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MRS S WHITELAW B(Ed) M.A.
HEAD TEACHER

Upwood School Newsletter February 2014

Attendance

The school aims to work together with parents/carers to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually; subsequently children will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Illness

If your child is absent from school due to illness please contact the School Office on the first day of non-attendance.

Holiday Requests

The Government brought in new legislation from 1st September 2013 regarding parental requests for leave of absence (including holiday absence). The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, e.g.:

- If a parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.
- If there has recently been a death or significant other trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.
- If the holiday is a unique, one-off, never-to-be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

The financial factor of taking holidays during term time will not be taken as constituting an 'exceptional circumstance' as per Government legislation.

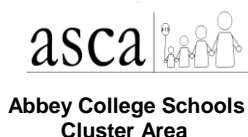
The Governing Body recognise that regular attendance at school is essential for children to make progress. Even one or two days absence from school affects progress as children miss teaching input which is sequential.

If a parent/carer needs to request a leave of absence from school, the form for completion (approved by the Governing Body) can be accessed via the School's website ('Policies and Prospectus' section): <http://www.upwood.cambs.sch.uk/>. Alternatively, for parents/carers without internet access, a copy of the form can be obtained from the School Office.

Schools are unable to grant leave of absence:

- If a child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness.
- If the period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to, or coincides with tests, SATs or other significant events in the school calendar.

If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the School's attendance register as Unauthorised Absence (the same as truancy), and the matter will need to be referred to the School's Education Welfare Officer. Any questions, please see a member of the Office Staff.



Notices and Reminders

Pantomime

On Wednesday 5th February, pupils and staff were entertained by the 'M and M' Theatrical Company. Children from Foundation right through to Year 6 enjoyed watching a performance of 'Peter Pan'. There was a great deal of audience participation during the show and some members of staff even joined the cast on stage for a dance! From the large amounts of shouting and clapping occurring during the show, the staff suspect all of those who saw it were thoroughly amused! It was a very professional performance with a fabulous set. We would like to thank the PTA who funded the performance, this is much appreciated.

Catering Workshops

Pupils at Upwood Primary School have developed their cookery skills the week beginning 27th January. Each year group welcomed and worked with Mrs Youngman from Cambridgeshire Catering Service. Overall, the aim of the workshops was to give the children a greater understanding of where food comes from and how to create a tasty dish from scratch using healthy ingredients. The children made fruit crumbles, bread and pizza and were taught many cookery skills including mixing, kneading and chopping safely. At the end of the session each child was able to eat their cookery project!

Egg Day

As the Spring Term draws to a close, we will be holding our annual 'Egg Day' on Friday 4th April. Children in Years 1 to 6 are invited to take part in a competition to design and make something creative, using a hard boiled egg. There will be prizes for each class and an overall winner. Judges will arrive in school during the afternoon to choose the winners. Creations will be displayed in the hall at the end of the day for parents/carers to view. This day always proves to be exceedingly successful and popular. Further details to follow.

World Book Day

On 6th March, schools across the country will be celebrating 'World Book Day'. Staff and pupils from Upwood Primary School will be marking the event in a number of different ways. Children and staff may come into School wearing a costume or items of clothing relating to a character from their favourite book. The last time the School celebrated World Book Day in this way we had many wonderful costumes, from Harry Potter to Where's Wally and we are all very much looking forward to seeing which characters will appear this year.

Read it Again

On Wednesday 5th March, a member of Ramsey Library Staff will visit our School to explain the 'Read it Again' Award to the children. This is a unique award from Cambridgeshire Libraries where thousands of children in local schools read, discuss and then vote for their favourite book from a shortlist of eight titles, all by first-time authors and illustrators.

Over the following two weeks, the children will hear the eight books and decide which was their favourite and why. If you are able to volunteer your time to read a story to a small group of children, please see a member of staff. Please note all volunteers must be DBS checked.

Dinner Money Reminder

All schools are coming to the end of the financial year (1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014) where the school accounts will be audited by the Local Authority. This includes outstanding dinner money debts. Please can all parents/carers ensure that all dinner money is paid, via Agora or at the School Office, no later than **Friday 21st March, together with advance payments until the end of the school term.** If the outstanding dinner money debt has been for a long period of time, Cambridgeshire County Council may take over the debt at this point. We would like to be proactive in supporting parents/carers to pay off debts through a payment plan before Cambridgeshire County Council take the decision to intervene.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Whitelaw
Head Teacher

Apparatus

This is a polite reminder to all parents/carers regarding school apparatus. The outside apparatus must not be used before and after school for health and safety reasons. We appreciate parents/carers co-operation with this reminder.