



HOW WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
ESTABLISHED 1968

Head Teacher: Mrs C Rowe
Newsletter 2



2nd October 2020

Dear Parents,

It always seems impossible until it's done.

Nelson Mandela

How Wood School Improvement Plan

Each year, the governors, staff and I, strive to make improvements in the educational provision that we provide for all the children at How Wood School. This year especially, we are committed to ensure that your children have the best education possible and regain the many opportunities they need to fulfil their potential. We have three main objectives in our How Wood School Improvement Plan, which has been agreed by the governors and our Hertfordshire Improvement Partner, Julie Kemp.

Priority 1: *To support pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing to aid full school return and ongoing provision*

Priority 2: *To ensure progress & attainment in maths is accelerated by exposing and addressing gaps in learning*

Priority 3: *Continued review and development of the curriculum to include Black & Asian British History*

Of course, the above are our key priorities however, reading and writing remain of high importance and we will always strive to maintain and deliver a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum.

Attendance

Please may I politely remind parents of the DfE statutory attendance requirements as set out below.

Attendance expectations

From the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct requirements

The Department for Education has made it clear that **'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'**. Head Teachers do not have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

You will no doubt understand that as the Head Teacher I have a duty, along with the school Governors, to promote the highest attendance levels possible. The school is set very high attendance targets by the Government; and our attendance data is regularly scrutinised by the Local Authority and Ofsted and is one of the factors by which they measure the success of the school. The academic progress of a child, whatever his/her level of academic ability, will be adversely affected if they miss school. If a child is unwell then they should not come to school, but if, in addition, they have other time off school, then this will definitely have a detrimental effect on their progress. ***Please take this into consideration when planning trips in the future.***

If you believe your circumstances may be exceptional, **then please discuss your request with me before making final plans.** I will review each request for absence carefully, consulting with the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer where and if necessary, and give you an answer as soon as possible. **If you need to make a request for leave of any description, then please download a holiday request form** from the school website or school office. We ask that all requests are put in writing using the form **at least two weeks prior to any leave.**

The overall attendance record of the vast majority of our pupils is very good and I very much appreciate your support in respecting and supporting the school's policy on attendance. ***The policy can be found on the school's website. Part of our new policy outlines the requirement for all parents to provide a written note or letter explaining their child's absence. Staff will actively be requesting letters and it would be most helpful if parents could send this letter in with their child when they return to school.***

May we also remind you that if you need to collect your child from school for any reason, they must be signed out and signed in if returning to school on the same day.

Harvest Festival Food Bank Donations

Thank you for the donations we have received so far. Please bring non-perishable items to the reception area where we have two containers prepared to receive them.



School Uniform

The weather has turned and autumn is most definitely upon us. Please can all children have outdoor shoes, wellington boots/old trainers etc. to wear on the playground and field. Thank you.

Walk to School Week

Next week is 'Walk to School Week' (please see email & letter from Mrs Barnes).

Important messages from her letter:

Daily theme – Every day this week children may wear silly socks and trainers if they wish.

Friday – will be 'Funky Friday' where the children may wear non uniform if they wish.

Competition - This year we will be holding a whole school competition to see which class can have the most children walk to school throughout the week. The running total will be tallied up and the class with the highest percentage of children walking over the whole week will win a prize which will be awarded before half term. Remember to qualify as a walker you must either walk the whole way to school or part way. Parking on Spooners Drive and walking into school from the main road will not count as walking!

Black History Month

This year, Black History Month will serve as a precursor to including Black & Asian British history into our curriculum. The children will be researching famous Black & Asian British Artists and creating artwork inspired by their works. They will also be considering the contributions of Black and Asian poets, authors, musicians and scientists throughout British history. Year 5 & 6 will be visiting St Albans Cathedral to take part in the Forgotten Soldiers Exhibition & Workshop:

The British African Colonial Soldiers of the Second World War.

Celebrating Diversity at How Wood School

The hall display is changing. Our new display will feature the many different nationalities of the children and families at our school. I have found it fascinating talking to the children this week about where their parents and grandparents originate from and have discovered that we have families with heritages from nearly every continent; countries include: New Zealand, Australia, Wales, Algeria, Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, Greece, Kenya, India, Zimbabwe, Sweden, Poland, Bulgaria, Iraq, Iran, Scotland, India, China, South Africa and more!



Please look out for a Home Learning task that I will be sending home next week to gather some fascinating facts about our children's heritages, which will be included in our hall display.



Mental Health & Wellbeing

Over the past two weeks, the staff have received the following training to support the mental health and wellbeing of our children and our school community:

- COVID Related Trauma and Anxiety and Strategies to Support Children
- Adult Mental First Aid Refresher Training

Mrs Saunders (Mental Health Lead) & Mrs Oliver (Pastoral Support Worker) are soon to complete Drawing & Talking training. This training will enable Mrs Saunders and Mrs Oliver to identify and support children who may be able to benefit from the therapy method. Drawing and Talking's therapy will provide us with an intervention that is a 'proactive' rather than 'reactive' technique to use with our children.

I hope you are all able to have a restful weekend.

Kindest regards

Cynthia Rowe

Dates for your diary

New dates in red

Date	Event
WB 5 th October	Walk to School Week
Friday 9 th October	'Funky Friday' non uniform day
Monday 12 th October	Yr 5 & Yr 6 visit to Forgotten Soldiers Exhibition & Workshop
Wednesday 14 th October during the morning	Harvest assembly
Saturday 10 th October	World Mental Health Day
WB 19 th October	Transition Week begins
Friday 23 rd October	Inset Day
Monday 26th - Friday 30th October	Half Term
Monday 16 th November	Anti-Bullying Day
Friday 27 th November	Occasional Day
Friday 18 th December - Finish at 1.30pm	Last day of term

How Wood Primary School

Term Dates 2020 - 2021

Autumn Term

INSET Wednesday 2nd September

Children back to school: Thursday 3rd September to Thursday 22nd October 2020

Half term: Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October 2020

INSET Friday 23rd October

Children back to school: Monday 2nd November to Friday 18th December 2020

Occasional Day Friday 27th November

Spring Term

INSET Monday 4th January 2021

Children back to school: Tuesday 5th January to Friday 12th February 2021

Half term: Monday 15th February to Friday 19th February 2021

Children back to school: Monday 22nd February to Friday 26th March 2021

Summer Term

INSET Monday 12th April

Children back to school: Tuesday 13th April to Friday 28th May 2021

May Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May 2021

Half term: Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June 2021

Children back to school: Monday 7th June to Wednesday 21st July 2021

INSET Thursday 22nd July