



# The Abbey CE VA Primary School

Headteacher: Miss E. Fenn  
Telephone: 01727 851802  
Fax No: 01727 766991  
Email: [head@abbey.herts.sch.uk](mailto:head@abbey.herts.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.abbey.herts.sch.uk](http://www.abbey.herts.sch.uk)

Grove Road  
St Albans  
Herts  
AL1 1DQ

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Dear parents

Welcome back to our Christmas half term here at school. The weather has turned quite chilly and I would like to remind all parents that children must come to school with a coat or have a coat in school. To assist with your future holiday planning attached to this newsletter you will find the academic term dates for 2015/2016. Please note that there are two Bank holidays within the spring term 2016 which unusually fall **outside** of the Easter Holidays.

You will have hopefully seen our brand new story telling circle, complete with 32 wooden seats, including a story telling chair. The seating is much coveted by all the Junior children at break times and lunch times. The story circle will be used by every class for storytelling, PSHE lessons, music, speaking and listening and drama lessons.



## Mrs Price

Mrs Price, our music teacher, is unwell with acute tonsillitis and signed off from work for at least two weeks. There will be no orchestra, peripatetic lessons or theory music lessons until further notice. Mrs Price also leads the Parish Junior Singers in the Abbey and this will not take place until her return. We are all wishing Mrs Price a speedy recovery.

## Nut Free School

Just to remind parents that we are a Nut Free school as we have both staff and pupils who are severely allergic and carry Epi-Pens. Nuts and foods containing nuts, such as peanut butter, almond essence and Snickers bars must not be brought into school for lunch, birthday treats or in cakes brought in for the Cake Sales.





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## **The importance of attendance and punctuality at Abbey School.**

As the Headteacher, I have a duty, along with the school governors, to promote the highest attendance and punctuality levels possible. The school is set very high attendance targets by the Government, and our attendance data is regularly scrutinised by the Local Authority and Ofsted. Attendance is one of the factors by which they measure the success of the school.

I would like to thank you for supporting the school, its staff and its children by your concerted efforts to ensure your child is in school on time to allow lessons to begin promptly at 8.55am. In keeping with Government requirements schools are expected to keep track of all attendance and punctuality. We have been reviewing last terms punctuality with guidance from the school's Attendance Improvement Officer.

The academic progress of a child, whatever his/her level of academic ability, will be adversely affected if they miss school, whether for a day or 5 minutes in the morning. Obviously, if a child is unwell then they should not come to school. At the start of each day the teacher takes the register and introduces the first activity. A child not present for this is put at a disadvantage, particularly if it happens regularly, as well as causing a disturbance to the teacher and the rest of the children in the class.

8.55-9.25am is also a crucial time for children to be in school as some of our identified children who benefit from additional support are timetabled to work with a teaching assistant during this time and many of these vulnerable learners are wasting this extra support.

## **Parents entering the school**

For safety and security we ask that all parents and visitors enter the school via the front door and sign in so we have a record of who is in the school building in case of an emergency. Classroom external doors will be closed to ensure safety of the children attending before school clubs. Teachers are happy to meet with parents at 8.30/8.45am via appointments made through the School Office, however politely request that parents do not enter the classrooms without an appointment. The Year 2 classroom with its external staircase is not ideal and Miss Dunn politely requests that parents wait at the bottom of the stairs at the start and end of the day to avoid congestion which may put children in harm's way.

## **School Website**

Just a reminder to parents that our school website is a useful tool for parents and potential parents to find information about the school and improve communications with parents, staff and governors. We also have a wonderful 3D Google images virtual tour of the school created by Year 1 parent Andy Collins. All term dates, curriculum letters, newsletters and photographs of special events can be found in this one central location.

## **Head lice in Key Stage 1 and 2**

We had cases of head lice in both Key Stages before half term. Can I please ask ALL families to check their children's hair on a Sunday night and treat if appropriate? This co-ordinated approach increases the chances of stopping re-infection. Anyone with hair can catch head lice.



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Children are most commonly affected because they tend to have more head-to-head contact while at school or during play. The risk can be reduced by having long hair tied back, as recommended for school.

There is information on head lice and treatments on the following internet pages:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice/Pages/Introduction.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice/Pages/Treatment.aspx>

Many parents choose not to use chemical based treatments; you may be interested in the Bug Busting kit, which can be purchased online, or is available on NHS Prescription. See <http://www.chc.org>.

### **Poppies**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> November is Armistice Day, and the children and staff will observe a minute's silence. The Year 6 children are selling poppies on behalf of the Poppy Appeal and children may wear their poppies attached to their school uniform. Children should bring their donation in a named purse or envelope and give it to the class teacher.

### **Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November – Dress in spots or as a super hero**

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> November is Children in Need Day, as always we would like to support this fantastic charity and children may dress in spots on that day, in return for a minimum £1.00 donation. We have heard that the CiN theme this year is super heroes so children may like to come as their favourite super hero! Children should bring their donations into the classroom and hand them to their teachers!

### **Supporting RNLI**

Remember to save your used stamps this Christmas period for the Royal National Lifeboats Institute. We have supported the RNLI for a number of years and there is a used stamp collection box in the entrance of school.

