

Galleywood Infant School

Wednesday 18th January 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy New Year!



We hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and New Year break- the two weeks always seem to whizz past very quickly. The children have been telling us about all the fun they had, but we know a few families including some staff had to change Christmas plans due to illnesses and positive Covid tests. We wish everyone a happy and healthy 2023!

There are currently many illnesses circulating in the community and a number of parents have expressed concerns that their children are barely recovering from one illness, before picking up another bug. We are very aware of this and doing all we can to reinforce good hand hygiene throughout the school day, reminding children to use sanitisers or soap and water as well as ensuring classroom tables and chairs, toilet areas and lunch tables are cleaned very thoroughly.

Whilst attendance of over 95% remains our aim for all children, we recognise that some children have been very poorly; we follow NHS guidance closely and discourage children from returning to school when they may still be infectious. Our school does not operate a system of rewards for 100% attendance because children cannot help being poorly sometimes and need to recover so that they are well enough to learn. Thank you for your ongoing support with this.

Farewell and Welcome

We were sad in December to say farewell to Rachel Maddox, who had taught music here for six years. We are very grateful to her for inspiring our children to love music and enabling them to feel confident to sing and play instruments together. We wish Rachel well in her new post working at a school near Brentwood.

We are very pleased to welcome Andrea Barnes to our school team. Andrea has wide experience of music teaching and is working with all classes on Friday mornings. Our children are very fortunate to have a specialist music teacher, and also to have Mrs Merry Bowley and Mrs Wade to lead wonderful singing lessons and singing assemblies, maintaining a tradition of excellent music teaching at Galleywood.



Where the Wild Things Are



We are excited to launch a new learning theme in all year groups this term: Where the Wild Things Are!

After considering and exploring the meaning of the word "wild" in different contexts, all classes took part in a dance workshop led by a professional dancer from West End in Schools based on the classic text Where the Wild Things Are, by Maurice Sendak.

At the end of this short half term the children would like to share some of their music, poetry, art and dance with families. These will be short, informal sessions in classrooms rather than a performance, but please make a note of the dates and times for each year group and come along if you can:

Rabbits and Squirrels: Monday 6th February from 2:15-3pm

Owls and Hedgehogs: Tuesday 7th February from 2:25-3pm

Foxes and Badgers: Thursday 9th February from 9- 9:45am

Healthy Start Vouchers

We have been advised that some families may be eligible for free Healthy Start Vouchers. With Healthy Start, you may be able to get free vouchers every week to spend on milk, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins for yourself and your child/ren. If you are pregnant and/or have children under the age of four and are on benefits, you could qualify. Please visit the website for full information, and to apply. <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/>



Online safety

Many children, or perhaps their older siblings or cousins, may have received new electronic devices for Christmas. We have been alerted to the following information relating to virtual reality headsets and to the game Fortnite:

Many devices allow both unfettered access to the internet and expose children to voice chat, text chat and photo sharing with complete strangers. This year presents an acceleration of vulnerability window as, VR headsets, connected to Facebook's Metaverse have been released onto the marketplace. The Metaverse seeks to link users to the internet as a Virtual Entity through the use of Virtual Reality Headsets. This amplifies the danger children are exposed to online. To help us understand this new, fast changing issue the NSPCC has published a guide to both the Metaverse and VR headsets. To find out more please follow the link:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2022/christmas-vr-safety-advice-for-parents-metaverse/>

Understanding Fortnite

Since its release 2017, Fortnite has become popular in classrooms and playgrounds throughout the world. The game, which features cartoonish renderings of characters, bright colours and consequence free violence, has had a mass appeal to children. Each year more children join the overcrowded multi-player lobbies, and more children than ever are being exposed to multi-player setting, chatting with strangers, and experience the game's spend-to-gain-advantage operating style allowing children to use real world money to gain perks and costumes. This game presents a number of potential dangers to young children, and make this more difficult to supervise, the game terminology is hard for families to understand. To help us, Internetmatters.org has published a guide to understanding the game and its terms. You can find the link below:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/fortnite-battle-royal-parents-guide-keep-kids-safe-gaming>

Foundation Stage Curriculum and Coffee

Just a reminder of the two Curriculum and Coffee sessions this term: the first is this week on Thursday 19th January from 9-10am, when Mrs Foster and Miss Bosley will be talking to parents and carers about writing. We look forward to seeing as many people as possible this Thursday morning in the hall.



Easter Service at St Michael's Church

Rev David Cattle was very sorry that our carol service and nativity assembly could not take place before Christmas. I have been in touch this week and we have arranged for our whole school to walk to St Michael's Church on Galleywood Common for an Easter service in the week before Easter. As last year, families and friends are very welcome to walk with us and to join us for the short service, which will take place at 10am on Tuesday 28th March. We will leave school around 9:30am and return to school by 11am.

Spring Term dates

Tuesday 10 th Jan	Whole school dance workshop- Where the Wild Things Are
Tuesday 17 th Jan	NHS health screening for children in Foundation Stage classes
Thursday 19 th Jan	9am Curriculum and Coffee meeting for FS classes- focus on early writing
Wednesday 1 st February	Full Governing Body Meeting
Monday 6 th February	2:15pm Where the Wild Things Are work sharing- Yr2
Monday 6 th February	3:30-6pm Parent Consultations for Foxes and Badgers
Tuesday 7 th February	2:15pm Where the Wild Things Are work sharing- Yr1
Tuesday 7 th February	3:30-6pm Parent Consultations for Foxes and Badgers
Thursday 9 th February	9am Where the Wild Things Are work sharing- FS classes
Friday 10 th February	3:10pm School closes for half term break (13-17 Feb, inclusive)

Half term

Monday 20 th February	Non-pupil day- school closed for staff training (Office open)
Tuesday 21 st February	8:50am School opens for second part of spring term
Thursday 2 nd March	9am Curriculum and Coffee meeting for Foundation Stage classes
Friday 10 th March	Reports sent home for children in Yr1 and Yr2 classes
Monday 20 th March	3:30-6pm Parent consultations for children in Yr1 and Yr2
Tuesday 21 st March	3:30-6pm Parent consultations for children in Yr1 and Yr2
Friday 24 th March	Theatre production of Oliver in school for all children, 10am
Tuesday 28 th March	Easter service at St Michael's Church. 10am.
Wednesday 29 th March	6:30pm Full Governing Body meeting
Friday 31 st March	Wear a Hat day for Brain Tumour Research
	3:10pm School closes for Easter break