**Newsletter – 9th September 2016.**

**Welcome to Westwood 2016-17.**

A warm welcome to our returners and new pupils and families. The first week at school has seen everyone commit to learning very quickly across the school – a really encouraging sign that we will again have a great year at school. Our youngest pupils in reception are doing a great job of learning the school rules and times, settling into their new routines. They are very welcome. For our returners – great job of coming back and getting on with the important business of learning. Some really great attitudes being shown across the school and it feels like we’ve been back for weeks because everyone has come back to school and thrown themselves into their study. Genuinely well done to everyone!

**Welcome meetings.**

Classes RA, 1R, 2F: **2.35pm on Wednesday 14th September**.

Classes 3B, 4SC, 5CW, 6D: **2.35pm on Tuesday 13th September**.

We would like to invite parents and carers to meet with their new class teachers next week, to discuss what will be taught during the first term, give key dates/times for each class during the week, and to answer any questions you might like to ask. These sessions will run for 20 minutes, and about half of that time will be available for parent’s questions. We’ve listened to parent’s comments and split the sessions this year so that it is possible to attend a session in both KS1/R and KS2 – we hope this is useful. For those unable to make these meetings, the key points and dates are included in this newsletter and will be available on our website [here](http://www.westwoodacademy.org/curriculum/) next week.

**Attendance.**

The school target for attendance is 97%. Overall, the school achieved 98.97% over the last week and three classes tied for the attendance trophy with a fantastic 100%. A brilliant start to the year and a massive well done to: 2F, 3B and 6D. This fantastic early start to the year is up a whole 3% compared to the same week last year so thank you for your help in achieving this.

Statistically, children with 100% attendance achieve on average more than 8 GCSEs, compared to less than 5 GCSEs for children with less than 80% attendance. Punctuality and high attendance at school also promote great life skills for the future. This is why we put so much energy into promoting the importance of high levels of attendance. Please be assured that if your child was ever considered too unwell to attend school, we would send them home. However, we would expect children with a common cold, for example, to attend. You can send your child in having had cold medication in the morning and parents are always welcome into the school to give a follow up medicinal dose should it be required.

**First Day Contact.**

As a school, we are committed to following statutory First Day Contact Procedures to trace any child who may be absent. All parents must notify the school by 9:30am on the first day of a child’s absence. The school has a 24 hour answerphone (please select option 1) for parents to leave a message. Please leave the name of the student that you are reporting as absent, clearly saying their class or teacher. The absence will be discussed with students on their return to school if it is of concern. Please be aware that there may be a follow up call to discuss the absence which may be recorded as unauthorised if there are not satisfactory reasons or evidence provided.

**Term Time Holiday Procedures.**

Government guidance advises that schools **SHOULD NOT AUTHORISE ANY TERM TIME ABSENCES.**  If you feel that exceptional circumstances apply, you can complete a leave of absence request form, available from the office.

Essex County Council have asked the school to advise parents of the following:

**By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable full-time education.  As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge.  You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court.  A penalty notice of £60 may be issued by the LA as an alternative to prosecution.  This rises to £120 if unpaid after 21 days.  Failure to pay will lead to prosecution.  Parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.**

**Dealing with Persistent Lateness.**

Included in our latest attendance policy is a clarification around lateness.  Each day the registers will close 15 minutes after the start of each session (school starts at 9:00am and 1:10pm).  Pupils arriving after this time without prior, appropriate arrangement will be recorded as present, but as an "unauthorised late".  This follows advice from Essex County Council to reduce persistent lateness, and unauthorised late marks will be totalled along with unauthorised leave of absence, which may lead to penalty notices or prosecution as detailed above.

**e-safety tip of the week.**

#9: [PEGI ratings](http://www.westwoodacademy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Age-Ratings-handout.pdf) advise which games are appropriate for which age: they protect children from extreme scenes in many cases, so **TAKE NOTICE** of them.

Help keep our children safe whilst using technology – check out the new resources and advice about e-safety on our website at <http://www.westwoodacademy.org/about/e-safety/>

**Out of School Achievements.**

So in the last newsletter we reported on Issie Connah’s upcoming Gymnastics British Championship in Liverpool to be held at the end of July. We can report that she came 3rd! A massive well done Issie and a great photo in The Echo!

If you have any out of school achievements about your child that you would like mentioned in the school newsletter, please email the office at: office@westwoodacademy.org by the Thursday before the Friday publication date. Thank you.

