Rewards, Facebook and AGM

The PTA would like all families to select Firfield as their nominated school if you shop at and use the ASDA rewards app. We have already raised nearly £200!



The PTA have a Facebook Group for parents and carers which enables them to communicate with you quicker and more effectively. They also use the group to advertise events and keep you updated on fundraising activities.



To join, you will be asked a set of membership questions which will be reviewed and once they have confirmed your details match the school records, you will be accepted into the group. They are unable to provide access to anyone who does not complete these questions.

We really hope you will find this useful in keeping up to date with fundraising initiatives and activities.

The PTA annual general meeting will be held at Firfield Primary School on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 6.00pm. Parents are welcome to attend. The PTA are always looking for new members who can offer support throughout the year.

Finally, if anyone is interested in the role of Chair, Vice chair, Treasurer or Secretary of the committee they can email [PTA@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:PTA@firfield.derbyshire.sch.uk) to register their interest or for information.

## Birthdays

A polite reminder that we ask parents not to send in sweets to give out on birthdays. Thank you for your anticipated support, we will always try to celebrate special occasions as much as we can. In KS1, birthdays are celebrated as part of the Friday Celebration Assembly.

## School Uniform

The children have come back to school looking smart in their uniforms. We remind parents that jewellery and make-up should not be worn to school including nail varnish. This also includes temporary transfers or tattoos. Children are allowed to wear one pair of simple ear studs or small sleepers but should avoid any ear jewellery that could potentially cause injury to the pupil or their peers. We ask if parents do decide to allow their child to have their ears pierced that they do so in the longer school holidays so they can be removed on PE / Swimming days.

We also remind parents that suitable hair styling should be encouraged in school, for example no hair dyes or extravagant hairstyles such as mohawks or shaved patterns in hair. Further guidance on school uniform is available on the school website, use the QR code below for a direct link.



## Prospective Parent Tours



There will be a number of parent tours this term for families with children looking to start school in September 2025. If you know anyone who may be looking for a school for their child, we would be grateful if you could share the dates and times below:

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am  
Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 1.30pm  
Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October at 4.30pm  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 9.30am  
Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 1.30pm  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> November at 4.30pm

## Free School Meals

We appreciate that as the cost of living rises, some families may find it harder to manage their finances. We would encourage any family who find themselves in this position to consider applying for free school meals.

If your circumstances have changed and you think you may be entitled to Free School Meals the application is quick and easy. Please follow the link below to apply.

[Apply for Free School Meals](#)

## School Meals

Can we please remind parents/carers that school meals should be booked in advance via your ParentPay login. A reminder that the daily cost is now £3.25.

## WRAP Club Costs

With new pupils starting the school, we remind parents that the costs for attending our WRAP club are:

£5 per breakfast session

£8.50 per afterschool session

## Parking

A polite reminder regarding parking around school at drop off and pick up time. The local community is very important to the school. Please try, wherever possible, to park further away from the school and take a little extra time to walk. There is much more space on Wilsthorpe Road or the side roads off Wilsthorpe Road.

## WRAP Club Parking

We remind parents that when dropping off or picking up children from before or after school club that they use the spaces nearest to the school rather than the spaces on the left as you enter the car park. If you are arriving after 8:15am please park outside the school grounds.

## Travel Smart Award



We have continued to maintain our bronze award status and are getting close to achieving silver

## Travel Smart Week

The Autumn Travel Smart Week Campaign will take place from 21st to 25th October 2024 during International Walk to School month. This week we will be collecting information on the children's usual and preferred modes of transport. To achieve silver, we are working on increasing the number of children that walk, scooter or cycle to school, so it is a great opportunity to encourage our children and families to use alternative methods of travel.



## SEPTEMBER 2024

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> – Curriculum News Out

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> - Year 5 Swimming Starts

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September – 2<sup>nd</sup> October- Book Fair

## OCTOBER 2024

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Parents and Teachers Association AGM

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> - 9:30am New Parent Tour

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> - Phonics Workshop for Parents (4pm)

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> - Individual and Sibling Photos

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> - Book Evening

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> - 1:30pm New Parent Tour

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> - Year 4 Egyptian Partake

Monday 21<sup>st</sup> - Friday 25<sup>th</sup> – Travel Smart Week

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> - 4:30pm New Parent Tour

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> - Parents' Evening

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> - Parents' Evening

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> – Last Day of Term



## INSET DAYS

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2025

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2025