



HOLLY PARK NEWSLETTER

'We support our children to be their best.'

ISSUE 12

Friday 29th November 2024

www.hollyparkschool.co.uk

Reading Volunteers

We are hoping to recruit adult volunteers (parents, carers, aunts, grandparents, etc) to read with some of our children, once a week. If this is something you (or another family member) are interested in then please join us for coffee and biscuits: Friday 6th December 8.50-9.30am in The Enchanted Forest with Miss Sampson and Mrs Walton.

No experience required—we will provide training. This will be a unique opportunity for you to help the school whilst developing your own skills in supporting young readers. ALL ARE WELCOME!

Smartphone Free Schools

Launch of the Barnet Smartphone Free Schools Campaign

I am sure that many of you have seen coverage in the press recently about the detrimental effects of smartphones on young people, particularly when available to be used both at school and at home. To quote The Guardian, "A recent House of Commons education committee report found that extended screen time had become increasingly normal for young children and teenagers... According to the report, nearly 25% of children and young people use their smartphones in a way that is consistent with a behavioural addiction."

In June of this year, seventeen state schools out of twenty in Southwark announced that they were taking collective action to shift away from pupil usage of smartphones. In North London, you may be aware of the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign whose website outlines some of the serious harm that comes from smartphone usage:

<https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk>

At Holly Park, we are fortunate enough to not have an issue with smartphone usage in school; however, I am aware that some parents will feel pressured into buying one for their child, particularly in the lead-up to Christmas or as they become an independent traveller in preparation for secondary school. As experienced Headteachers, we are all too aware of the issues caused on smartphones and the exposure to age-inappropriate material that can be accessed relatively easily. We feel the difference in our schools that even regular screen use is having on our children's development and want to ensure that we support our children's future wellbeing. To that end, we have decided (along with many other Barnet schools) to support the North London Smartphone Free Childhood campaign and work to encourage parents to delay when their child gets a smartphone. Buying a smartphone for your child while at primary school is of course entirely a parental decision but we hope that by supporting the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign, banning smartphones in school and creating a 'not yet' school culture, it will add weight to any discussions and decision making with your child at home should you feel uncomfortable with them having one.

If your child is an independent traveller or you are concerned about being able to contact them there are other 'non-smart' phone options available. A list of alternative phones to smartphones can be found [here](#).

By working collaboratively as schools and with our parent community, we hope to create a new norm in Barnet that means children will start to have smartphone access at an older age and we can reduce the negative impact that comes from having a smartphone in their pocket.

I have emailed out a letter today about this issue which has a link to where parents can sign the Smartphone Parent Pact.



PTA Jazzy Jumper Day

Jazzy jumper day is on Friday 6th December. Children should come to school wearing ordinary school uniform but wearing a 'Jazzy Jumper' on the top instead of the school sweatshirt. In exchange children should bring in donations of Christmas chocolates and bottled good for the tombolas.

PTA Christmas Fair

The PTA Christmas fair is on Saturday 7th December 12-3pm. The PTA will be welcoming all families and friends for some Christmas fun. Of course, Santa will be visiting too!

The PTA still need volunteers for selling cakes and running games – this can be grown-ups or children that could be supervised by their grown-ups.

Help Your Children Remember More – Parent session Monday 2nd December

This year, class teachers are focusing on how they can help children remember more. If you are interested in gaining a clear understanding of the work that is being done then Ms Sampson will be doing a presentation in the hall at 9am on Monday. She will be outlining some of the neuroscience connected to memory, sharing strategies and example retrieval activities that class teachers will be implementing in lessons as well as suggestions on how you can support with this at home to help your child achieve the best academic success. All our welcome.

London Youth Games

One of our pupils - Bronagh - took part in the London Youth Games at the weekend. It is a competition where all the 32 London boroughs compete against each other in various sports throughout the year including cross-country. Bronagh's parents were contacted following the school cross-country to say she had been selected as part of the U11 girls squad (year 5 and 6). It was at Parliament Hill / Hampstead Heath and Bronagh loved every minute! She started right at the back but managed to overtake loads of children running up the steep hill on the second lap and ended up 58th out of 199 so she was very pleased.



Character Education – Optimism

As part of our work on **Character Education**, we will be focussing on different positive character traits each half term. This half term we are looking at **OPTIMISM**. The children will be thinking about what makes them happy and how to change negative thoughts into positive thoughts. They will learn through reading books, watching short films and discussing real-life scenarios. There will also be a homework which will be to keep a gratitude diary for a few days. We hope that parents and carers will discuss these ideas with their children at home so that we can promote an optimistic approach to life and better mental wellbeing.



Stars in Our School

Today is national 'stars in our schools' day. This is a day to celebrate school support staff. It takes a whole team to make a school a safe and happy place for all children. School support staff help children learn, keep them safe and happy and make sure schools run smoothly. They are the mealtime supervisors, office staff, teaching assistants and premises staff. These members of staff are very much valued in our school and I would like to extend my personal thanks to all of them for what they do.



Attendance

Whole school attendance for last week was 93%

Well done to Y4 Mulberry and Y5 Juniper Class with the best attendance at 99%.

Dates

Monday 2 nd December	Meeting for all parents: Learning
Monday 2 nd December	Decorations Day
Wednesday 4 th December	Reading meeting for Reception parents

Friday 6 th December	Jazzy Jumper Day
Saturday 7 th December	PTA Christmas fair
Tuesday 10 th December	Y1 Church Visit
Tuesday 10 th December	Nursery stay and play
Wednesday 11 th December	Christmas Lunch
Thursday 12 th December	Nativity Dress Rehearsal
Monday 16 th December	Y3 Nativity at 2.15pm
Tuesday 17 th December	EYFS parties
Tuesday 17 th December	Y3 Nativity at 2.15pm
Wednesday 18 th December	Y3 & Y5 parties
Thursday 19 th December	Y1, Y2, Y4 & Y6 parties
Friday 20 th December	Term ends at 1.30pm

There is facility to translate this newsletter and the whole school website at the bottom of the website home page.



**WE HAVE
ACHIEVED**

