



## Consett Junior School

### November 2020 Newsletter

I am pleased to welcome you to the first newsletter of this, the second half term. This is normally one of our busiest and most enjoyable half-terms, with the focus of building towards our amazing Christmas events.

It is clearly apparent with the latest news from Government, that Christmas this year will not be normal; however, we are determined to ensure the children receive an amazing experience, despite the various adjustments that must be taken. We have already made numerous plans to ensure Christmas in school is a truly memorable time.

As the new guidance becomes clear we will make any adjustments that are needed in school. In the meantime, **I would strongly suggest that parents and adult family members wear masks when collecting their children.** We have done ever so well so far to get to this point in the year without having to close a bubble - this has only been the case because of the tremendous support of families, their amazing children, and the fantastic staff in school.

As always, please keep safe and if you have any concerns please do get in touch.

Best wishes,

*Mr Paul Dixon*

Head Teacher

#### Attendance

Thank you to all families who are supportive in sending their child to school in these very difficult times. We understand that you are anxious, especially given the latest Government lockdown announcement to come into force this Thursday. However, the Government have made it very clear that schools are to remain open, recognising that children's education has already been damaged due to the first lockdown and that they should not close schools again, this therefore means that school attendance remains compulsory. We once again want to assure you that we are regularly reviewing our risk assessments in line with changes and are following the DfE guidance as it is released. Our priority is to ensure the safety of all children, staff and families, these are very hard times to be in.

If your child is isolating due to Covid, you must keep us informed. This is regardless of who has symptoms in the home/bubble. It may impact on school and means the children need to access their remote education. Attendance marks when a child is absent due to Covid DO NOT impact on your child's attendance mark. If your child is unwell for other reasons or are attending medical appointments, these do impact on attendance.

There are still some families who do not inform school of absences. This takes time out of an ever-increasingly busy day to try and find out why children are absent, so please use the communication systems we have in place. School attendance is a legal requirement so keeping your child off for no reason will form part of the reporting process and could result in prosecution.

## October attendance overview

Once again Class 1 achieved the highest % class attendance for October 98.31% and their free non-uniform day reward is this Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November (Friday is 'wear purple day' for all). Well done!

Year 3 achieved the highest attendance as a year group for October, 97.23% and they will each receive a giant cookie/cake on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November, well done. Good luck to all other classes for November.

Year 3 and 4 have a very high number of 'late' arrivals, it is sad to note that these tend to be the same children. If you are having trouble getting your child to school on time, we can support this. Late arrivals miss valuable education and disrupt children who do make it to school on time.

Year Group	% attendance	Unauthorised absences	Lates
3	97.23	14	<b>35</b>
4	94.90	14	<b>32</b>
5	94.26	2	14
6	93.44	<b>35</b>	9

## School Dinners a message from our Cook

*My name is Pip and I just wanted to introduce myself as your new school cook.*

*I would firstly like to thank all the children and staff for making me feel so welcome and for bearing with me while I get to know what each child's likes and dislikes are and secondly, a really big thanks to everyone who took part in our "Halloween Week Extravaganza", we had some very spooky goings on and I think you'll agree there were lots of foody Tricks & Treats on offer for all to try. Nikki really did us proud with her fantastic desserts and sides and the children said it was brilliant.*

*Theme days/weeks are a great opportunity for children on packed lunches to join us and get a taste of what is on offer with school dinners but don't forget that everyone is welcome to join us for dinner on a Friday for our popular "Fun Friday", speak to Mrs Raine for more details. Our Fish and Chip meal is always very popular with the children!*

*A little about me, my son, now 24, came to Consett Junior School and my daughter, Mia, will also be moving down from the Infant School in September.*

*I am heavily involved in allotments and spend most of my free time at my own plot seeing to my chickens and ducks and often help around the local area with various gardening and community projects. In school, I am super excited to start helping out in the school allotment with Mr O'Dowd and Miss Hughes and growing some amazing fresh fruit and vegetables to use at lunchtimes.*

*Most importantly, we want every child who receives a dinner to enjoy both the food and the experience every single day. We believe that whilst it should always be healthy food, it should also be tasty and well-cooked/presented and that mealtimes should be fun so if anyone has questions please do let us know I am always happy to help if I can and will always support your children as their own relationships with food grow with them.*

*Many thanks*

*The Catering Team*



### **Durham County Council out of school term FSM vouchers**

As children across County Durham began their half-term holiday, a new voucher scheme has been launched to support families who rely on free school meals.