**Year 5 Trip to The Planetarium - 3rd October.**

We are still awaiting some payments and would ask parents to please pay this voluntary amount of £14.40 via Parentmail PMX as soon as possible. We hope the children have an enjoyable and fulfilling, learning experience.

**Year 4 Trip to Colchester Castle – 11th October.**

This trip has been booked to enrich this class’s learning about the Romans. We are currently in the process of finalising the details but will be sending home a letter to year 4 parents shortly.

**Year 3 Trip to the Iron Age Roundhouse.**

3B will be visiting Hadleigh Roundhouse on Thursday 10th November. The trip will involve the children participating in activities to enrich their learning on the Stone Age era. The children will take part in a ‘Dig’ where they will learn how archaeologists work, before setting to work excavating the pits. They then make clay coil pots. They will visit the Iron Age roundhouse, where they learn how human society developed from the Ice Age to the Iron Age, research different aspects of past life by exploring the house and its artefacts, and have the opportunity to ask questions. They discover how fire was made and grind corn on the quern. The children also find out about the progression from hunting tools to weapons of war and are able to see and touch weapons and armour. They learn to throw javelins and use slings to shoot paper balls and also learn sword skills and take part in hand-to-hand combat

It would also be brilliant if the children could get into the spirit of the day by dressing as ancient Britons, examples of suitable clothing to follow in a further newsletter.

The cost of the trip will be £7.50 per child and this voluntary contribution and permission, will be payable via Parentmail shortly.

**Reception, Year 1 & Year 2 Pantomime Trip – 13th December.**

We have arranged for reception, year 1 and year 2 to visit Thameside Theatre in Thurrock to see Peter Pan. We will leave school at 9am returning at lunchtime. The cost is £10.86 per child which is a subsidised cost, due to a kind donation from the PTFA. This will be payable via Parentmail PMX and we will also need permission to be given at the same time. This amount will need to be paid in full bythe 30th September otherwise we will assume your child will not be attending and will make alternative arrangements for them to stay in school.

**KS2 Pantomime Trip – 15th December.**

This trip to see Robinson Crusoe at the Cliffs Pavilion on the 15th December is for years 3-6 children and you would have received a letter about this in June. It has been kindly subsidised by the PTFA and we are grateful for all the wonderful work they do for the school. The cost is £10.45 and for your child to attend we need consent and full payment by the 30th September 2016. We will assume you do not wish for your child to attend if we have not received payment by this time and we will make alternative arrangements for them to stay in school during the performance. .

**Jeans for Genes Day – Friday 23rd September.**

As a school we will be supporting ‘Jeans for Genes’ day this year by encouraging children to wear jeans to school on Friday 23rd September and making a voluntary donation of £1. This fundraising day is to help raise money for thousands of children with genetic disorders across the UK; a very worthy cause.

**Clubs.**

Next week sees the return of many of our favourite clubs, plus some new ones. Please note that Gardening Club does not recommence till the 21st September. Please see the following timetable. This information is also available on our website. Keep an eye on future newsletters as more clubs become available.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Time** | **Club** | **Year** | **Cost** | **Leader** |
| Monday | 12.10-1.10 | Homework Club | YR-Y6 | No cost | Mrs Tong |
|  | 15.30-16.30 | Football Club | Y5-Y6 | No cost | Mr Reynolds |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tuesday | 12.10-1.10 | ChromeBook Club \* | Y1-Y6 | No cost  | Mrs Tong |
|  | 12.15 – 1.00 | Tennis Club | YR-Y2 | Cost involved | Deanes |
|  | 3.15-4.15 | Football Club | Y1-Y2Y3-Y4 | Cost involved | Deanes |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wednesday | 8.15-8.45 | Library Club | YR-Y6 | No cost | Mr Archer |
|  | 12.10-1.10  | Lego Club \* | Y1-Y6 | No cost | Mrs Tong |
|  | 12.15-1.00 | Basketball | Y4-Y6 | Cost involved | Deanes |
|  | 3.30-4.45 | Gardening Club | Y3-Y6 | No cost  | Mrs Scarisbrick |
|  | 3.15-4.15 | Tag Rugby | Y2-Y3 | Cost involved | Deanes |
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| Thursday | 3.30-4.30 | Choir |  YR-Y6 | No Cost | Mr Stanley |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Friday | 12.10-1.10 | Stu’s Lunchtime Club |  Y3-6 | No cost | Stuart Christian |
|  | 12.15-1.00 | Football | Y5-Y6 | Cost involved | Deanes |

\*First come, first served – Limited to 15 spaces.

