



## Consett Junior School

### October 2020 Newsletter

As I write this introduction it seems we are nearing a critical stage in the Coronavirus Pandemic; sadly, rises in the infection rate and hospital admissions. I am conscious that much of my time in school is being taken up with COVID related issues, such as risk assessments and updating of reviews and plans. I am adamant that we will continue to focus on the safety and well-being of all, as we look forward in this Autumn term. It would seem very unlikely that Primary schools would be asked to close moving forward, although the advice and science does change almost daily - we will do our best to keep you up to date as much as possible. Please do continue to follow the guidance issued by school, it is for your safety and that of your families.

The children have settled back into the routine of school very well, they follow the rules well around cleaning etc. On occasion, some children need reminding of what constitutes sensible behaviour, usually at lunch times, as always if we have concerns we will be in touch - I do very much appreciate the support we have from families in these matters. The school rules are in place to ensure everyone's safety and to allow all the children to have a good education and access excellent learning opportunities.

Now we have moved through September and managed, with your support to keep things moving, I am happily looking forward to switching my focus a little more towards the learning and the development of the children and staff. With this in mind, I hope to meet with a random selection of children from each year group, asking them to talk through their experiences since we have returned to school and look carefully at what they are doing in class and how we can support them moving forward.

Thank you to the many parents who returned their questionnaire regarding home learning, it has been very useful in framing what we hope to provide moving forward with children who are needing to isolate or if a class should need to isolate. We are in the process of finishing the offer; but it will include Microsoft 365 Accounts for all children, Timetables Rock Stars for all year groups, work delivered through Purple Mash and our new Reading at home package 'MyON' - further details will follow soon. Sadly, what we offer won't be perfect for all families, but we hope to provide work that can be marked, with prompt feedback to children and a facility for keeping in touch with families.

As we move into October and beyond, please be assured we have plans in place for some lovely experiences for the children for Halloween, Remembrance and then into Christmas.

As always, if anyone is concerned or has worries, I am always more than happy to speak with you, please contact us to arrange an appointment.

Please take care and keep safe, I look forward to catching up with everyone very soon.

*Mr Paul Dixon*

Head Teacher

#### Attendance

The whole school attendance for September was fairly good at 95.02%, which is below the governments floor target of 96%. This is good considering that the children have been away from each other for six months and are now back together, despite remaining in their 'bubbles' they will still be in contact with germs that their immune

system has not been used to for so long. This is also the season of cold and flu.

We completely understand the worry about Covid and the rise in cases in the North East. We are here to help if you want to talk about this and how we are ensuring the safety of your child in school during these difficult times. If you or a family member develop symptoms you must keep us informed. If your child is absent either from symptoms of Covid or isolating due to a family member, your child's absence is authorised.

If your child is absent from school for any reason you MUST inform the school. There have been several children absent and no reason has been provided. By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full-time education. For most families, this means registering their child at school. Therefore, all CJS children must attend school, if they are unwell there are several ways you can inform the school office, as it is known that sometimes getting through on busy mornings can be difficult. You can ring 01207 504431, text 07537436638 or email [consettjunior@durhamlearning.net](mailto:consettjunior@durhamlearning.net)

If your child is poorly and their illness means they need to be absent for 48 hours, you must contact school on the first day of their absence and we will advise you if you need to ring again on the second day of absence. If your child's absences become frequent or pattern based, i.e. off regularly on Mondays or Fridays, then action will be taken to prove your child is off unwell. This may mean letters are requested from their GP, a home visit from the school or a visit from a DCC attendance team officer. You can be prosecuted if your child has unauthorised absence from school.

Please ensure you try to make medical appointments outside of school time, any made during the school day must be supported with a letter detailing the appointment. Although medical appointments are authorised, they do not qualify as an attendance mark.

As you are aware it is against the law to take holidays during term time, we do refer families to the LA for fixed penalty fines. Very clear guidelines regarding the triggers for penalty notices can be found on our website or issued at your request. These procedures are strongly in place in all schools, and although our attendance is good overall, we must comply with legislation.

