

Head Teacher's Comment – from Bryony Surtees

It has been an intense couple of weeks at school, not helped by the rain and awful weather meaning we haven't been able to spread out as much. Even though our playgrounds are fairly large, the children always find it trickier just being on the playground. Next week, we are going to change this and the field will mostly be open so your child/ren may come home a little muddy but with a change of footwear, hopefully this will be minimized. Mud washes out fairly easily and the children so enjoy being on the field, we think it'll be worth it. We are really looking to enhance the children's experiences at break/lunch times as it makes up 20% of their time at school. There are further details below and I would really appreciate your help with this so if you can help, please do. I hope you all have a fabulous weekend!

Latest news and information from Isle of Ely Primary School

Staffing Update:

Mrs Pelin Silveira will be returning to school following her maternity leave on 18th December. She will be supporting the Year 6 team.

Break/lunchtimes:

We are looking at making our break and lunchtime more fun and entertaining for the children. To this end, we are going to be opening the field and the forest school area for most sessions. Therefore, we would like your child to bring in a change of footwear/wellies so if they want to go in muddy areas they will be wearing the appropriate clothing. Please send the change of footwear/wellies into school from Monday in a labelled bag and write your child's name in both shoes/wellies. We will also be teaching the children to manage risk and to consider how they play on the different surfaces, particularly if they are wet and muddy.

We are also looking for donations to add to our break time equipment. If you have any of the following, we would appreciate taking them off your hands:

Small world; e.g. people, dinosaurs, animals, vehicles; tyres, large and small, balls of all shapes and sizes, logs, guttering, gardening equipment, crates, planks, hoses, baskets, big sheets of materials, dressing up clothes, chalk boards, pots and pans, wooden spoons, measuring jugs, buckets, paint brushes and any storage boxes.

Please send donations into the office.

We are also very keen to have a large sandpit installed on the field. If you are able to help us with this, either with the installation or donation of equipment, or you know someone who can, please get in touch with the office, admin@isleofelyprimary.org

The PTA have set up an Amazon wish list which is full of resources to make playtimes more fun. Please click on the link: [Isle of Ely Primary - Amazon WishList](#) if you would like to donate sometime specific.

The PTA are also holding a bake sale on Friday 15th December and all proceeds from the sale will be going to buying playground resources. Please see the attached poster for further information.

Term Dates 2024 – 2025:

The term dates for 2024 – 2025 are now published on our school website.

Spotlight on behaviour:

Since the summer break, we have had a big emphasis on being kind with the children. All of the head teacher awards have been given for random acts of kindness and whilst most of the children are thinking about other children and demonstrate kind acts and words, we have had some children thinking it is cool to be mean this week. Some older children have talked about a Tik Tok video that encourages unkindness to your friends and they just have to tolerate it. However, this won't be tolerated at our school. Our rules of safe, ready and respect mean that it is not cool to say mean things and it won't make them popular and there will be consequences for children if they say or do mean acts. Please emphasize the fact, it is better to say and do kind things and also encourage them to talk to a grown up if others are not being kind to them. It is Anti-bullying week this week and the theme is make a noise about bullying and we have been encouraging all of the children to speak out. Luckily, bullying is rare at our school but we also want to stamp out unkind words and acts and so we want the children to shout about that too.

Online Safety:

WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows users to send messages, voice messages, images, and videos. You can also make calls (including video). You are meant to be 16 to use WhatsApp, but there is no age verification. We are aware that many of our children are in WhatsApp groups. You need to be alert. Statistics suggest most children over 8 years old are using WhatsApp and other messaging apps/sites. It is not without risk, and the age limit is there for a reason. These risks include experiencing cyberbullying, unwanted contact, sexual exploitation, other criminal exploitation, risk of fraud, and access to inappropriate and explicit content. There are also features of WhatsApp that increase the risk. You may have heard of end-to-end encryption which prevents law enforcement or the tech platform from seeing any messages. You can also select an option for messages to disappear after a certain timeframe. This means you won't be able to see historical conversations and means children can hide conversations from you. You need to decide what is right for your child depending on their age and maturity. If they are going to use WhatsApp, the best way you can keep them safe is to have lots of conversations about how they and others are using WhatsApp, what they have seen, anything that has surprised or worried them, and what the risks might be. Encourage them to be kind to others, and to think carefully about what they share.

Parents' coffee morning:

This half term our coffee morning is on Friday 1st December at 8:45am. Nina Bradley, Senior Clinician from the Ely Mental Health Support Team, will be joining us with some of her team to discuss how they can support with behaviour at home. As a school, we are able to refer children to the Mental Health Support Team for anxiety or behaviour. At the coffee morning, we will discuss referrals for the parent led behaviour workshops and answer any questions you may have.

Nut free school:

A reminder that we are a nut free school and so any food sent into school must not contain nuts.

Karate Championships:

Berfu and Amala, in Year 4, took part in national karate championships in Hatfield at the beginning of the month. This was attended by students from all over the country, totalling well over a thousand competitors. In their category, they achieved the following results:

- Amala achieved 3rd place in her individual competition
- Amala and Berfu achieved 2nd place in their team competition

A massive well done to both Amala and Berfu for their achievements.

National Sleep Helpline: We are here to help:

At any given time up to 40% of adults and 50% of children (this rises to 80% with a SEND diagnosis) have difficulties with their sleep. Yet in a recent survey, almost 60% of adults felt there was a lack of support for sleep issues. Sleep problems can leave people feeling isolated and lonely.

Our free helpline is run by trained sleep advisors, many of whom are specialists in working with SEND. We can talk to young people directly, or parents (we can also talk to adults, including older people, about their sleep issues).

The helpline is open 5 times a week, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday evenings 7-9pm, and Monday, Wednesday mornings 9-11am. The number is 03303 530 541.

You can read more here: <https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/national-sleep-helpline/>

St Peter's Church, Broad Street, Christingle:

St Peter's Christingle service is on Sunday December 3rd. They begin with a fun activity in the Church Room, making their Christingles and then all go into church for a short service and to light the candles on the Christingles.

Please see the attached poster for further information.

Ely Wildlife Watch With the Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs and Northants:

Join them on Saturday 2 December 1.30-3.30pm at Ely Museum to unlock the secrets of a night flying predator - the barn owl. Dissect an owl pellet to discover what it has been eating.

Places cost £5 for Wildlife Trust child members and £7.50 for non-members. Accompanying adults are free. Places are limited, so booking is essential via wildlifebcn.org/events.

For further information contact Rebekah.odriscoll@wildlifebcn.org, phone 01487 815524

School Term Dates 2023/2024

Autumn Term 2023:

Starts	Friday 1 st September
Half term	Monday 23 October 2023 to Friday 27 October 2023
Ends	Wednesday 20 th December
Christmas holiday	Thursday 21 st December 2023 to Wednesday 3 January 2024

Spring Term 2024:

Starts	Wednesday 3 rd January
Half term	Monday 19 February 2024 to Friday 23 February 2024
Ends	Thursday 28 th March
Spring (Easter) holiday	Friday 29 March 2023 to Sunday 14 April 2024

Summer Term 2024:

Starts	Monday 15 April 2024
Half term	Monday 27 May 2024 to Friday 31 May 2024
Ends	Friday 19 th July
Summer holiday	Saturday 20 July 2024 to Friday 30 August 2024

PD Days (School closed to children):

Friday 1st September 2023
Monday 4th September 2023
Monday 30th October 2023
Wednesday 3rd January 2024
Friday 24th May 2024