**Science Club – Not yet scheduled.**

We are also hoping to start a science club which will be run by an external company called Mad Science. They will cover subjects such as dry ice, rockets, indoor fireworks and explosions; a different subject each week. They will cover curriculum topics such as the Great Fire of London through a science perspective. At the end of the session the teachers ask the kids what they have learnt and what they have enjoyed.

They will be coming in to our school on Wednesday 14th September for years 1-6 to hold a special assembly and to gauge interest. More details will be available after this assembly if your child enjoys what they have learnt and wants to further their interest in this subject. This club will only run if numbers support it.

**Deanes run clubs.**

Letters for the clubs highlighted above as being run by Deanes (at Westwood) will be sent home with your child today. There are associated costs and places are limited so please return permission slips and money to the office at your earliest convenience.

**Monday 3.30-4.30pm Years 5-6 Football.**

For your child to attend this club, please fill in a permission slip to be found at the end of this newsletter and hand it into the school office. We will only advise you if your child fails to secure a place.

**School Choir**

If you wish your child to attend, please fill in a permission slip at the end of this newsletter and hand it into the school office. Once more, we will only advise you should your child fail to secure a place in this club.

**Gardening Club.**

We are looking forward to another successful and productive year, in particular, using the greenhouse effectively will help us enormously in the upcoming seasons. Thank you to all last year’s hard-working members, and their parents, whose enthusiasm has produced amazing results commented on by many visitors to the school.

This club is open to for years 3 to 6 and runs on Wednesdays 3.30 to 4.45pm. During the darkest weeks of the year, it will move to lunchtimes. This will be confirmed as it transpires. If interested, please return the attached permission slip to the office by Wednesday 14th September as places are limited. We will inform the children by Friday 16th September if they have a place and the club will restart on Wednesday 21st September.

A change of clothing and suitable footwear will be needed, including sunhats should the weather remain hot. At the close of club, please wait by the main gate and we will bring the children out to be collected.

We would be most grateful for donations of any spare plants/ shrubs, seeds you may have which will enable us to develop our future plans. These can be brought into the school office. Thank you for any donations – these will be gratefully received and nurtured.

**Parentmail PMX – New Parents to the school.**

Parentmail PMX is our preferred method of communication with parents and combined payment system that we utillise. Woodys before and after school club, School dinners for KS2, trip payments and permissions and school uniform will all be available through this system – which is also available as a convenient app on your smart phone. By registering your email address we can also send messages via this system which saves on the hundreds of pounds a year we have previously spent on texts.

Reception parents will receive an email next week inviting you to register.

**Gym Trail.**

This will recommence on Tuesday 13th September.

**Swimming.**

Swimming starts for year 5 on Friday 16th September. A letter will be coming home with your year 5 child today and transport costs will be payable via Parentmail PMX.

**Library Sessions.**

These will begin again on Wednesday from 8.15am. Please note that parents are expected to attend with their children and to enjoy this time to look at the school’s library resources and to experience and help to encourage a love of reading. Some refreshments are available at these sessions.

**School arrival time.**

Can we please remind parents that we do not expect pupils to arrive at school unsupervised before 8.45am.  This is to ensure that pupils are safe.  The school gates open at 8.45 to allow pupils into school into a supervised environment, with the register being taken at 9.00.

**Safeguarding children at Westwood.**

We take safeguarding of our pupils seriously: we are currently looking at our priorities for the next 3 years and safeguarding is consistently being identified as the top priority of our stakeholders.  If you have any concerns about the safety of a pupil, you can report it using the red button on our home page or speak to the Designated Child Protection Officers at school (Mr Harbrow, Mr Archer, Mr Clarke, or from September 2016, Mrs Dench).  Our safeguarding policy is also on the school website.  It sets out how the school meets it’s legal duties by identifying concerns relating to child protection, child sexual exploitation and the risks of FGM, radicalisation and extremism (the PREVENT duty).  We appreciate the support we receive from the Westwood community in ensuring all our pupils are as safe as possible at all times.

**Compulsory signing in and out of Westwood Academy.**

Please note that entry to the school requires that **all visitors**, including all parents, sign in and out of the main building.  This is so that if there is an evacuation due to an emergency we can account for everybody.  Admission will not be allowed without the signing in process being completed.  Again, we appreciate the support of everyone in making the school as safe as possible.