### [September attendance overview](#)

Class 1 achieved the highest % class attendance for September (97.87%) and their free non-uniform day reward is this Friday 2nd October. Well done and what a fantastic start!

Year 3 achieved the highest attendance as a year group for September and they will each receive a giant cookie on Friday 2nd October, well done. Good luck to all other classes for October.

**Late arrivals at school ARE an issue. This impacts on all children in class. There are absolutely no reasons to warrant this high number of late arrivals at the start of the year. What the data does not show is that it is the same families every time. We are discussing these concerns with those having issues.**

Year Group	% attendance	Unauthorised absences	Lates
3	97.29	7	<b>50</b>
4	94.67	8	<b>21</b>
5	95.45	2	<b>27</b>
6	93.56	30	8

## **School Dinners**

Please ensure you follow policy when changing meal arrangements for your child, we require 2 weeks' notice, but this can sometimes be accommodated sooner if other children are also changing meal arrangements. If you do not inform the office your ParentPay account will be charged.

We would like to welcome our new cook Pippa to our school, she will be working alongside Nicky in the kitchen to provide some delicious meals for our children.

We have been on an interim menu since returning in September but we are now in the position to return to a larger choice of menu and this will be the same winter menu from when we finished back in March. This will start from Monday 5th October.

Due to risk assessments children have been eating in their classrooms, if they are on school meals they collect them from the kitchen and return to class. From Monday we can allow the last dinner sitting to go into the hall for their lunches, as they are the last bubble in that area. At present we cannot use the hall for all children to eat their lunches as it is not safe. This is reviewed regularly when new guidance and risk assessments are shared.

We also welcome two new lunchtime supervisors to our team from Monday 5th October, Mrs Guy and Miss Waters (Vicky), we know our children will make them feel very welcome.

## **Year 6 trip to Ford Castle**

If your child was booked to go to Ford Castle in 2021 we have already informed you that this has been cancelled. This is very sad news for us all but especially for the children. We have sent out a questionnaire for some alternative events. Our aim is to provide all Year 6 children with three consecutive days of amazing activities. We will be led by the government guidance throughout next year as to what other things we can plan for these children so that they do not miss out on making Year 6 memories whilst in our school.

Some families who had paid deposits or made additional payments have requested refunds. We will be sorting this over the coming weeks. We have been very lucky to not lose any deposits; other schools have not been so fortunate.

## **Halloween Celebrations**

Sadly, our usual Halloween Disco cannot go ahead this year. So, in a bid to salvage this and allow children to have fun safely, we have arranged the following:

Year 3 and Year 4 can come to school dressed in their Halloween costumes (if they wish to) for a £1 school council fine on Thursday 22nd October. Each year group 'bubble' will have fun, games and music in the hall. One group in the morning and the second after lunch. The council fines will be used to buy games and prizes for the day. On Friday 23rd October children in Year 5 and 6 will have their turn and can come to school wearing their Halloween costumes for a £1 fine. Children can bring masks but they must not wear them during lessons or whilst in the yard so we can easily identify them.

For children taking part there will be an option set up on ParentPay called 'Halloween Celebrations'.

## **Harvest Celebrations – Supporting 'Food 4U'**

As part of our Harvest celebrations this year, we have decided to raise money for the 'Food 4U' organisation in Consett. This organisation provides food parcels for people in need, with short term financial difficulties. We feel that it is important that we contribute to the local community and remember that there are people who are less fortunate than ourselves.

We usually ask for donations of food, but due to Covid we are unable to do that this year.

To help raise money, the whole school are going to complete the 'mile a day' challenge every day in October. If you would like to sponsor your child, please use the link below. The link has been posted on the school app.

[https://www.gofundme.com/f/harvest-039food4u039?utm\\_source=customer&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link&utm\\_campaign=p\\_cf+share-flow-1](https://www.gofundme.com/f/harvest-039food4u039?utm_source=customer&utm_medium=copy_link&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1)

Thank you in anticipation of your support.

### **Salvation Army Toy Appeal**

Every year we support the Salvation Army Toy Appeal and ask for donations of new and unused toys that are given to local families in financial difficulty at Christmas. Due to Covid we are unable to accept these donations this year so we are working with the Salvation Army to find an alternative way to support them. It may mean dropping toys off at a different place to allow them to be left for 72 hours. We will keep you informed.

