

Tuesday 17th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

Spring Term Update 1

The Spring Term is well and truly underway and the pupils are back into the swing of lessons. Albeit slightly late, I trust you all had some quality family time together over the Christmas break.

There are a few information items to draw your attention to, including a 'heads up' on a couple of other letters which will be coming home to specific year groups in the coming days.

Strike Action

You will no doubt have seen in the news that members of the largest teaching union, the NEU, have voted to take strike action. The dates announced are 1st February, 1st March and then the 15th and 16th March.

Not all staff are members of this particular union and at this stage it is unclear as to whether the proposed industrial action will have any impact at Whitehill. For now, I am planning for the school to be open usual and therefore parents should send their children to school as normal.

Of course, should this change, I will give you as much notice as I can.

Sponsored Sports Day

Those of you who have read my blogs this term will have seen me make reference to our support of the David Leach Spinal Recovery Appeal. David, a parent of two pupils at Whitehill, suffered a life changing injury whilst playing lacrosse, a sport he has played at international level.

There has been a great deal of support across the Hitchin community to date and we all feel that we would like to do something at Whitehill. Our Junior Leadership Team have proposed that we hold a 'sponsored day of sport' during our Feeling Good Week and therefore we will be holding an event on Wednesday 8th February.

Pupils will have the opportunity to embrace all aspects of the 'five ways to wellbeing' across the morning in a series of fun activities working across year groups to promote the social aspects of sport.

We will be inviting families to donate whatever they feel they are able to via School Gateway in advance and post event. There is no expectation of donations and all pupils will be involved.

Attendance

This has settled down again after Christmas and attendance at Whitehill, on the whole, remains very good indeed. Our Attendance Improvement Officer is working with me at the moment to look carefully at patterns of absence and may contact you directly where a child's attendance is causing, or is starting to cause, concern. Given the disruption over the last three years, it is imperative pupils are in school as much as they can.

Key Dates

I have begun updating the school calendar on the website with some key dates and events. I will continue to do this over the coming days so that you have all the necessary information.

The term dates have not changed and I would like to remind you that we have an INSET day on the first Monday after the February half term (13th – 17th February). Pupils return to school on Tuesday 21st February.

E-Safety Information Session

On Thursday 23rd February we will be running some e-safety sessions for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 with specific reference to mobile technology. We are aware of many more pupils now in Upper School with phones and we wanted to work with them to highlight their responsibility when using this technology.

We have invited local charity Phase to support this initiative as they already work closely with pupils in both of these year groups. As well as a focus on the legalities of using technology, we are also asking them to focus on the emotional responsibility that comes with owning such potentially powerful tools.

At 6.00pm, we will be running a parent information session on a similar theme and we would like to invite you to join us to hear for yourselves what we have shared with the pupils and also some advice around what you can do as parents to ensure your children remain as safe as possible when online.

Although the session is aimed at parents of pupils in Upper School, I am happy for parents of any of our pupils to attend. You can register your interest using the google form – link below.

[Register for Parent Information Session](#)

If you have any questions please feel free to get in touch with me.

As always, thank you for your ongoing support.

Best wishes,



Steve Mills
Headteacher