King Street Primary & Pre - School

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 5th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to warmly welcome all our families back to school for our new academic year. I would also like to welcome all our new families in Reception, Nursery and across the wider school as we have many new children this term.

We are very fortunate to have children and families who are so friendly and welcoming and it feels like our new families have been here forever. Our children always settle well and make new friends quickly and this year is no different. The sound of chatter, learning and excitement fills our classrooms once again and the school feels full of life.

As always, I will continue to send out a weekly Friday newsletter that will keep you up to date with what has been happening in school and things that will be taking place. I apologise in advance for this long newsletter, but there is always a lot of information at the beginning of a new school year and it is important that all of our new families receive this information too. Class teachers will also send out their termly class newsletter today which will detail information regarding the curriculum topics, PE days, reading books and any other relevant information. It will also give you the class teacher’s email so you can make direct contact with them. Please do respect their work-life balance and understand that emails will only be answered within working hours and, as teachers are teaching during the day, responses will usually be given before or after school. Any urgent messages can be given to the school office.

**Meet the teacher and phonics event**

Next week (Monday 8th) we will be hosting our annual ‘meet the teacher’ event, for children in Year 1-6, where you can see your child’s classroom and meet the staff. Teachers will build upon information given in their newsletter and you will hear more about specific expectations within their year groups and can ask any questions you may have. We will run 2 sessions so that families with more than one child can attend both meetings. The sessions will run from 3:30pm-4.00pm and then repeat at 4.00pm-4:30pm. There will be no need to book a place at these sessions. You are welcome to attend either of the sessions. Please enter the building via the doors your child uses on a morning and you will be directed to the classrooms.

On the same night, for children in Reception, there will be a phonics information event for parents. This will also run over the same 2 sessions. This will be very informative, helping parents understand the phonics programme we use and how they can help extend learning at home as this is a crucial stage in helping your child learn to read. We look forward to seeing you all there.

**School timings**

I would like to give a reminder to all families that the school start time for children in Reception to Year 6 is 8.45am. We have an ‘Early Bird, soft start’ to the school day, which children can access from 8.30am when the school doors open. This 15-minute session not only allows children to settle before the school day but also allows staff to extend learning opportunities through additional reading, maths and consolidate other curriculum knowledge. The school day finishes at 3:15pm.

Our Nursery sessions are 8:30am- 11:30am (mornings) and 12:15pm -3:15pm (afternoons).

Where children are persistently late, will invite families into school to look at how we can support to improve this, so children can achieve their potential.

**Attendance**

Last year, new legislation came into force regarding the criteria for, and the issue of, penalty notices to address national issues around lower school attendance post- Covid. A national framework for parental fines was introduced for any pupil who misses 10 or more half days within any 10-week period.

Please note that if you request a Leave of Absence, any Penalty Notice/s issued will be at the new rates and trigger the start of the three-year threshold period, as specified below.

The following changes have been made:

* the number of unauthorised absences that may trigger a potential fine - **10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a 10 school week period.**
* the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child - **a maximum of 2 penalty notices will be issued (per parent, per child) within a 3 year period**
* for the first penalty notice issued to each parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period - **the amount of the penalty notice has increased from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days**
* any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date - **the second penalty notice issue is now set at £160 to be paid within 28 days - NB: No discount for earlier payment is offered**
* any further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty issued - **The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child. If, however, you have a history of offences of this nature, you may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can fine you 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. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school**

Please contact school if you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance so that we can offer support and work together to ensure your child attends school regularly and on time. We are here to help and always aim to avoid the Local Authority issuing fines.

**After School Clubs**

We are restarting our after-school activity clubs the week beginning 15th September. These will run for the whole autumn term. A booking form will be issued next week through Eschools so please look out for this. We do expect the clubs to be popular, as always, and spaces will be limited. If children would like to attend, they must be able to attend for the whole term. Many of the clubs/coaches are being paid for by the school at no cost to families and we do not want to waste coaching costs if children do not attend. Where children regularly do not attend clubs they have requested, this may limit their ability to access other clubs in the future. Please also note that clubs finish at 4.15pm and children must be collected. They cannot walk home at this time as the dark nights begin to draw in.

**School applications**

It is that time of year again. The application process for both Primary and Secondary Admissions 2026 Intake (current Nursery and Year 6 children) is now open. Please note that children in our nursery are not automatically enrolled into reception. All families must make an application to the Local Authority.

