

# Whitehill Junior School

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Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

## Autumn Term Update 2

Having stated that I try and keep 'updates' to a minimum, the start of an academic year, coupled with unprecedented events at the end of last week, mean that it is probably best to send out this to you all sooner rather than later.

### Bank Holiday for the State Funeral

As announced over the weekend, Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September has been declared a Bank Holiday as the official date of the State Funeral. Given this, school will be closed on that day to all. Staff and pupils will return on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September. I have liaised with Mrs Avey at Highbury, who are doing exactly the same.

Mr Sapsed has asked me to say that the dance club which was due to start on this date will now start on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> September and finish one week later, on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December. That way, pupils will get the correct number of sessions.

### Attendance

In my initial update, I spoke about attendance and the heightened scrutiny we are getting from the local authority and the Department for Education on pupils' absences.

I would urge you to ensure your children are in school as much as possible. There is clear evidence the impact absence has on a child's attainment as well as their emotional well-being. I will be reviewing our absences regularly and will contact families where absences are increasing or beginning to cause concern.

Of course, if a child is ill and has been sick, for example, we would rather they are at home so they can get well again. It will be the unexplained or regular absences which would raise concerns.

Can I remind you that if your child is not going to be in school, that you call or email to let us know this is the case and also the reason? We will not routinely acknowledge a voice mail but you can assume that if it has been left (option 1 if on night-service), it will have been received. If we don't hear from you on the first day of absence, we will send a message to check and if this is not responded to, then your child's absence could be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

### Friends' Association Social

You may have noticed some sponsorship signs attached to the school perimeter over the weekend and this morning. These are all in relation to this Friday's social gathering, after school. Details have already been



sent out via the Friends' Association social media channels and it looks like it is going to be a very enjoyable evening.

The primary reason for this event is to bring our Whitehill and Highbury communities together at the start of the school year. The entertainment planned looks very exciting indeed.

Linked with the Friends' Association, I would like to thank everyone who has sponsored me to do this bungee jump. As I mentioned in Friday's blog, it was unfortunately postponed on Sunday but we immediately rebooked for the 16<sup>th</sup> October. I promise it will happen!

### **Letters from the Office**

Both Mrs Lanni and Mrs Granger in the office are mindful, like I am, of the amount of communication which comes out from school. That being said, some communication is avoidable and needs to be sent out in a timely manner.

When it comes to school trips and visits which require a financial contribution, it is our aim to send these out sooner rather than later so that you have ample warning. It is not, as it might appear, to nag you for money. We all feel that you would rather know that there may be a cost coming up so that you can plan for it.

As I said recently, we are all very mindful of the increase in living costs we are all facing both at home and in school and have factored this into the year's planned events.

### **Year 6 Secondary School Visits**

We are about to embark on this year's open morning visits for current Year 6 pupils who will be choosing their secondary school places. All visits will be authorised and won't actually count as an absence, as long as we know.

If you know when you are going to see the local secondary schools, please would you email the office ([admin@whitehill.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@whitehill.herts.sch.uk)) confirming when you will be out and also whether or not you still require a school lunch.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support and again, if you see me on the playground and want to come and say hello and introduce yourselves, that will be lovely.

Kind regards,



Steve Mills  
Headteacher

