

NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley St Helen's and Whalton Church of England Aided Schools

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Friday 7th June 2019

Dear Parents

Welcome back to the second half of the Summer Term, we really hope that you all had a great half term having lots of fun even if the weather was slightly temperamental, although the sun is really trying!

Residentials

A great time was had by all Year 4 children across the Federation; Robinwood definitely lived up to its expectations, from stories of exhilaration on the giant swing, to the tales of the enthusiastic staff, to the delicious and plentiful cooked breakfasts, snacks and drinks available throughout the stay. Huge thanks to Mrs Potter and Mr Reilly for accompanying the children, it was a great opportunity for the children to make new friends from Cambo and Tritlington and to achieve and complete new challenges as part of their transition to middle school; we are very proud of how they behaved and of their personal achievements.

Our Year 6 children at Whalton have still got their France trip to look forward to with the Ponteland Partnership of schools, both Miss Anderson and Mrs Casper are very excited as are the children!

Transition

Mr Stewart (Headteacher at Chantry) and Mrs Irving (Head of Year 5) came into school this week, as did Mrs Ryan, Deputy Headteacher from Dr Thomlinson, to have a good chat to all of our children at Longhorsley to help put their minds at rest and ask any of the questions that are weighing heavily on their minds about moving to their new middle schools...detention and how to actually get into Chantry were among them! Please be assured that if the children have any further questions or queries that we will quite happily try to answer them ourselves or get answers for them. It is a really emotional half term for many of our children, (not to mention for many of you parents) and even though they are ready to fly the nest of first school there is still lots planned for them to be doing, learning and enjoying.

Year 2 and Year 6 SATs

We are extremely proud of our hard working Year 2 children at both schools and our Year 6 children at Whalton. Staff across the Federation ensured that the children felt comfortable and under no undue pressure and were always reassured that they just needed to do their very best. Team Whalton were amazing at helping the Year 6 children prepare for their SATs too - breakfast clubs in the run up to and delicious snacks between SATs papers; there was even a report that



the children were excited for the SATs which is the best compliment any child can give us! In fact the only stressful part was trying to put the right papers in the right envelopes with the correct labels and registers following the tests for the courier - and that was for us staff! How your children have achieved in the statutory tests will be sent out with your child's Report on Friday 12th July.

Attendance

Just prior to the holidays we reviewed our Federation Attendance Policy which will be going to Governors for formal approval this half term. Huge thanks to Mrs Bates and Mr Hague for their input and comments. We have attached our reviewed parent/carer leaflet, which although still in draft form will hopefully give you an overview of the legal expectations, our systems and also helpful hints to decision making when planning holidays and booking essential appointments so that we can work together to minimise any disruptions to your children's learning; a day before or after a half term makes a great difference to the price of a holiday but also decreases the amount of time away from school as once that sequence of learning has been taught (or missed), the teacher moves on to new objectives which makes building upon any prior knowledge for any children who have missed the previous teaching very difficult, especially if a child has missed a week or two weeks of the curriculum.

The tables following show what our current position is in terms of statistics for attendance. Although we are at the national average at Longhorsley and above for attendance at Whalton, our unauthorised absence at Longhorsley is above national for the Spring term 1.28% v 1.2% (this does not include illness).

Longhorsley 2018-19	100% attendance	% attendance for term	authorised absence	un-authorised absence
Autumn	20/85 - 24%	96.3%	2.61%	1.08%
Spring	29/86 - 34%	96.05%	2.67%	1.28%

Whalton 2018-19	100% attendance	% attendance for term	authorised absence	un-authorised absence
Autumn	24/47 - 51%	97.9%	1.93%	0.17%
Spring	19/47 - 40%	97.2%	2.36%	0.44%

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year.
98% - 100%	Excellent	0 - 4	Less than 1
96% - 98%	Good	5 - 9	1 to 2
90% - 95%	Unsatisfactory	10 - 20	2 to 4
Below 90%	Persistent Absentee	More than 20	More than 4

To encourage and recognise those children who have attended school regularly, certificates and prizes will be awarded for the first time next week for good and excellent attendance using this banding adopted from Northumberland County Council's model policy which will recognise those children who do attend well even if they have missed a small number of days due to illness which really cannot be helped.

