



WHYTRIG MIDDLE SCHOOL

One of the Seaton Valley Federation of Schools

Elsdon Avenue, Seaton Delaval, Northumberland NE25 0BP

Tel: 0191 2371402 Fax: 0191 2371830

Email: admin@whytrig.northumberland.sch.uk

Website: www.svf.org.uk

Executive Headteacher: John Barnes

Head of School: Jonathan Souter

2 December 2020

End of Autumn Term 2020

Dear Parent or Carer

As we are now into December, I am writing to you with details of what the run-up to the end of term will look like at Whytrig Middle School this year. In what has been a very challenging time for all involved with our school, we hope to end the term on a positive note and try to inject some festive spirit into school life. Although much of what we usually do will unfortunately not take place due to the current restrictions, we hope that the atmosphere in school will be happy and friendly as it always is at this time of year.

Crisp Wrapper Request

One of our parents is collecting **foil crisp packets** to send to a charity that makes foil blankets from them for the homeless. We would like to support this initiative as a school. Due to covid restrictions and potential issues around cross contamination, we can not collect these items in like we would normally do as they need to be quarantined for 72 hours before we can handle them, so we will be setting up a box outside our reception where anyone who is able to support this can safely deposit their crisp packets when they enter the school building on a morning. Did you know it takes 80 years for foil packets to degrade in land fill but only 150 packets to make a blanket? Collecting will start on Thursday 3rd December and continue up to Tuesday 15th December.

Christmas Cards

We are now at the time of the year where people are usually thinking about sending Christmas cards, especially the children. Reluctantly, this is not permitted this year in school and would unfortunately go against procedures outlined in our school covid risk assessment. This includes the handing out of cards before school, on the way to school or in the yard, in order to prevent potential cross contamination. We are sorry and hope everyone understands how this year is going to be a little different; as an alternative to buying cards children could make a donation on Friday 11th to Save The Children instead; just think of the difference we will also be making from an environmentally friendly perspective!

Friday 4th December – Dressing of The Tree

We will be selecting a child from each Year 5 form class to dress the Christmas Tree in our Reception area. Unfortunately, this year we will not have the Year 8 prefects assisting them as bubbles can not mix within school.

Friday 11th December – Year 6 Cycling

Due to the poor weather forecast for Friday 4th December we have made the decision to re-arrange the Year 6 cycling for next week. We want to ensure that we have the best possible conditions at this time of year so that it is both safe and enjoyable for all those taking part.

Friday 11th December – Christmas Jumper Day

We will be having a non-uniform day where children are encouraged to wear a Christmas jumper if they have one. This day is to support the charity **Save The Children** so any donations made will be greatly appreciated. If you are unable to contribute at this moment in time due to financial concerns, then please do not worry.

Tuesday 15th December - Christmas Lunch Day

Although we are unable to provide our usual Christmas lunch offering, the catering staff are producing a "Christmas wrap", chocolate log slice and a carton of juice for £3. As previously stated in recent

communications, you must sign up in advance for this and meals will be delivered to the respective year group bubble areas, so nobody misses out.

Thursday 17th December – Christmas Movie Afternoon

Usually at this time of year we have our annual whole school visit to the cinema. Unfortunately, this also can not take place this year due to the restrictions, so we are bringing the movies in to our bubbles instead! Normal lessons will take place on the morning and in the afternoon we will show a festive film in each form class. In order to make this event a little more festive, we are allowing the children to have a free non-uniform day where we are encouraging them to dress in red/green or both colours. Children are also permitted to bring a small treat (chocolate/sweets/popcorn) which can be consumed during the film (the same procedures will apply as per consumption of packed lunches in bubbles). School will provide a drink to each child free of charge.

Friday 18th December – Final Day of Term

The final day of term will be spent in form classes as is usually the case, however this year the children will not be able to bring in items from home such as toys/games. Instead we will be organising some Christmas themed activities that will be completed in this time, as well as readying the classrooms for our return in January. The school kitchen will not be open on the last day of term so the children will need to bring in a packed lunch on this day. For children entitled to a free school meal, a lunch will be provided for them. School will then close at 1:00pm as it has done in previous years, however this year the dismissal of pupils from their classes will be staggered as it is in the current end of day routines:

- At 12.45pm Year 5 will leave the premises.
- At 12:50pm Year 7 will leave the premises.
- At 12:55pm Year 6 will leave the premises.
- At 1:00pm Year 8 will leave the premises.

As usual we will expect the highest standards of behaviour from our pupils as they go home and they must ensure they continue to follow social distancing expectations on their way.

Looking ahead - Spring Term 2021

We return to school in the New Year and we would like to remind parents of the following:

Monday 4th January 2021 is a Teacher Training day - Pupils are not in school on this day.

Tuesday 5th January 2021 - School will re-open for all pupils. Existing daily start and end times for each year group bubble will continue as per the current arrangements. Children should continue to only bring a packed lunch box (if not on school meals) and a water bottle in to school each day. Small bags are only permitted for those who journey to school by bike or scooter.

Could I please ask all parents/carers to ensure that all pupils return to school, smart and organised for the year ahead. This includes making sure that pupils are following our school's policies on uniform, hairstyles and jewellery. In particular, can you please ensure your child is wearing the correct footwear for school. **Children should not wear trainers for school unless it is a PE day.** We appreciate there have been some issues replacing footwear during the lockdown and closure of non-essential retailers and our approach this term has reflected that. However, as the lockdown has ended today, there is now enough time and opportunity to ensure the children have the correct uniform for their return on 5th January. We appreciate your support in this area in order to maintain our very high standards.

Finally, in what has been a very difficult year and one that we could not have predicted twelve months ago, we would like to wish everyone associated with our school a very happy Christmas. We will of course be sending our best wishes for the New Year when we write at the end of term. I am sure we will all be glad to see the back of 2020 and hopefully a return to some sort of normality sooner rather than later!

Kind regards

Jon Souter

Head of School