### **September Voluntary School Fund**

Just a quick thank you to all families that have sent in school fund for September, we have received £55 School Fund so far. This is used for the benefit of all pupils at the school. Examples include: Prize expenses i.e. Head Teacher, Reading Race; Subsidising travel expenses of pupils; Class resources; Individual and Class rewards; Special events; Supplementing library stock and additional teaching resources. Often, these things cannot be purchased through our school budget. We have the money spinner in school for children who like to use this, alternatively there is now an option on ParentPay.

### **Clubs**

Unfortunately, we are still not ready to welcome back after school extra-curricular clubs. We hope to bring back cross country sooner than the other clubs, but still have no fixed date for this.

Year 6 band members are safely practising again outdoors, this is during break times and not part of a club. Miss Waters would like band children in years 4 and 5 to practise at home, therefore they can request to take their instrument home to do so.

### **Letter for parents about COVID-19 symptoms**

Public Health England have produced a letter for schools to distribute to parents which explains when a person requires a coronavirus test and what the symptoms of coronavirus are. The Department would be grateful if we could share and circulate this letter amongst parents at our school.

The intention of the letter is to help prevent children being taken out of school unnecessarily and answer some of the questions parents may have around testing.

Please find the letter in the link below.

<http://www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/letter-for-parents-about-covid-19-symptoms/>

### **Our Christmas Eve 'Big Show' Plan...**

As you are all very aware, many events we usually have in school cannot go ahead this term. This is really disappointing for the children, yourselves and of course our team. In this autumn term we usually have a whole school Halloween school disco, the pantomime in school, brass band events, Christmas party day and the amazing Christmas show.

But fear not! As you can imagine we are pulling out all the stops to ensure the restrictions of Covid do not stop our events, even if this means changing the way we deliver them. But we need your help...

Some things we simply can't do this year, like the disco and certain band events, but the other amazing things we will be able to deliver in a different way. What we are planning now is an 'end of term finale' which will be recorded and a link sent live to families to view on Christmas eve!

The event will be rehearsed after half term until Christmas as part of the children's PE lessons and will be professionally recorded and edited before being sent to us to publish on our CJS YouTube page on Christmas Eve (all comments are disabled). All families sign a permission form to allow us to use photographs/videos from

when they start with our school. As this is for a specific event we feel it is necessary to gain permission specifically for it, which will also give families the opportunity to 'opt in' should they have said no previously. If you do not want your child to be part of this video they will still be involved, but will not feature in the video that will be shared.

We are trying not to give too much away about this event, other than it will be well organised, professionally recorded and the children aim to bring Christmas cheer to us all on Christmas Eve.

Permission forms will be sent this week. Please sign and return before Friday 23rd October.

### **Dropping off and collecting your children**

Following the latest government advice and my observation of the drop off/collection of children, can I once again request that the earliest Year 3 and 4 parents arrive on the school site is 3 p.m. We are trying hard to keep your children safe and part of this is keeping adults safe. I would also insist that you follow the path around our school grounds when leaving with your child, some adults are crossing our yard or are going against the one-way system.

I have also observed and been informed that when Year 3 and 4 families leave their children on a morning they are gathering close to the main gates to talk to each other, this goes against what we are trying to achieve in terms of children's safety and social distancing. If you need to talk to one another can you do this well away from the school to allow Year 5 and 6 children to enter school safely?

If people involved with the drop off/collection of children feel safer wearing a face mask, it is permissible to do so. We envisage this to be something the government will soon insist on, given the rise in Covid Cases.

### **Secondary Admissions Application Process for 2021**

Parents can make their application for Secondary School online by visiting [www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions) and the School Admissions online application facility will be available to parents from Monday the 14th of September 2020.

The Closing Date for Secondary School Applications is the 31st October 2020.

If parents do not wish to apply online they can complete a paper application form, and these are available to print from our website (same website address as above) from Monday the 14th September 2020.

