

# Newsletter 15

Friday 12th January 2024

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Welcome back to a brand new January! I hope you all had a restful and relaxing Christmas and enjoyed spending time with your families and friends. On behalf of all the staff I would like to thank you for your very kind and generous gifts, cards and your messages over the festive season.

The children have returned to school full of enthusiasm and excited to learn. I have already seen some amazing work going on in the classrooms as the children have settled back into the routines of their classrooms and school. They have all grasped the challenge I gave them in assembly on Monday morning of seizing every opportunity that comes their way in 2024.

We would also like to extend a warm welcome to Mr Meredith who has taken over as class teacher for Cygnus Class. Mr Meredith completed some work with us last year so it is wonderful to have him back with us as a member of the Monkfield Park team.

mrs Howell.

## The Big Ambition – Have your say!

The Children's Commissioner for England, Dame Rachel de Souza, has launched The Big Ambition, a national survey of children and young people across England.

The Big Ambition wants to hear from children across England on what they think is important! In the lead up to the next General Election, the Children's Commissioner wants to take children's thoughts, opinions and ideas to decision-makers, to make sure that the Government hears young people's voices on what they think needs to be done to make children's lives better in England.

The Big Ambition survey will be open until Friday 19th January and can be completed using the link here: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition)



## Attendance and Punctuality

Many of you will have seen the reports in the media about school attendance and the government's pledge to improve the attendance crisis. Since the COVID lockdowns, data shows that 1 in 5 children are now classified as being persistently absent from school; a child is persistently absent if their attendance falls below 90%.

Schools are required to ensure that parents are informed of any attendance concerns at an early stage and therefore, some of you will have receive an initial communication from us if your child's attendance has fallen below the expected 96%. This initial letter is simply to make you aware of your child's attendance level. If concerns persist, then we will contact you again, to ensure you have all the information about your child's attendance at the earliest possible stage. If your child's attendance level continues to fall we will contact you to meet with us to explore the reasons and discuss what help can be put in place to increase your child's attendance.

Where a child is struggling to attend school, it is imperative we meet with you and your child at the earliest opportunity so that we can try to understand the reasons for their absence and what support you or your child needs to overcome the barriers to attendance they are experiencing.



Our new Family Support Worker, Mrs Emma Walsh, will be working closely with families and children where attendance has fallen, as part of her role. Mrs Walsh will contact families to offer support to improve attendance and you will see her on the playground at the beginning of the school day, so please do speak with her if you feel you need some help. In addition, Mrs Walsh will work with children, parents, carers and wider agencies to provide safeguarding advice and guidance, prevent needs escalating so that intervention by specialist services is not required, tackle underachievement and enable children to have full access to educational opportunities by overcoming potential barriers to learning and well-being.

We are still receiving an increasing numbers of requests from families who wish to take holidays or travel abroad in term time to visit family members. The guidance from the Local Authority and the Department for Education does not allow the governing body to authorise absences in term time other than in exceptional circumstances, so we would urge you to adhere to the school holiday dates when planning holidays and family events. The term dates for this academic year and for 2024-25 are available on the school's website and are included in this newsletter.

Please work with us to make sure that poor school attendance is not a limiting factor for any child at Monkfield Park. If you do receive a letter from us, please do not be offended as it is intended to be supportive and we want to work with you and your child to address any barriers to school attendance. Thank you for your support.



### Outdoor Play

The field is now open all year round to allow the children to have more room to run and play. Those children who have brought wellingtons to school have been enjoying the wonderful extra green space this week.

All your child needs is a pair of wellingtons or waterproof boots e.g. walking boots, which stay in school for them to change into at lunchtimes. Please note that to preserve our carpets, the children will still need to come to school in their school shoes which they will need to wear inside the school buildings and when the weather is dry.

It would be very useful to have some spare pairs of boots or wellingtons in school. If you have any spare wellingtons which your children have grown out of we will be very happy to take them off your hands if you would like to donate them to school. Any donations of wellingtons can be left at the School Office. Please speak to us if you are experiencing problems sourcing wellingtons or suitable boots for your child.



