

Dear Parents

Monday 4th February 2019

Applying for a place in Nursery for September 2019

If your child was born between 1st September 2015 and 31st August 2016, you can apply for a place for Nursery.

Applications are open and close on Friday 15th March 2019

Please apply directly to our school at:

<http://www.shepherd.herts.sch.uk/admissions/four-year-old-nursery-admissions.html>

If you would like to come and look round our Nursery, we are holding tours at 9.30am on 12th February and 5th March - please call the school office to book a place.

Attendance & Punctuality



The school day starts at 8.50 for children in Years 1-6 and 8.55am for children in Nursery and Reception – please make sure your children are on time for school every day. Congratulations to **Ryeland, Beltex, Swaledale and Vendeen** who had least late arrivals to school last week.

In order for a school to be judged as ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted, the school’s overall attendance must be above the national average for all children. Although our overall attendance is improving year on year, we are still below the national average – this is a significant barrier to us moving from ‘good’ to ‘outstanding’.

Children attending Shepherd Primary School should attend school regularly - we see this as being at least 97% of the time. Last week our overall school attendance was **95.6%**. Congratulations to **Year 3 Texel**, who had the best attendance last week. Congratulations also to the **248 children** who had 100% attendance this week.

Last term, the school’s overall attendance for the term was **95.8%**, below the national average. Today we have sent a letter to those parents whose children had attendance lower than the DfE expected standard of 95%. This letter has been devised by the attendance team to alert parents to their child’s attendance, as many parents do not realise the impact that absence has on their child’s overall attendance.



Shepherd Primary School Blog

Don’t forget to check our School Blog this week (www.shepherdprimaryschool.edublogs.org) where you’ll find Blog entries from me, alongside class posts.

Promoting discussions about ‘Learning’ at home

The children at Shepherd Primary School are busy learning so many new and different things each week. To help parents discuss their child’s learning with them at home, please find below a question that you could ask your child about something they have learnt this week:

Nursery: Can you name 5 different vegetables?

Reception: What do you know about volcanoes?

Year 1: What are the different types of transport we have learnt about in History?

Year 2: Can you describe the features of an Emperor Penguin?

Year 3: Can you describe Boudicca?

Year 4: What are the 5 changes of state that can occur?

Year 5: What is the difference between a primary and secondary source?

Year 6: What does the word inheritance mean?



Term Dates for next academic year (2019-20)

Below you will find the full term dates for next academic year. I appreciate that term dates can be confusing, so I have tried to set out this information as clearly as possible for you. Please make sure that holidays are not booked in term time, as absence due to holiday will be unauthorised. If you need to take time out of school for exceptional reasons, please see me in advance to discuss this. Please be reminded that if your child is absent from school for 15 sessions (7 ½ days) or more across two terms, then you will receive a fixed penalty notice (fine) from the Local Authority.

Autumn Term 2019

Monday 2nd September and Tuesday 3rd September: school closed (staff training days)

Wednesday 4th September: school starts for children

Monday 28th October – Friday 1st November: half term holiday

Friday 15th November (occasional day): school closed

Friday 20th December (1.30pm): end of term

Spring Term 2020

Monday 6th January: school starts for children

Monday 17th February – Friday 21st February: half term holiday

Friday 3rd April (1.30pm): end of term

Summer Term 2020

Monday 20th April: school starts for children

Monday 4th May: Bank Holiday

Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May: half term holiday

Monday 29th June: school closed (staff training day)

Friday 17th July (1.30pm): end of term

Monday 20th July and Tuesday 21st July: school closed (staff training days)

The week gone by ...

Snow!

Thank you for your understanding when we shut the school on Friday, due to the bad weather.



Young Voices

Despite the adverse weather, our Young Voices Choir made it to their performance in concert at the O2 Arena on Friday night! Very many congratulations to all the children who had an amazing time. I am sure parents will want to join me in a heartfelt thank you to Miss Whiteman, Mrs Freuchen and Mr Vickers who ran the trip so the children did not miss such a special opportunity.

New Windows and Doors!

The windows in the hall are now all in apart from a few finishing touches - it took longer than we thought, but it was worth waiting for. Next the fitters will be fitting new windows in the staff areas, before moving on to Early Years classrooms.



Governor Vacancy

Thank you to David Hewitt, Dad to Elando in Year 1, who put himself forward to be our new Parent Governor. As he was the only parent who did so, he is automatically elected. We look forward to welcoming him to the Governing Body.

This Week ...

Safer Internet Day

We will be celebrating safer Internet Day tomorrow, Tuesday 5th February (a change to the date previously noted in parent Diary dates). Mrs Luts, our Computing Subject Leader, has been busy helping class teachers plan special activities for the day.



At 9am on Tuesday 12th February Miss Whiteman and I will be holding a coffee morning, offering parents advice as to how to support their children in keeping safe online and to answer any questions or queries that parents may have. If you would like to attend the Coffee Morning, please telephone the School Office and add your name to the list.

General Information



School Crossing Patrol

We are really keen to continue our hunt for a school crossing patrol - while the PSPO has reduced the number of parents parking outside our school, it has meant that there are more families crossing Shepherd's Lane to get to school and those cars driving down Shepherd's Lane are going faster - so I think our need for a school crossing patrol is greater than ever. If you are interested in this role and would like to find out further information, please contact Janet Fairhead at HCC County hall on 01992 556815.

School Trips and Local Visits

The following school trips and local visits are scheduled to take place this half term:

- Year 4 Maths Mastermind Workshop (*selected Year 4 children only*), Monday 4th February
- Year 4 trip to the Science Museum, Wednesday 6th February



Safer Places - Domestic Abuse Outreach Worker



Safer Places is a charity offering support to families experiencing domestic abuse. They advise, that if you think you are suffering from domestic abuse, then you probably are. The Reach Free secondary school have been chosen as a base for Emily Hannon (Domestic Abuse Outreach Worker from Safer Places) – she will be present there between 10am and 12 noon each Friday. This means that you can access direct support from the charity should you wish. Safer Places offers a range of different services to support you and guide you through an abusive relationship. Emily can tailor the support to support you and your family's individual needs, or just offer advice. To speak to Emily call 01923 711517 at the times above, or email her at emily.hannon@sahwr.org.uk

School Closure - Snow

In the event of the school having to close due to severe weather, parents who are signed up to ParentMail will receive a text notifying them. If you are not signed up to ParentMail, please either;

- check the school website: www.shepherd.herts.sch.uk
- check the Herts Direct website (www.hertsdirect.org)
- listen to either Heart Radio Station (96.6 FM) or Jack Radio Station (106 FM)



We fully appreciate how inconvenient it is when our school closes, which is why we try to avoid it. When we do have to close the school, we make the decision as early as possible. In the event of local roads and paths being icy and potentially dangerous to travel on, we may not open the school. If not enough staff can safely make the journey into school, it may not be possible to open due to problems with ratios and concerns over the health and safety of both children and staff. Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Ink Cartridge Recycling

We are continuing to recycle ink cartridges – please help us raise some extra funds for the school by sending your used/empty cartridges into school. Thank you!



Safeguarding

If you are concerned about the wellbeing of a young person or child you are able to make an anonymous referral through Hertfordshire County Council, by calling **0300 123 4043** and selecting option 1. Remember that you can make a referral at any time – weekday, weekend or during the school holidays.

Family Worker

Our family worker, Debbie Wingfield ran a parent drop-in session last Thursday. It was an opportunity to meet her and find out what she does. Thank you to those parents who attended. The next drop-in will be on Thursday 14th February at 9am.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Claire Foad
Headteacher