

Uphill Village Academy

Newsletter 13th January 2023

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Message from the Principal

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope all our families managed to spend some quality time with their loved ones over the Christmas break. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year.

Welcome back to term 3! We have had a really busy start to the term with our younger children taking part in walks around Uphill village this week. Thank you to the staff and parent volunteers who supported this activity. The children had a great time learning all about the history of our village and local area.

Our older children also took part in workshops run by Revealed Projects which focused on the importance of having and raising self-esteem.

On Tuesday, I was privileged to be able to take 44 children to the Young Voices concert at the NEC in Birmingham. This is a singing festival like no other; with over 6,000 school children singing together to an audience of 8,000 parents. It is a truly phenomenal event. Thank you to all the children for singing loud and proud, you were a credit to the academy.

I wish you all an enjoyable weekend.
Mrs Samantha Hodder, Principal

Parking in the Village

In an attempt to address the ongoing problems with parking around the village at drop-off and pick-up times, a meeting was held at the end of last term between representatives from our school, Westhaven School, Weston Hospice and the Uphill Village Society.

Please be reassured we are working hard to solve the issues and will keep you informed of the outcome.

In the meantime, we ask parents to be considerate when parking and driving in the village. Vehicles are not allowed to park or stop on the yellow markings outside the school gates. Please do not park across driveways or on corners of the roads; this is dangerous and inconsiderate to our neighbours.

We are very disappointed to have had a number of reports of parents verbally abusing residents of the village. This behaviour is unacceptable and will be reported to the police.

Please treat everyone with consideration, respect and dignity.

Menu Change

Next Thursday 19th January, is school census day. This is one of the days in the year when the Department for Education gathers data from all schools. This information is used to calculate our funding for the forthcoming year.

In particular, our funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals is calculated based on the number of meals taken on Census day. If this is significantly lower than an average day, the school will not receive enough funding to cover the cost of providing these meals throughout the year.

To help encourage as many children as possible to have a school lunch on Census day we have changed the menu to one of our more popular choices:

Thursday 19th January

**Chicken Nuggets & Chips
or Macaroni Cheese**

If your child is entitled to UIFSM but normally brings a packed lunch, this is a great opportunity to try a free hot school meal. They also have the option of a jacket potato or tomato pasta everyday, plus a selection of salad.

Thank you for your support.

Club Dates

Extra-curricular clubs have re-commenced this week. We remind parents that collection from these clubs is from the front playground at 4.15pm promptly.

If your child does not require their space please let us know so we can offer it to another child.



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Attendance & Term Time Leave Requests

We would like to extend a big thank you to all our families for supporting your children to attend school and engage so well with their learning. We know this reflects the value place on our children's learning.

We understand that attendance over the last few months has been impacted by the numerous cases of childhood illnesses circulating within the community; however as we come into the new year cases are subsiding and we want to try to support good attendance for all our children going forward.

At Uphill Village Academy, we want and expect our children to attend school every day, unless they are really not well enough. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest life-long benefit from their education. Attending school, on time, every day also helps to form good habits which can stay with them throughout their educational journey and on into the workplace.

Illness

Minor ailments need not be a reason for staying at home e.g. tummy/head ache. If your child feels better as the day progresses, they can then attend for the rest of the school day. If your child attends school when feeling slightly under the weather, but feels worse during the school day, we will contact you to let you know if we think they need to go home. If you aren't sure whether to send your child to school, please contact us and we will be happy to support and advise where appropriate.

If your child is too ill to attend school, you must notify the academy before 8:45am on the first day of absence. If your child is ill for more than one day, you will need to let us know on each & every morning of the absence, unless otherwise agreed.

Unexplained Absences

We understand occasionally a parent may forget to telephone the school in the event of a child's absence, however parents should report their child's absence each and every day. The academy will follow up any pupil absences where the parent/carer has not contacted us, or where we are unclear about the actual reason for absence. In the first instance, this will be followed up by a phone call and then, if necessary, a home visit from a member of the pastoral team if we cannot make contact.

Schools have a specific duty to protect children. Section 175 of The Education Act 2002 compels schools to safeguard children and promote their well-being.

Therefore, if children are not attending school, we must do something about this and take the appropriate steps to support the child and family. This means we will always follow up and ask questions to find out where a child is or why they are absent. Unexplained or unclear absences will be recorded as unauthorised ('O' code). When a pupil is absent, we will always follow our duty of care and do our best to support the child and their family in a range of ways.

Holiday Requests

As families begin to consider booking their Summer holidays, we would just like to remind parents that the academy will NOT authorise any absence during term time, unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

We ask parents to request permission for any leave of absence in advance, and to carefully consider if the absence is absolutely necessary. Any requests must be in writing and, wherever possible, at least **four weeks'** notice should be provided. Forms are available from the academy website. We may ask to meet with you to discuss your request.

Any absence should be for the shortest time possible. If an absence is agreed, the Principal will decide how many days will be authorised. Parents are reminded that unauthorised absence may result in the receipt of a fixed Penalty Notice and/or, in certain circumstances, being liable to prosecution.