Alternatively, these application forms can be requested by e-mail to [schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk) or by telephone from the School Admissions and Transport Team on 03000 265896.

### **M & M Productions - The Wonderful Wizard of Oz**

We are delighted to confirm that despite the many challenges we have all faced together over the past few months, M & M Theatrical Productions will still be honoring our forthcoming pantomime booking of 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' on Tuesday 17th November.

To ensure high standards of health and safety are maintained, we have the company's policy and they too have our risk assessment. We will be operating this with four separate showings on the day to allow for the separation of our bubbles and cleaning between.

In the past all children would be in the hall and it was a live team of about four actors. The company have purchased cinematic screens to deliver the show in a pre-recorded and digitally interactive way. Only one actor will perform in this show, by the use of the screen. It sounds amazing and we are so pleased the children can enjoy the show with safety in the highest regard.

As the sound can be controlled there will be no loud bangs as there was in the live shows, so more children can enjoy the show. If you have any queries please speak to Mrs. Raine.

In order to allow all four bubbles to see the show we will need to end the school day later than normal on this day, but this will ONLY impact on Year 6. Year 6 will not be finished until 3.45 p.m. on this day.

**Key Dates and events for you to be aware of, please note that they are correct at time of print.  
More will be added when arranged**

**Friday 2nd October** - Class 1, Mrs McMahon's class can come to school in non-uniform for free for their excellent attendance in September

**Thursday 22nd October** - Year 3 and 4 children can come to school wearing their Halloween Costumes for year group fun and games. This is £1 payable on ParentPay under 'Halloween Celebrations'. As the last day of term is always non-uniform Year 5 and 6 can come to school in non-uniform on this day so that they do not miss out tomorrow, this is also paid on ParentPay under 'Non - uniform fines'.

**Friday 23rd October** - Year 5 and 6 children can come to school wearing their Halloween Costumes for year group fun and games. This is £1 payable on ParentPay under 'Halloween Celebrations'. Year 3 and 4 can come to school in non-uniform for the usual £1 fine, payable on ParentPay under 'non - uniform fines'.

**Friday 23rd October** - If you are ordering photographs from Mark Wilkinson, please ensure your order is returned today. If paying cash, the correct amount of money must be enclosed.

**Friday 23rd October** - Video permission forms for our big Christmas surprise event must be returned today.

**Friday 23rd October** - Last day of term. This is the final day for children to complete their 'walk a mile a day' challenge in school. They can still do this throughout half term. Please ensure all sponsors raised are paid to the Just Giving link (found in this newsletter).

**Saturday 31st October** - Closing date for secondary school admissions.

**Monday 2nd November** - School reopens today for the last half of the autumn term. It is now compulsory to wear the full uniform. We still accept children coming to school wearing their PE kit, and understand that as the weather is colder this may not be the school P.E. kit. Please do not send children to school wearing football strips.

**W/C Monday 2nd November** - Children will bring home a school report which identifies how they have settled into class during their first term. Each report will have additional comments from the class teacher as well as a space for you to return parental comments, if you wish. Your comments should be returned to school by Friday 13th November. This process is our alternative to the 'drop in' session we would usually offer you.

**Friday 13th November** - School report comments to be returned to school on or before this date.

**Tuesday 17th November** - M & M productions are in school for their cinematic show of 'The Wizard of Oz'. Children in Year 6 will finish at the later time of 3.45 p.m. today. We are unable to accommodate siblings of Year 6 children held back.

**Friday 4th December** - Nasal Flu Immunisations. If you have returned your form to give consent for this immunisation the children will receive this in school today.

**Thursday 17th December** - Whole school Christmas Party Day. Full details to follow. This will be four year group parties in the hall, delivered by DNA kids. We will have a cleaner on site all day.

**Friday 18th December** - Last day of the autumn term. Children can come to school in non - uniform for a £1 school council fine, payable on ParentPay under 'non - uniform fines'.

**Christmas Eve** - A time is yet to be decided, but sit back as a family and prepare to be amazed with our wonderful virtual Christmas extravaganza...

**Tuesday 5th January** - School reopens at the start of the Spring term.