Durham County Council announced it would step in to provide this vital support last week following the House of Commons vote against extending the national school meals scheme to cover school holiday periods.

The scheme ran throughout the October half term week; the council will ensure it is extended to cover the Christmas holidays if the Government's position does not change.

<http://www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/dcc-fsm-scheme/>

If your child is isolating from school due to Covid and they are entitled to FSM, our kitchen is open and making hot/cold lunches for daily collection. Please contact Mrs Raine if this applies to you.

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

As part of our Harvest celebrations this year, we 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 felt that it was important that we contribute to the local community and remember that there are people who are less fortunate than ourselves.

To help raise money, the whole school completed the 'mile a day' challenge every school day in October. If you have not yet sponsored your child and would like to, please use the link below. This link will be closed on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/harvest->





### **Remote Learning Policy**

In response to the Department of Education's request we have developed a Remote Learning Policy. Each and every school will fulfill this request differently, indeed a range of approaches are in use across our local primary schools. This policy, in its development, has taken into account the views of parents, children and staff.

All children were provided with their online passwords before Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, families who had children isolating or absent during the last week of term had their passwords emailed to them.

Children have all been trained on the use of these online platforms (apart from 365 email), so will be confident in its use. The platforms will run to a timetable and all staff can see if children are accessing and completing work from home. If they are not, staff will contact them in the first instance using their 365 email.

In the link below, you will find our Remote Learning Policy, links to the four platforms and also guides for parents/carers, please read these.

<http://www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/our-curriculum/remote-learning/>

Remote learning is only to be used during school terms when; your child has been sent home as part of their school bubble to isolate; if they need to isolate due to a confirmed case in their home/bubble; or should there be another lock down and schools are told to close.

### **Salvation Army Toy Appeal**

We are still waiting for information about how we can help the Salvation Army support families this Christmas.

### **October Voluntary School Fund**

Just a quick thank you to all families that have sent in school fund for October, we received £47 School Fund in school via the use of our 'money spinner' and a further £206 online from ParentPay. This has helped to subsidise the recent Halloween celebrations and will also go towards the cost of our scheduled Christmas events.

## Clubs

Unfortunately, we are still not ready to welcome back after school extra-curricular clubs. We are guided by the Covid restrictions we are in nationally and as we are ensuring the safety of all during the school day, we do not feel it is the right time to make adjustments to provide clubs at this time.

Year 6 band members are safely practising again outdoors or indoors within the space regulations and have instrument covers. 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.

## Our Christmas Eve 'Big Show' extravaganza...

There are still some families who have not given permission for their child to feature in this event. It is imperative that you give permission (complete the form either way) so we know if your child can take part. If you DO NOT give permission, they will not be part of the end feature. To prepare you in advance, we will be providing all props for the event but do request your child wears a Christmas Jumper. They do not need this until the first rehearsal on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December.

## Dropping off and collecting your 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.

Please do not gather so 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 safely and away from the school grounds. As the weather is typically wintry, it is more a benefit to you to wait until the last possible moment to drop off/collect your child. We will also be reviewing drop off 'windows' as the weather gets colder.

## Secondary Admissions Application Process for 2021

The Closing Date for Secondary School Applications was 31st October 2020. From checking our shared council system there are five families that have not applied for their child's secondary school place and have been reminded. If you have missed this deadline you **MUST** contact admissions by emailing [schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk) or by telephone on 03000 265896, as your child will have no secondary school place in September 2021.

## #WearPurpleForJIA

On Friday 6th November we are supporting a family of a child who attends our school by raising money and awareness of Juvenile Arthritis. This pupil suffers with Juvenile Arthritis, and even struggles to walk on some days. Let's pull together to help an amazing charity.

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis, formerly known as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, is the most common type of arthritis in children under the age of 16. Juvenile idiopathic arthritis can cause persistent joint pain, swelling and stiffness. Some children may experience symptoms for only a few months, while others have symptoms for the rest of their lives.

We hope you can join us in raising as much as we can by wearing purple on Friday 6th November. This can be purple clothes, face paint, hair bobbles and even hair paint!

To donate please log into ParentPay and pay a nominal amount. All money raised will be forwarded to the charity.

