

THURNHAM CE INFANT SCHOOL

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Spring Terms 2018

Newsletter No 1

“At Thurnham we learn to love and love to learn.”

Dear Parents,

I hope you all had a lovely Christmas and break. The staff, governors and I wish you a very Happy New Year.

Dates for the Terms 3 and 4 are attached to this letter – please note the February week long break is 12th – 16th February. Due to an early Good Friday this year, it means term ends for Easter on Thursday 29th March and we return on Monday 16th April.

I am currently in the process of agreeing the dates for next year with Roseacre (including Staff Development Days).

Christmas Gifts / Donations

Thank you to the Friends of Thurnham who funded many Christmas items for the children. They have just presented the school with a cheque for £2,500 for which we are very grateful. I would also like to pass on thanks from the staff for the lovely gifts they received and appreciate your generosity.

We had two Christmas charities this year suggested by the School Council, the NSPCC and sponsoring a child's education at a school in Uganda. The final figure is £1,221.40 – thank you for your generosity.

Father Christmas

The children had a lovely last day of term in December. Father Christmas distributed presents to each class in the morning and we thank him for taking time out of his busy schedule to come in!

Admissions

I am sure the vast majority of you will have now done this but would like to remind you one final time that the deadline for online applications (for Y3 next year or for Reception at Thurnham for a sibling) is on Monday 15th January. If you wish to use the linked admission with Roseacre to ensure you are ranked higher, please make the link clear in your application. Since the link was introduced it always seems to go very smoothly but I am happy to help anyone with their applications.

I also receive an interim list from Kent so that I can check all Year 2 parents have actually made an application and have time to catch anyone who hasn't applied yet! I appreciate life is busy for parents.

School Dinner Census

On Thursday 18th January the Government will carry out their count of the number of children staying for school dinners. I ask if as many children take part as possible as we are not funded for the coming months on a daily take up rate but only based on the numbers eating on a census day. Therefore, if numbers are lower that day but are substantially higher another we would have to fund the difference out of other budgets. Even if you do not always take a free dinner (but may at times in the near future) I ask if you could take part on that day.

Parent Consultations In Term 4

As usual, we hold the next parental consultations in term 4 (mid-March). Two of the three sessions will be in the evening for all classes as usual, however, we will trial holding the third one during the afternoon as some parents have commented to us that they would find it easier at this time. This means that three Thursday afternoons (one for each year group) the teacher will also be available for a consultation time. If we find there is no demand for these afternoon times we will revert back to having all three in the evening in future.

Note on the dates (at the end of the letter) when each year group afternoon session will be or the evenings as usual.

Attendance

The Government defines 'a persistent absentee' (and therefore a cause for concern) as any child below 90% of the school year for attendance - approximately a maximum of 19-20 school days off including sickness and holidays.

All attendance is computer tracked and parents are often surprised to receive a call from me when their child's absence trends higher. Therefore, close to the mid-year point (near the February holiday) I will issue every parent with a breakdown of their child's attendance to date and guidance on whether their figure is a good one. They can also be aware of how their child is being flagged on our system.

As you know, we have been praised for our very high attendance rate and want to retain that high rate.

Exceptional Absence

Again, I am currently refusing a number of term time absence requests due to forms being received not explaining the 'exceptional' reason for that term time absence. If you do not make this clear expect the request to be refused. It is not an exceptional reason to request an absence for reasons such as a holiday being heavily discounted or wanting to visit a relative.

Please send as much supporting documentation as you can, for instance if your employer will not give you leave in school holidays a letter from them will help with your case.

Note, no Y2 requests for leave of absence at all will be authorised during the months of May / June (when Year 2 assessments are carried out) or for Y1 the period before and including the week beginning 11th June (National Phonics Screening).

Severe Weather Alerts / Snow

As we are entering the time of year for severe weather, parents can find out if the school is able to open following snowfall in the following ways:

- The most effective way is to check by looking at 'updates and important announcements' near the top of the main page of the website (www.thurnham-infant.kent.sch.uk) and a decision should be made by 7:30am each morning to enable contingency planning (and always refresh the page with F5).
- Listen to Radio Kent / Heart FM for school closures, if you do not hear Thurnham mentioned we will be open.

It is very likely the school will be open as myself and a number of staff live within walking distance of the school. Depending upon staff and numbers of children attending, we may not be able to offer the full curriculum but appreciate there are some parents

who depend upon school being open, particularly those who work in the emergency services.

We will always try to open the school in bad weather, and there have been occasions when we have opened during snow when many did not. Snow can also be notoriously difficult to predict and the health and safety of parents, staff and pupils is paramount, especially those families and staff who travel long distances to get to the school. The minority of parents who live too far away to walk should assess the risk of driving in these conditions before leaving for school. However, expect school to be open.

I look forward to successful Spring terms at school for the pupils and working with you all to secure the best for all the children.

Mr C K James
Headteacher

DATES FOR SPRING TERMS 2017-18

Monday	15	January	Maths Week Starts	
Wednesday	17		SEN Resources Afternoon For Parents (with Mrs Pateman)	
Thursday	25		6:30pm SATS Evening For Y2 Parents	
Friday	26		FOTS Quiz Night	
Friday	2	February	Science Day	
Tuesday	6		Safer Internet Day (In School)	
Friday	9		Last Day of Term 3 100% Attendance Stickers	
12-16 February School Holiday				
Monday	19	February	Start of Term 4	
Monday	26		Writing Week	
Thursday	1	March	World Book Day	
Friday	2		Book Fair Leaves	
Wednesday	7		All Year Groups Parent Consultations 3.30-5:30pm	
Thursday	8		Y2 Parent Afternoon Consultations	
Tuesday	13		All Year Groups Parent Consultations 3.30-5:30pm	
Thursday	15		Reception Parent Afternoon Consultations	
Thursday	22		Y1 Parent Afternoon Consultations	
Friday	23		Children bring decorated eggs in pm Easter Rehearsal	
Monday	26		9.15am Easter Performance 1 10:30am Easter Performance 2	
Tuesday	27		9.15am Easter Performance 3 3:10pm Easter Walkabout and refreshments	
Thursday	29		Last Day of Term 4 100% Attendance Stickers	
Friday 30 March - Friday 13 April School Easter Holiday				
Monday	16		April	Start of Term 5

(Dates for Reception and Year 1 Phonics information evenings will be confirmed soon)