We really hope that this information and the leaflet is helpful in understanding the legal expectations and agreed processes and systems that school has to go through to support your children's attendance and education. Thank you for your support and understanding.

Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

In addition to my headteacher monitoring and termly visits from our School Improvement Partner (SIP), we also have governor visits. I thought that you would like to hear the feedback from our most recent governor visit which was focused on 'An assessment of learning and engagement of children across the school at Longhorsley' which concludes that; 'Children throughout the school were all well behaved, engaged, understood the tasks given to them and were clearly enjoying their work... There was clear progression of learning throughout the school, and children were happy and confident in their learning.

Thank you to the governors for their ongoing support and challenge and to all the staff across both schools for the hours of hard work that goes into the 'behind the scenes' planning, marking and attending staff training which keeps our schools moving forward to ensure that the children get the very best and are such happy places to learn.

Parent Questionnaire

It is at this time of year that we are not only looking at what we have planned for the summer but reflecting back on the year as a whole in order to plan for September, especially in terms of school improvement and ensuring we do the very best by your children. To this end, please could you spend a little time feeding back your thoughts on what has gone well this year and anything we can improve on further. We have used the generic Ofsted questionnaire that we have used in previous years which allows us to compare the feedback annually too. There is additional space for further comments and especially if you are a parent who has chosen to change schools to bring your child to either school, either mid year or for the start of a new year group, it would be great to hear how you have found your experiences to date as we are always showing new parents around so it would be good to be able to share your comments.

Building Work at Longhorsley

Just to let you all know that we have been able to pay all of our extension building works off completely so any further money raised at Longhorsley will go onto new projects such as additional classroom resources, additional reading books and further improving the Early Years environment. The PTA at Longhorsley also kindly funded the amazing and talented felters, Charlotte and Emma, who worked with the children to produce our stunning new banner at Longhorsley which we take annually to the Leavers' Service at Newcastle Cathedral. They were also responsible for the new Whalton banner last year too.

Huge thanks again to the PTA across both schools for all of their fundraising, we will be getting the order ready so that we can have new reading scheme books at Whalton for the entire school. Please continue to support our PTA at the Whalton fayre too.

Special thanks to everyone who gave up a part of their family weekend time to help pack shopping bags at Morrisons for Longhorsley's PTA - a brilliant £200 plus was made.

Opportunities to come into School

The summer term is always a busy one but we are extremely fortunate to have musical concerts to invite you to as well as our traditional sports afternoon and 'welcome meetings' to meet your child's new teacher for September. Please ensure you don't miss out on these opportunities by keeping up to date with our electronic newsletter sent out by Schoolcomms and on our website. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the different events across both schools.

Kind regards

Mrs Brannen
Executive Headteacher



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS – June 2019

The questionnaires are totally anonymous and should only take a few minutes to complete.

Parent Questionnaire 2019		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
<i>Please tick ✓</i>					
1	My child is happy at this school.				
2	My child feels safe at this school.				
3	My child makes good progress at this school.				
4	My child is well looked after at this school.				
5	My child is taught well at this school.				
6	My child receives appropriate homework for their age.				
7	This school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.				
8	This school deals effectively with bullying.				
9	This school is well led and managed.				
10	This school responds well to any concerns I raise.				
11	I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress.				
12	There is a good range of activities that my child finds interesting and enjoyable.				
13	Would you recommend this school to another parent? If so, please comment on the school's strengths.				

Do you have any other suggestions or comments? (If necessary please continue on the back)

Please return by Monday 17th June.

Thank you so much for your time.

Kind regards, Mrs Brannen

