



Portobello Primary School  
Weekly Newsletter  
13<sup>th</sup> September 2024



### Achievement Assembly

Our achievement assembly this week celebrated children who have "enjoyed learning" this week. Well done to the following children:

**Reception:** Harry    **Year 1:** Teddy    **Year 2:** Esme    **Year 3:** Emmie  
**Year 4:** Frankie    **Year 5:** James    **Year 6:** Dean

### Celebrating Attendance

Whole school attendance is currently at 96.7%.

Well done to Year 2 & Year 3 for best attendance this week at 98%!

### Dates for Diary

- Wed 18<sup>th</sup> Sept - Reception Meet the Teacher meeting at 4.30pm
- Fri 20<sup>th</sup> Sept - Genes for Jeans Day - non uniform, please wear denim or blue?
- Mon 14<sup>th</sup> October - Individual School Photos AM (younger siblings welcome from 8.50am)
- Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> October - Reception Vision Screening AM
- Fri 25<sup>th</sup> October - break up for Half term 28<sup>th</sup> to 1<sup>st</sup> Nov
- Mon 9<sup>th</sup> Dec - Y2 A Christmas Journey at Birtley Methodist PM
- Fri 6<sup>th</sup> December - Flu vaccination - whole school
- Thurs 19<sup>th</sup> Dec - Y1 to Y6 Panto Trip AM
- Break up for Xmas Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December!
- Inset day Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January - pupils return Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 24

### Absence in term time - following new framework introduced August 24

All children of statutory school-age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect their future progress. It is recognised that regularly taking time off school for family holidays or events can have a significant impact on a child's achievement.

In order to protect children's education, the government introduced legislation that enables the Local Authority to issue fixed penalty fines to parents who take their children out of school for a holiday or leave without the permission of the Head Teacher.

Parents are expected to seek permission for a leave of absence prior to the leave, fully explaining the reasons for the request. Along with a completed leave of absence form you are also required to make an appointment with the Head Teacher. Each request is then considered on a case-by-case basis.

The school will respond in writing informing whether the leave has been granted or not.

If unauthorised leave is taken, parents will be informed in writing that a request for a Penalty Notice will be made. Any leave of absence be taken without prior authorisation will result in a request for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority.

### Fixed Penalty Notices

Only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first leave of absence penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at **£160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
- A second leave of absence penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of **£160 if paid within 28 days.**
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. **Alternative action, such as prosecution in Magistrates court, will be considered instead.**





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The Local Authority will issue fines, should you receive one please follow the instructions on how to pay. Fines are not handled by schools and schools do not receive the income from fines either. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

**Attendance**

What YOU must do:

- Telephone the school before 9am each day of your child's absence.
- Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.
- If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.
- Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour, or friend.
- If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance, then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

What WE will do:

- Check your child's attendance every day.
- Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.
- Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.
- If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit and refer any issues to the Local Authority.

Where all avenues to improve attendance have been exhausted and support has not been successful or is not being engaged with, the Local Authority can enforce attendance through statutory intervention to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The Legal Intervention Team takes referrals from schools for formal action (Penalty Notices and prosecutions) once all school interventions and support from other services have failed to improve attendance. This will take place when there has been a minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the past 10 weeks (in accordance with the National Framework and Gateshead's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct).

**Earrings Reminder**

Earrings are not allowed to be worn in school; this includes clear plastic ones. If your child comes to school wearing earrings and cannot remove them independently, you will be contacted and asked to come to school to remove them.

**Homework**

If you are struggling to access home-learning for your child at home your child may be eligible for home-learning club at school. Please email the school office who will then pass any queries to class teachers who can discuss this further with you.

**Jeans for Genes Day**

Did you know 1 in 10 families are affected by a genetic condition? That's why On **Friday 20th September** children are invited to come to school and dance in their jeans for a donation of £1. All money raised will go to the Jeans for genes charity who offer services, support and most of all hope to families in need.





At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

## 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SUPPORTING CHILDREN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Change can be hard for children to manage. Going back to school after a long summer break might cause them to feel uncertain about their friendships, school routines and relationships with new teachers. However, trusted adults play an important role in providing both practical and emotional support.

### 1 LEARN WHAT EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

Figure out a list of all equipment needed for the start of the school year, so you can comfortably get your hands on the necessary items in time. If children have any financial issues and receive free school meals, the school may be able to provide some monetary aid or offer other support.

### 2 COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

If you notice that a child is feeling anxious about a change of teacher or school, arranging a one-to-one meeting with their new teacher can be a good way to alleviate some of the anxiety. Just knowing that they understand the child's worries and will be able to help them if the need arises can build the foundations of a good working relationship. Knowing that you can contact them with any queries can also be reassuring.

### 3 CHECK THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

There will be plenty of information about the start of term on the school's website to keep you updated. Furthermore, you should be able to find other useful information such as contact details for staff, important school equipment, clubs, and news about any special events on the school calendar for the year. It could be helpful to look through this with children for anything which might reassure them.

### 4 HELP TO MANAGE FRIENDSHIPS

If a child is feeling anxious about making new friends – especially if they're moving up to secondary school – it can be a good idea to remind them of what they could do or say when meeting new classmates. Investigating the extracurricular activities available could be a good way to open a conversation about their hobbies and pastimes, and joining such clubs could allow new friendships to be built on this mutual interest.

### 5 PLAN SELF-CARE

Talking to children about how they can manage their self-care can be an effective way of helping them understand its importance. This might involve playing a computer game they love with friends, a weekly visit to the library, getting to bed at the same time each night, or a range of other activities that support their wellbeing and provide the familiarity and safety of a routine that works for them.

### 6 MANAGE TRICKY FEELINGS

Explain that it's okay to have difficult feelings around returning to school. This can help reduce any shame or embarrassment a child might be feeling over these emotions. Emphasise that other children – even some of the teachers – will be feeling the same way. Consider practical ways to manage these feelings and help children feel more in control of their emotions. Some examples include fidget toys, breathing exercises or a notepad for doodling.

### 7 SECURE A SCHOOL UNIFORM

Parents and carers should try to buy a child's uniform for the new academic year well in advance of the new term (although allowing for potential holiday growth spurts) and give them time to adapt to any changes. Make sure they can comfortably change into and out of it for PE lessons. Double check the requirements for PE on the school's website, as some schools will also have requirements for PE kits.

### 8 PREPARE FOR TRANSITION DAYS

Ensuring that children attend transition days is a vital step in preparing for the new year. Some schools also have transition evenings for parents and carers to attend, offering extra opportunities to reach out for any additional support.

### 9 READ THE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

If a young person struggles with their mental health, it's important to understand their school's mental health policy and provision to know what support is available. This should be on the school's website. A range of aid is typically on offer – from individual timetable amendments to group sessions on emotional wellbeing. You can then discuss these options with the child to reassure them that help is there if they need it.

### 10 LEARN ABOUT SEN SUPPORT

If a child has SEN and receives help in school, try to confirm exactly what support is available, to ensure they'll be having their needs met. If they're moving up to secondary school, it's a good idea to meet with the SENCO to ensure that all teachers receive the most relevant, up-to-date information about the child's needs and have a contact to liaise with if these change over time.

### Meet Our Expert

Amy Sayer is a freelance mental health trainer for schools, an author and a content writer. She is an Associate for Diverse Educators, a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and ITT wellbeing coach. Amy has previously been a SMHL coach, helping many different settings audit their mental health provision and support them to create and implement a strategic plan based on the specific needs of each setting.



The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/supporting-children-going-back-to-school>

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