

Dear Parent/Carer,

6th September 2017

WELCOME BACK NEWSLETTER

Short message from the Head

I hope you have all had a great summer and if you were away managed to find some sun. The children have all come back in high spirits, settling into their new classes excellently and we welcome a number of new children who have started with us today. I realise that this is very early in the term for a newsletter, but I want to make parents aware of some exciting changes to school we are implementing through this term to further improve our provision for your children.

School Vision

As you are aware we surveyed parents, (alongside staff, children and governors) so we could redefine our school vision - really come up with a way of expressing clearly and succinctly what Ghyllside is about. The final image does not in any way show the work that went into its production but will hopefully help us to explain to people here, new parents, and the wider community what we do. We can then use this to help us decide on new initiatives going forward - 'Will help us achieve our vision?'

The new vision poster will be prominently displayed around school and form the basis for our assemblies this term and will start to be incorporated into our school policies and planning.

Ghyllside School Vision

We aspire for all the children leaving Ghyllside School to be confident, successful, well rounded individuals who are able to go on to lead happy, personally fulfilling lives through being:



New staff

As you are aware Kevin Jenkinson retired during the summer holiday. Wayne Lees is our new site manager and will be in and around school at the beginning and end of the school day. Wayne has made a great start and I am sure will prove to be a great asset to the school.

Changes to PE

In line with the healthy part of our revised school vision we are going to change the way our children do PE throughout school. The primary aim of PE in schools is to make the children healthy and to develop sports skills. We feel the most effective way to do this is to split our PE into fitness sessions and skills acquisition sessions.

To do this the children will have one skills session a week and three twenty-minute fitness sessions a week where the primary aim will be to raise the children's heart rate for fifteen continual minutes. The staff have put a lot of thought into arranging their timetables to make sure that this can happen with minimal disruption to the rest of the curriculum.

For this to happen smoothly the children will need PE kits and trainers in school four days a week, (they will be let know which ones by their teacher) and not come to school wearing jewellery that they cannot quickly remove and put back on / in quickly themselves.

Reports and Parents' Evenings

As was indicated at the end of last term the staff have put a lot of time and effort into improving our communication with parents about their child's progress and attainment. This year we will be sending a brief written report home in both the Autumn and Spring terms which will give parents reading, writing and maths attainment and grades for behaviour, effort and attendance for their child. There will be a parents evening for all classes after each of these reports. In the Summer term there will be a more detailed report which will again be followed by an opportunity for parents to talk to their child's class teachers.

Our hope is that the increased information going home and the increased face to face meetings with teachers, will enable greater home - school liaison so parents can quickly have any queries answered and are also clearly aware of their child's attainment, where they may need a little extra help and how they can support this. As has always been the case though parents will continue to be able to make appointments to speak to teachers whenever they wish.

Start and Finish of the Day in Y1 & 2

As previously mentioned in the new class meetings held last July we will be putting the start and end of the school day for Y1 & 2 back by five minutes to the same as KS2. This means that the children will start at 8.55am and finish at 3.20pm. In reality this will probably mean little change for most people, but will mean that KS1 parents will not need to be on the main school corridor to pick up children before the KS 2 children have finished lessons. To give people plenty of notice we will start with these new arrangements from **Monday 11th September**.

Parental Contact Information and Text Service

To further improve our ability to communicate with parents we will this term be launching a text service which will enable school to more easily keep parents up to speed with what is going on, keep parents informed of unavoidable changes in school procedure (maybe a revised time for a trip returning for example) and remind parents of different events and meetings. Our hope is that this will be a more efficient way of keeping in touch than just using letters. For this to work we will need the most up to date mobile numbers for all parents. **It is also very important that we have at least three contact details for each child.** Please ensure that you fill in the attached form and return it, in the envelope provided, to the school office as soon as possible.

Photograph Consent Form

During the course of the school year there may be opportunities to publicise some of the activities that your child is involved with and occasions when we arrange photography for school purposes, i.e. display and school brochures. If you **do not** wish images/photographs of your child to be taken please complete the form available from the School Office.

Building Work and Lunches

As you are aware we have had a great deal of building work completed through the summer holiday which has improved both the fabric of the building and our ability to cater for the children. Unfortunately, the contractors have come up against some unexpected work which has resulted in an overrun of the project. The knock on effects of this are twofold:

- **Lunches** - We will not be able to provide hot school lunches until Monday 18th of September. We will provide packed lunches for all those children who usually have school lunches for this time and have booked these for the remainder of this week. If however, your child usually has a school lunch but for next week you would prefer to provide your own pack lunch, please could you let the office staff know by the end of school tomorrow, Thursday 7th September. The cost of school meals will remain at £2.00 per meal until Monday 18th September when the cost will be £2.10. For anyone wishing to pay for the half term in advance, letters will follow shortly.
- **Building work** - The contractors will continue to work in the kitchen until Friday 15th September. They will be completely self-contained in a small fenced off area in front of the boiler room that will run up to the fence of the Reception playground and in the sealed off kitchen with no access to the hall. As a result, for the following week and a half, there will be no access to the Reception playground from the main school playground, parents will need to use the ginnel to access nursery and Reception. **For the duration of the remaining building work we will unfortunately not be able to let the children play on the yard at the end of school as this space may be needed for deliveries etc.** As a school we have put extensive measures in place to ensure the children do not inadvertently come into contact with this work

We are more than aware that starting a new school year with these interruptions is far from ideal, but thank you for your patience in bearing with us.

Reading Books in School

Our stocktake over the summer holiday has highlighted that about **£3000** worth of books were not returned to school last term. **PLEASE CAN YOU CHECK AT HOME AND SEND IN ANY BOOKS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE** as we obviously can't possibly sustain this loss. Thank you in advance for your help with this.

Attendance

Good attendance is vital for success at primary school and establish positive habits for future success. The more pupils are in school the more they will achieve. We focus on attendance and punctuality and try to discourage holidays during term time. Over the last two years we have experienced a rise in the number of holidays taken during term time. A list of our holiday dates can found overleaf and are also available on the school website. Please try to ensure that wherever possible you take your holidays within these dates.

As always if there are any questions about the contents of this letter please do not hesitate to contact us.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Fri 15 Sept:	Kendal Torchlight Procession
Wed 20 Sept:	Y2 Transport Trip
Mon 2 Oct:	Reception and Nursery (am) Individual Photographs
Tues 10 Oct:	Y1-6 Individual Photographs
Wed 11 Oct:	Nursery (pm) Individual Photographs
Wed 18 Oct:	Reception 2018 Open Evening
Fri 20 Oct:	Half Term, school finishes at 3.20pm
Mon 30 Oct:	Term re-starts