### Applying for a School Place

Just a reminder that the closing date for applications for Reception places for September 2024 is **Monday 15th January 2024. Applications received after this date will not be considered until the second round of allocations in May.**

If your child was born between 1st September 2019 and 31st August 2020, and you live in Cambridgeshire you can apply online at:

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/apply-for-a-school-place/primary-reception-junior-or-middle-school>



### Safeguarding

Sadly, we have had some incidents of unkind and inappropriate messages being posted on social messaging platforms, mainly by Upper KS2 children. I think it is worth stressing again that the majority of these sites that we know the children are using have an age limit of 13 years of age.

Tik tok = 13+                    I

Instagram = 13+

Snapchat = 13+

Whatsapp = 16+

It is very hard for us to resolve issues that occur outside school, especially when they involve social media. Often we find that disagreements, unkind messages, inappropriate language and activities on social media fuel disagreements in school. We will always aim to support children and families when trying to resolve issues that occur outside of school, but urge parents and carers to consider and monitor closely what your children are allowed to access at home.

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT PARKING OPPOSITE SCHOOL

This week I have been contacted by the businesses at Caxton House, situated opposite the school. They have informed me that parents and carers are parking in the spaces outside Ladbrokes and the Dry Cleaners when dropping children off at school and at the Care and Learning Centre.

These car parking spaces are reserved for staff who work in Caxton House and parents and carers parking there at the beginning and end of the school day is causing them significant inconvenience as they are unable to access their parking spaces.

The business owners have asked me to inform parents and carers that they should not be using these car parking spaces or the ones in the semi-circle by Fish N Chicken and Dominoes. I understand that they have left messages on cars asking them not to park there.

The business owners have informed me today, that they will now be moving to prosecute the owners of all cars parked there without permission.

Please can I urge everyone to use the Priory Walk Car Park or to walk or bike to school to avoid the risk of receiving a fine.

## Sentence starters

Ask your Reception child to compare Cambourne with Antarctica.

Ask your Year 1 child to tell you the names of the four countries that make up the UK and their capitals.

Ask your Year 2 child to explain what a riddle is and give you an example.

Ask your Year 3 child to re-tell the story of 'The Egyptian Cinderella'.

Ask your Year 4 child to explain the plot of 'How to be a Viking'.

Ask your Year 5 child to tell you which words they learnt to pronounce in their first Spanish lesson with Senorita Ground.

Ask your Year 6 child to re-tell the story of Robin Hood in their own words.

### Headteacher Parent Drop Ins

Do you have something you would like to talk to Mrs Howell about? If so, why not come along to one of the Headteacher's Drop In sessions this term. Mrs Howell will be offering parent drop ins for anyone who wishes to discuss any aspect of school life throughout the Spring term. The dates can be found below, but please remember that these are offered on a first come, first served basis and you may therefore have to wait.

19th January 9.30—10.30 am

15th March 3.00—4.00 pm

31st January 2.30—3.30 pm

27th March 9.30—10.30 am

15th February 3.00—4.00 pm

28th February 9.00—10.00 am



**FORTHCOMING DATES Spring Term 2024**

16th January—Parent Workshops

19th January—Headteacher Drop In at 9.30 to 10.30am

22nd to 26th January—International Week

26th January—Columba Class assembly

31st January—Headteacher drop In at 2.30 to 3.30pm

2nd February—NSPCC Number Day

5th to 9th February—Children’s Mental Health Week

6th February—Parent’s Therapeutic Thinking Workshop at 2.30pm

6th February—Parent’s Therapeutic Thinking Workshop at 5.30pm

8th February—Reception Come and Share

9th February—Blue Class assembly

9th February—FOMP School Disco—details to follow

13th February—Year 2 performance at 2pm

14th February—Year 2 performance at 2pm

15th February—Year 1 WOW Day—London

15th February—Headteacher Drop In 3.00 to 4.00pm

16th February—Break up for half term

19th to 23rd February—Half Term

26th February—Children return to school

28th February—SEND Coffee Morning

28th February—Headteacher Drop In 9.00 to 10.00am

5th March—Dental checks for Reception and Year 1

5th March—SEND Coffee Morning

8th March—Cygnus Class assembly

8th March—Mid-term reports to parents

12th March—Parent consultations

14th March—Year 1 trip to Church Farm

15th March—Violet Class assembly

18th to 21st March—Book Fayre from 3.40pm

21st March—Parent consultations

22nd March—Green Class assembly

26th March—Year 5 production at 2.00pm