**Appointments with Teachers.**

Can we please request that appointments are made with the office to meet with staff, as teachers are unable to meet at the start of the school day, as this is disruptive to learning and delays the start of registration and lessons.

**School is a No Mobile Phone School.**

Can parents please ensure that no mobile phones are used on the school site. If it is imperative that you use your phone whilst in the school premises, please go to the school office to do so. This is to ensure that children who are not allowed to be photographed are safe and to protect visitors to the school from accidently doing so. Thank you for your help with this safeguarding requirement.

 **Water Bottles.**

Please can you ensure that your child has a water bottle in school at all times.

**PTFA News.**

The PTFA welcomes everyone back to school and extends a special welcome to our new Reception parents. The PTFA is an organisation that raises funds for the school through a series of events and initiatives. As a parent at the school, you are automatically a member and we would love to see you and hear ideas and opinions at our regular meetings. For the parents of new starters, we are holding a welcome meeting on the last Thursday of this month, Thursday 29th September, in the school library at 9am; after the morning school drop off. There will be refreshments provided. Please come along and put some names to faces and hear our upcoming plans. We look forward to welcoming you.

**Ice Lollies Sale:** Today after school, 50p a lolly. Thanks for our volunteers as this really is a profitable venture for the school and we could not run it without your support.

**Welly Rack:** It is lovely to be able to report on items now ordered for our Reception class from funds we have raised. We hope this will be a great asset to this class.

Big Family Campout: We have had a fantastic response to this proposal but many families could not commit due to the short notice. We will temporarily postpone this and hope to run it around Eastertime next year.

Next meeting: This will be held at 7pm on Monday 19th September in the school staff room.

 Any related business, please see Marnie Dukes or post via the Facebook PTFA page. Thank you.

\*\* For updates and more news on what we are doing, please join the Westwood PTFA page on Facebook\*\*

**School Calendar.**

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| 13 September | PTFA Medium night at The Moorings, The Anchor pub, South Benfleet.  |
| 13 September | Gym Trail recommences.  |
| 14 September | Mad Science Assembly – Years 1-6. |
| 16 September | Year 5 Swimming restarts.  |
| 19 September | PTFA Meeting – 7pm school staff room.  |
| 29 September | PTFA Welcome meeting – 9am in the school library. |
| 3 October | Year 5 Trip to The Planetarium.  |
| 7 October | Open Morning for September 2017 admissions.  |
| 11 October | Year 4 Trip to Colchester Castle.  |
| 14 October  | PTFA Haloween Discos.  |
| 19 October | Parents’ Coffee Morning.  |
| 21 October | Non-Pupil Day. |
| 24-28 October | Half Term. |
| 31 October | Return to school after half term. |
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| 9 November | Open Morning for September 2017 admissions. |
| 11 November | Parent Consultations. |
| 2 December | Flu Immunisations.  |
| 13 December | KS1 Pantomime Trip. |
| 15 December | KS2 Pantomime Trip to the Cliffs Pavilion.  |
| 16 December | Save the Children Christmas Jumper Day.  |
| 20 December | Class Christmas Party.  |
| 22 December – 4 January 2017 | Christmas holidays.  |
| 5 January | Return to school after Christmas holidays.  |
| 13-17 February | Half Term.  |
| 20 February | Non-Pupil day.  |
| 21 February | Return to school after half term.  |
| 3-17 April | Easter holidays. |
| 18 April | Non-Pupil day. |
| 29 May – 2 June | Half Term. |
| 5 June | Return to school after half term.  |
| 21 July  | Last day of summer term.  |
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| WESTWOOD ACADEMY**CLUB APPLICATION FORM** | WESTWOOD ACADEMY**CLUB APPLICATION FORM** |
|  |  |
| Child’s Name: | Child’s Name: |
| Class: | Class: |
|  |  |
| Club:Club Leader(s): | Club:Club Leader(s): |
| Details of any relevant medical condition: | Details of any relevant medical condition: |
| I give permission for my child to apply and join the above club, I realise there may be a rota for over subscribed clubs. I will ensure my child is aware of arrangements for collection from after school clubs.Signed:  | I give permission for my child to apply and join the above club, I realise there may be a rota for over subscribed clubs. I will ensure my child is aware of arrangements for collection from after school clubs.Signed:  |