

Newsletter – Friday 25th November 2022

Dear Families,

A walk round school at the moment might lead to you picking up a hint of bad luck – some of our younger children have started practising Christmas songs in hushed tones ready for their performances in December. Ticketing details/allocations should have reached you by now – thank you for your patience as we grapple with various new electronic sign-up systems which will eventually prove more efficient for everyone in the future (... but take extra time to set up initially).

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

The number of children at Hookstone Chase with less than 90% attendance this year (classed by the government as **persistent absentees**) is **nearly one in five (19%), more than double** the latest national figures on persistent absenteeism for primary schools (8.8% in 2020 – 21).

Regular school attendance is absolutely vital.

Good attendance habits at primary school (i.e. over 95%) set the tone for building strong friendships, positive social skills and an excellent attitude to life-long learning.

We understand that there are explainable reasons why children may not attend school, but our school community faces many problems if pupils see non-attendance as normalised. All too often, patterns of poor attendance continue and deepen as children move to secondary school and into the world of work.

Many families will have received letters this week regarding notification about persistent absence: we will be monitoring this closely for **all pupils**, including those at risk of becoming persistent absentees (i.e. below 95% attendance).

Attached is our attendance policy and a 1-minute guide to support you in all matters of attendance. If you have any questions please do get in touch with me in person, via the office or directly on **headteacher@hookstonechase.n-yorks.sch.uk**

CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

*** Our brilliant pupil School Council need your help...***

CAN YOU HELP US DECORATE A HOOKSTONE CHRISTMAS TREE?

We hoped to send a Hookstone Chase tree to the Knaresborough Christmas Tree Festival this year and wrote you all a letter a little while ago... but at present we have only a couple of decorations that have been brought in.

Please send in as many as you want/can by Monday 28th November so we can prep the tree and make the Hookstone community proud.

Thank you!

SCHOOL SNIPPETS AND FACEBOOK LINKS

Oak – Class Assembly

<https://www.facebook.com/HookstoneChasePrimarySchool/posts/132814672901737>

Music Concert: North Yorkshire Music Service

<https://www.facebook.com/HookstoneChasePrimarySchool/posts/133317079518163>

Rag wreaths: Eco Club

<https://www.facebook.com/HookstoneChasePrimarySchool/posts/133129299536941>

Football - Y5/6 league (organised by Sporting Influence): After two weeks of competition, Hookstone Chase's two teams stand 2nd and 3rd in the nine team league. Exciting times!

HOOKSTONE CHASE COMMUNITY FORUM

A huge thank you to the 9 parents/carers and school staff who attended our first Hookstone Chase Community Forum on Tuesday. It was really positive to hear from contrasting voices on the subject of **reporting to parents/carers** to help inform a review of our systems to benefit everyone.

In brief:

- **What does happen?**
 - Parent/carer evenings twice a year (autumn and spring terms) then written reports to parents/carers in July
 - Some felt that reports could focus on their child better, rather than using generic report statements
 - Seeing children's work is welcomed - this did not happen at the most recent parents' evening
 - Teachers typically spend many hours outside of the school day writing reports for their class
- **What should happen?**
 - Reports should be informative and focus on pupil progress (not merely on curriculum coverage)
 - Statutory guidelines on reports and parent/carer consultation events are vague/minimal
 - Time critical communication about social/academic issues should be communicated proactively rather than simply at parent/carer events
- **What could happen?**
 - Curriculum information should be provided throughout the year to keep everyone in the loop
 - The timing of written reports should link to parent/carer consultations
 - Children's recorded learning could be shared with parents/carers at key times to allow them to see progress for themselves

In the coming weeks we will capture the wider school community's opinions on issues raised and solutions suggested. Our next meeting will be **January 17th at 4.30pm** and all are welcome to attend.

ACORNS: Polite Reminder

Please do not use the Acorns car park for dropping off or picking up (... unless you have a child there, of course). Thank you!

STAFFING UPDATE: GTAs

We've had some changes to staffing the past few months that I realise I have not communicated to you all.

- We wish well...
 - Sahra McCann, who worked tirelessly as a Teaching Assistant and member of our Safeguarding Team, has moved onto a new role at another school.
 - Sara Holt, our Admin Officer who supported the office team through some challenging times, also gained promotion in a new role.
- And we have recruited two new part-time General Teaching Assistants who will both be with us from Monday 28th November: **Sarah Malone** and **Victoria Boyd**. I know you'll all wish them well and welcome them to the Hookstone Chase community.
- Another role is in recruitment phase for a new School Business Officer – we hope to tell you more about this soon.

YOUR HARROGATE + CAROLS FOR HOOKSTONE – vote for us!

How would you like to hear your child singing Christmas carols on the radio?

https://yourharrogate.co.uk/win/nominate-your-school-to-sing-christmas-carols-on-the-radio/?fbclid=IwAR0XwFZsXzGpJcGcC90C4N6xCcJfN-S0v0_1m4xvJuh9xC9UM4PDeCpsnhQ

ONLINE SAFETY SEMINAR - **POSTPONED**

Our local police officer, Paul Robinson-Ripley, was due to hold an online safety seminar next Tuesday 29th November. He has informed us today that he has had to cancel this event for personal reasons. We will let you know when this has been rescheduled.

In light of recent online safety concerns I invite you to read the attached guide about TikTok, kindly shared by a parent at Hookstone Chase.

QUICK REMINDERS:

- **Bad weather:** If snow is forecast we would communicate with you (text, email, phone) about any adjustments to opening school safely. Please contact the office to update any mobile numbers/email addresses if they have changed recently.
- **LAST CALL: Years 3 – 6: Design a Christmas Card Competition (Andrew Jones, MP)** - Please see attachment for more competition details. We will collate entries at school on **Wednesday November 30th** to take up to his constituency office together.
- **Medical/dental appointments** – we understand the difficulties involved but please try wherever possible to arrange appointments out of school hours where possible.
- **'This May Help'** - Mental Health Support for parents/carers: <https://thismayhelp.me/>

DATES

- December 3rd – Choir Concert at Harrogate International Centre (Year 3/4)
- December 7th and 8th – 2.15pm – Nativity play for Reception and Year 1
- December 12th: Harrogate High Band in school– 2.15pm
- December 13th – 9.30 am – 10.00am and December 15th – 2.30pm – 3.00pm – Y2's Christmas production (Pine and Willow - ticket details and allocations coming soon)
- December 14th – Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day (details to follow)
- December 16th – **Break up for the end of term** (3.15pm)
- January 3rd **2023** – Staff training day
- January 4th (Wednesday) – First day back after Christmas break
- January 17th at 4.30pm – Hookstone Chase Community Forum: focus is tbc
- January 19th (Thursday) – Ash class assembly 9.10 – 9.40pm
- January 25th (Wednesday) – Hawthorn class assembly 9.10 – 9.40pm
- February 1st (Thursday) – Silver Birch class assembly 9.10 – 9.40pm
- February 9th – Young Voices (Y5/6)

CONTACTS

General concerns? → Contact your class teacher via the office (admin@hookstonechase.n-yorks.sch.uk)

Need to follow up a concern? → Arrange to contact me via the office (i.e. follow-up phone call or email)

Not happy with my response? → Contact the Chair of Governors, Craig Goold – details on request from the office

Safeguarding concerns? → Contact me via the office or via Safeguarding@hookstonechase.n-yorks.sch.uk

See also: <https://www.hookstonechaseprimary.co.uk/parents-carers/concerns-complaints/>

Best wishes,
Mr Cooper