Please do not just take your child out of school without requesting leave. These absences are recorded in the registers differently, and carry a harsher penalty than a requested absence. Unauthorised absence of 10 or more sessions (5 days) will be referred for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Put simply, a holiday request of more than 4.5 days will result in a request for a fixed penalty notice.

Ensuring children attend school every available day, on time, is a key parental responsibility and your support in this matter is appreciated.



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Punctuality & Medical Appointments

Punctuality

We have noticed a number of children arriving late to school since our return from the Christmas break. The gates (both front & side) open at 8.35am and close at 8.45am promptly. Please ensure your child is in school BEFORE 8.45am as registers are taken at this time. Children arriving after 8.45am will be marked as 'late' (L code)

Children begin their learning as soon as they enter the classroom so any lateness directly impacts on their own and other children's learning.

Arrival after 9:15am will be marked as 'late after registers close' (U code). This is an unauthorised absence and will impact on a child's overall attendance record. A culmination of unauthorised absences of 10 or more sessions (5 days) (this includes unauthorised holiday, no reason for an absence or late after registers close) may lead to the request for the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

Punctuality is a life skill and parents of primary school age children are responsible for ensuring they attend & arrive at school on time every day.

Medical & Dental Appointments

In these current times, we understand how difficult it is to get an appointment for a dentist or a GP. However, wherever possible we ask that parents try to avoid appointments in school time.

If this is unavoidable, please arrange appointments so that the minimum school time is lost; possibly arranging an appointment over the lunch period of 12pm-1pm or collecting a little early or dropping in a little late at school.

Unless it is an emergency appointment, parents/carers are expected to let the academy know about the appointment in advance. All appointments should have evidence provided, such as an appointment letter or card. Your child should still attend school for as much of the school day as possible.

It is not acceptable to take a child out of school for a parents medical or dental appointment.

Benefit Related Free School Meals

If your income or circumstances have changed and you feel your child(ren) may be eligible for free school meals, please apply now to check your eligibility. An application should be made for each individual child; as siblings will not automatically qualify.

Even if you have a younger child who is eligible for Universal Infant Free School Meals (Yr R-2), it is important you check if you are eligible for benefit related Free School Meals. This will enable you to receive additional financial support from the school to help cover the cost of school trips, milk, school jumpers/cardigans and KS2 music lessons.

North Somerset Council provides an online application service for free school meals which gives an instant response. Parents are able to apply online by following the link below. If you need any support to access this online service, please contact the school office and we can arrange for you to do this in school. Please note, if you are eligible, this will start from the date of your application and cannot be backdated. Please screenshot or print off your eligibility letter and forward this to the school.

Use the link below to access further information and to apply online:

<https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/my-services/schools-learning/local-schools/free-school-meals>

IMPORTANT - if your child is already eligible for free school meals, **do not reapply** as this may lead to the loss of your entitlement.

Term Date Changes from September 2023-2024

North Somerset Council have issued their term dates for the 2023-2024 academic year. However, as a Local Authority, they have chosen different term dates to the surrounding local authorities of Bristol, Somerset, & South Gloucestershire.

Cabot Learning Federation have made the difficult decision to align all of its academies to the term dates of Bristol & South Gloucestershire, NOT North Somerset. Therefore, our term dates for 2023-2024 will be those listed below. Please check these carefully when looking to book holidays for next year.

- Term 1** Starts Friday 1st Sept 2023 - **INSET days Friday 1st & Monday 4th September**
First day for children - Tuesday 5th Sept 2023
Ends Friday 20th Oct 2023 - **INSET days Thursday 19th & Friday 20th October**
Last day for children - Wednesday 18th Oct 2023
- Term 2** **Monday 30th Oct 2023 - Friday 15th Dec 2023**
- Term 3** Starts Tuesday 2nd Jan 2024 - **INSET day Tuesday 2nd January**
First day for children - Wednesday 3rd January 2024
Ends Friday 9th Feb 2024
- Term 4** **Monday 19th Feb 2024 - Thursday 28th Mar 2024**
- Term 5** Starts Monday 15th Apr 2024 - **INSET day Monday 15th April**
First day for children - Tuesday 16th Apr 2024
Ends Friday 24th May 2024
- Term 6** **Monday 3rd June 2024 - Tuesday 23rd July 2024**
INSET day - Friday 5th July

Bank Holiday Dates (school is closed to children) - Monday 6th May 2024

Dates for the Diary

Don't forget to check out the school website for all our events as well as lots more useful class information and an array of great photos of our children's learning:

www.uphillvillageacademy.clf.uk

January

- Thursday 19th Voyager Class Swimming (1)
Year 3 & 4 Sports Event (held in school)
- Wednesday 25th Year 4 Multi Sports Event (selected children)
- Thursday 26th Voyager Class Swimming (2)

Upcoming Bank Holidays

Monday 1st May
Monday 8th May

February

- Wednesday 1st Pupil Parliament Meeting (selected children)
- Thursday 2nd Voyager Class Swimming (3)
- Friday 3rd PTFA Textile Recycling
- Thursday 9th Voyager Class Swimming (4)
- Friday 10th END OF TERM 3**
- Monday 20th INSET DAY - school closed to pupils**
- Tuesday 21st START OF TERM 4**
Extra-curricular clubs start again this week



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