### **Christingle Service – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December**

All are welcome to this enjoyable candlelit service at 3pm at the Cathedral. This traditional service is loved by children and adults alike, as we look forward to the coming of Christ, Light of the world. A collection will be taken for the Children's Society.

### **Christmas Jumper Day – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December**

In support of Save the Children's Christmas Jumper Day, staff will be wearing a Christmas jumper and give a small donation in support of this wonderful charity. All children are welcome to join us in this fundraising opportunity if they would like to. This is not mentioned on the diary dates and new this year so we wanted to give you an opportunity to organise a jumper should your child wish to join in.

### **Christmas tree decorations**

Our school Christmas tree is being donated by Aylett Nurseries this year and our children will decorate the tree in the week of the Christmas Fair, week beginning 24<sup>th</sup> November.



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Any new children (such as the Reception class or new starters this academic year) who joined the school since last December are invited to bring in one decoration from home to hang on the tree that week. This decoration remains in school and is not returned home.

This Abbey School tradition is fun for the children, but if your child is unable to find a decoration, or forgets, we will make sure he or she can choose a decoration from our box.

## **Supporting the homeless at Christmas**

Captain Ralph from the Harpenden Salvation Army visits us for Collective Worship each term and entertained the whole school recently with a wonderful magic trick to emphasis Trust. Captain Ralph told me that in the run up to Christmas sleeping bags and blankets are much needed for the homeless who are not lucky enough to receive a bed from charities such as Open Door.

## **Extreme weather conditions**

Thinking ahead, with potential future unpredictable weather conditions, our large and complex school site can make the start of the day difficult in ensuring the school is not only open but safe for children, parents and staff. On days when we experience snow and icy conditions the school will always endeavour to clear pedestrian walkways to the school building.

If the conditions are severe, the entire school site may not be cleared in time for 8.45am. On these occasions we will ensure that the pedestrian walkways to the front door of school via the pedestrian gate at Grove Road and the pedestrian gate at Lady Spencer Grove are clear for the start of the day.

With such a large and complex site we cannot always guarantee that the pathway from the Abbey Orchard gate is safely cleared in time, as parents and children walk across two playgrounds and it encompasses many flights of steps. Health and safety is always a priority and our flights of stairs could prove dangerous in adverse conditions. I hope you can understand that we have parents and children's safety in mind at all times if we do not open all three entrances to school. On such days, any assistance from parents is much appreciated, even from 7am or 8.45am.

To help you plan your journey to and from school on snowy and icy days it is best to rely on the clear access points of Grove Road and Lady Spencer Grove. Thank you for your continued support and understanding as we try to provide a safe learning environment for your children.

## **School closure procedure**

In the very rare event we were ever forced to close the school for health and safety reasons, please familiarise yourself with our school closure procedure. All parents registered with Parentmail would receive a text if the school is closed.

It will not be posted on the website. You can also check if the school is closed on [www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlfe/schoolclose/](http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/edlearn/schlfe/schoolclose/) you should also listen to your local radio station.



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The station will announce the school closures regularly throughout the 'Drivetime' slot in the morning and/or put a list of closed schools on their website if possible (please note that not all stations put the information on their website).

*BBC Three Counties Radio* 103.8fm/92.1fm/90.4fm/630mw/1161mw

Areas covered: The whole of Hertfordshire

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/england/beds\\_bucks\\_and\\_herts/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/england/beds_bucks_and_herts/)

*Heart 96.6 Hertfordshire* (previously Mercury 96.6)

Areas covered: Watford, Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Rickmansworth, Berkhamstead, Redbourn, Borehamwood, Kings Langley, Radlett <http://www.heart.co.uk>

### **Helpful website suggested by a Key Stage 2 parent**

Below you will find a very useful website for finding additional information (more than your children may want to tell you) on movies, TV shows, video games, apps and advertising. This may prove very helpful before you start purchasing Christmas presents! The website has useful expert reviews as well as reviews from parents and children with the ratings they think media should have [www.commonsemmedia.org](http://www.commonsemmedia.org)

### **Midday Supervisory Assistant Job Opportunity**

Abbey Primary School is looking for an additional midday supervisor to help with the supervision of children during the lunch break. The hours are 11.55 am to 1.10 pm at an hourly rate of £6.50. We would be delighted to hear from applicants who would be interested in working any day of the week. You would be joining a supportive team and working with well-behaved and friendly children. Please contact the School Office on 01727 851802 for further details.

### **Cross Country**

Well done to the Year 5 and 6 Cross Country team who struggled through cold temperatures on Wednesday to complete in the final race of the season. We are extremely proud of all the runners and were delighted to come in the top 10, with Beth Barker, Year 6, achieving 4<sup>th</sup> position in the girls' race out of over 90 athletes.

### **Giant African Snails**

The School Library is the proud owners of two giant African snails. We are looking for a rectangular glass tank (with a lid!) to give them a larger home. If you have a spare empty tank that you are happy to donate to school please speak to Mrs Johnston or the School Office.



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### **Morrisons Let's Grow Vouchers**

Morrisons supermarket have started their annual 'Let's Grow' voucher scheme which allows for schools to save up for gardening equipment for children at school. If you are given any vouchers when shopping at Morrisons, we would be grateful to receive them. There is a collection box in the front of school.

I hope you have a relaxing weekend.

Kind regards

Emma Fenn  
Headteacher