

Cotherstone School Governing Body

Newsletter – February 2019

Welcome to the first Governors' newsletter of the New Year. Despite the recent snowfall, Christmas feels like a long time ago but we hope that you all had an enjoyable festive season.

Welcome

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Jon and his family who joined Class 1 recently.

Timely payments of outstanding bills

At a time when school budgets are getting tighter and tighter, we find ourselves in the position whereby we need to review the payment of school meals and the before and after-school clubs.

We need to ensure that all of our budget is spent carefully and invested in the education of the children. If debts are incurred for school lunches or wrap around care, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money that should be spent on all pupils' education in school is used to pay debts incurred by individual parents/carers.

We currently have over £1000 in unpaid dinner money and wrap-around care bills. The governing body see this as unacceptable and request that all parents/carers pay in a timely manner.

After the half term break, we will issue each family with an 'Agreement to pay' document which we will need to be signed and returned to school as soon as possible.

Space Camp

This week's Space Camp was a huge success. The event would not have been possible without the massive commitment made by the staff, whom the Governing Body would like to thank. Even though it was a cloudy night, we understand the children were able to see Mars and the Moon. We will look forward to hearing more about the event from the children next half term.

Parent Governor Vacancy

Towards the end of February, one of our parent governors' term of office will come to an end meaning there will be a vacancy on the governing body. Parent governors are elected by the school community for a period of 4 years. Details will be published in the weekly school newsletter next half term.



School Attendance Target

We have been set an attendance target of 97% with 0% of children with an attendance below 90%.

Attendances so far this year are as follows:

Half term attendance averages	Attendance Key
Autumn 1 st half term 95.36% (22 children having attendance lower than 95%)	96 – 100% Well done 91-95% - risk of children underachieving their potential
Autumn 2 nd half term 96.36% (8 children with attendance lower than 95%)	85 – 90% Serious risk of underachievement
Spring term 1 st half 96.31% (16 children with attendance lower than 95%)	Below 85% - serious cause for concern and underachievement. At risk of Fast-track by the Local Authority

If you require more information regarding school attendance, Durham County Council's website contains practical guidance and advice for parents: <http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2339/School-attendance>

Dr Jellis, Staff and Governors are always happy to discuss any concerns or questions you may have regarding your child's attendance.

Cool Kids

Next half term, Claire will be introducing cake decorating to the many fun activities the club has to offer. In order to have sufficient ingredients to go around, please do ensure you book your child's place.

The club will offer the following activities after the holiday:

Monday – Coding Club
Tuesday – Film Club
Wednesday – Cake Decorating
Thursday – Easter Crafts
Friday – Friday Fun

Friends of Cotherstone School

The 100 Club is underway and has had its first winner! There are some numbers still available so if you would like to purchase one, please see Liz Gill or email lizzie.lizzie@hotmail.co.uk It only costs £1 per month and the odds of winning are much higher than the national lottery! It would be lovely to get the wider community involved so please mention it to family, friends and neighbours.

We would like to thank FOCS for funding the recent purchase of 10 refurbished laptops which are sure to be put to good use in class. The planetarium visit last week was also made possible thanks to FOCS and was a wonderful experience for the children.

The fundraising efforts of FOCS are vital to the experience our children receive in school and we appreciate the support given to them by the school and wider community. If you have any ideas for fundraising or time and skills to support planned events then please contact the Chair of FOCS, Deb Newman debnewman70@gmail.com

School re-opens on Monday 25th February 2019

If you have any issue that you would like to raise with the Governing Body, please contact Rachel at rachelgoldsborough@gmail.com or on 650041.