If your child is due to start **Reception (Primary School)** in September 2026, you can now apply online. Please visit [www.durham.gov.uk/primaryschoolplaces](http://www.durham.gov.uk/primaryschoolplaces) to apply. **The closing date for making your application is 15th January 2025. Parents are informed on 16th April 2026 which school they have been allocated.** We will be holding an open evening for our Reception class places on 29rd September, 5pm for anyone wishing to visit.

Parents can make their application for **Secondary School, current Year 6 children,** online by visiting [www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.durham.gov.uk%2Fschooladmissions&data=05%7C01%7Cj.bromley200%40kingstreet.durham.sch.uk%7C685015fadb284750356408da8f2b0f9d%7C45dfff5283644d73bf3a8f98bdf10d87%7C0%7C0%7C637979712346575138%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=zI3OLbaF7Jj63PvN4I2Z%2B%2BzUi3yt7p0aaZFUcVwIY74%3D&reserved=0)  **The Closing Date for Secondary School Applications is the 31st October 2024**.

If you have any queries please contact school admissions directly on schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk or by telephone from the School Admissions and Transport Team on 03000 265896.

**Year 6- Whitworth Open night**

There will be on Open night for families to look around Whitworth Park Academy on Thursday 18th September at 6pm. Please see their social media pages for more information.

**Contact details and medical information**

We are aware that over the summer break some families have moved home and have not updated their contact details. This is also the case with mobile phone numbers and email addresses. Please keep contact details up to date. Phone and email details must be kept up to date as this is how we will contact you in the event of any queries or an emergency situation. Our Eschools platform also relies on these details to keep you up to date with newsletters, parents’ evenings and other letters and events. Please do not miss out on this information by not updating your details.

You can contact the office at kingstreet@durhamlearning.net

If you do not have your log on details for the Eschools platform, please contact the school office who can organise this for you. When we hold our parents’ evening later this term, we use the platform for your convenience so you will need to know your details.

This term we are asking families to update any medical information we hold on your child. When children are young, conditions can change over time and sometimes medication is no longer required. Please ensure we have the most recent information available and that medication we hold is in date and clearly labelled. We cannot administer any medication without parental consent.

**School lunches/packed lunch**

A reminder that if your child would like to swap from school meals to packed lunch (or vice versa), we do require one week’s notice. This is done by emailing the school office.

**School building work and redevelopment**

We are very pleased that our continued building work went well over the summer and we were able to return without any major disruption - we are really thankful for this! Internal works are still ongoing and some decorating still needs to be finished but staff worked hard over the break to ensure that classrooms were lovely for children to come back to. You may have noticed some improvements in our school yard too with the addition of a messy kitchen in the big yard, more activities in the EYFS yard and we are delighted that our school bus is also much closer to being completed. I would like to thank all the staff who have contributed to these developments and also a parent (Mr Peter Bright) who has offered a huge amount of help to get our bus ready for its fixtures and fittings. We now have a warmer, drier school and it is looking wonderful. We have purchased, upon request from the children, more equipment for the school yard and this will be introduced to the children over the coming weeks. It is an exciting time for them to see the developments we continue to make. Much of this is funded through the fundraising we do and they enjoy being part of that.

**Upcoming events**

Please use the diary dates at the bottom of this email for the events that are happening this term. Where individual events require you to sign up, further information will be sent in due course. Our school disco is one of our most popular events so please look out for this next week. We also look forward to a Harvest Service, pantomime and our nativity performances this term too. Please note that the school photographer will be in school on Wednesday 24th September. Staff in school will organise for any siblings in school to have their photograph together. Photograph samples are then sent home for you to purchase online.

We look forward to a very busy Autumn term and hope to see many of you on Monday at the information events. If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch. If there is any information you believe is important to pass on about your child, staff are always available on the school yard, by email or you can make an appointment through the school office. Teachers email addresses are on their termly newsletter.

Joanne Bromley

Head Teacher

**Diary dates**

Monday 8th September - Meet the Teacher Event Year 1-6 (3.30pm, repeated at 4pm)

Monday 8th September- Phonics information event- Reception class (3.30pm, repeated at 4pm)

Tuesday 16th September- Y6 children to visit Whitworth Academy

Thursday 18th September- Y6 Open evening for parents at Whitworth Academy 6pm

Wednesday 24th September- School photo day

Monday 29th September- Reception open evening- September 2025 starters 5pm

Thursday 2nd October- Harvest service at St. Andrew’s Church 1.15pm

Thursday 23rd October- Y5 reflection visit to church

Thursday 23rd October- Halloween disco in school

Friday 24th October- School Closes for Half Term Holiday