<https://jia.org.uk/event/wear-purple-for-jia/>

## Uniform

Since returning to school in September we were mindful that many of our families have had to endure some

serious financial conditions over the previous months. Therefore, for the start of the new academic year we relaxed our uniform policy and said uniform was a 'preferred expectation', but not compulsory until after half term.

Please ensure your child is in the correct uniform after half term (Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November), this includes not wearing earrings or nail varnish. Children must also wear black school shoes; trainers are only allowed if they are ALL black. Children can still come to school in PE clothes on their specific days – please ensure this is appropriate for the weather. The classrooms will continue to be ventilated, despite the colder weather so please ensure your child is dressed suitable to keep them warm.

<http://www.consett-jun.durham.sch.uk/parents/our-school-uniform/>

### **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. Our cleaner will be on site all day.

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.**

### **Winter Wonderland 'Christmas Party Day'**

We have once again booked our Christmas party day with 'DNA Kids', this will be on Thursday, 17th December. Children can come to school in party clothes but they will need suitable outdoor clothing and footwear for break time and lunchtime. Parties for the whole school will be all day within their year group 'bubbles' taking part in activities/games in their classrooms and taking turns to use the school hall. Our cleaner will be working in school all day.

We want to ensure that every child has a special day over the festive period, due to the uncertainty of lockdown restrictions it is unknown what Christmas will be like for anyone this year. This way we can ensure that they have an amazing day with their friends.

The company is going to spend the whole day in school and will entertain each year group in turn with games, music, props, prizes and more! The cost of this is £2 per child, which should cover some of the cost; the rest will be heavily subsidised from our Private School Funds. This £2 must be paid on ParentPay from now until the day of the party.

In previous years we would request donations of food, but due to Covid we will not be asking families to do this. Instead we have sourced a good price from a local company that they will provide individual buffet boxes for each child. If your child has a special diet, we will contact you separately.

**In order to allow all four bubbles to have their one hour party slot in the hall, we 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 3.30 p.m. on this day.**



## Completion of the Outdoor Gym

As previously informed and as many of you may have already noticed when collecting your children, our brand new outdoor gym is almost complete. We are waiting for the fence around it to be installed and the correct safety hand over to be shared and then the gym is ready for use (w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> November). This gym will be incorporated into PE lessons.





**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**

**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 their school report this week 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 before Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November. This process is our alternative to the ‘drop in’ session we would usually offer you.

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** – Year 5 will have the opportunity to purchase Poppy Appeal merchandise in school. There is a limited number of items remaining but there are still plenty of paper poppies available.

**Friday 6th November** – Year 6 will have the opportunity to purchase Poppy Appeal merchandise in school. There is a limited number of items remaining but there are still plenty of paper poppies available.

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November** - We are supporting a family of a child who attends our school by raising money and awareness of Juvenile Arthritis. This pupil suffers with Juvenile Arthritis, and even struggles to walk on some days. Let's pull together to help an amazing charity. Children can wear purple today (clothes, hair, make up etc) and pay a nominal amount on ParentPay. PE lessons will still go ahead today.

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> 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. Children will not receive this immunisation if you have not returned your form or given permission.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December** – This is to be confirmed but we have proposed to Taylor Shaw that we would like to offer Christmas Lunch to all Year 3 and Year 5 children today. This will allow them to eat in the hall and cleaning between both bubbles implemented. A link to order a school dinner on this day will be sent.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December** – All children to wear a Christmas Jumper today, it is our ‘Christmas Event’ rehearsal...

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December** – This is to be confirmed but we have proposed to Taylor Shaw that we would like to offer Christmas Lunch to all Year 4 and Year 6 children today. This will allow them to eat in the hall and cleaning between both bubbles implemented. A link to order a school dinner on this day will be sent.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December** – All children to wear a Christmas Jumper today, it is the day of filming...

**Thursday 17th December** - Whole school Christmas Party Day. The cost of this Party Day is £2.00. We have a local catering company providing individual buffet boxes this year instead of requesting food donations. We will contact families if their children have a special diet. **Children in Year 6 will finish at the later time of 3.30 p.m. today. We cannot accommodate siblings of children in Year 6 children held back.**

**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 5<sup>th</sup> January** – School reopens at the start of the Spring term at 7.45 a.m. for Breakfast Club.