Newsletter 4

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to the parents who helped with the two school trips last week, we couldn’t run them without this help. Thank you also to Jack’s Dad (Year 2), who did a volunteering day in our school grounds on Friday through a scheme run by his workplace. He cleared up the area down the side of the school and the path to the Forest School area. If anyone else would like to come to improve an area of our lovely grounds there is always lots to do!

**Parents evenings**

Booking opens TODAY: (Monday 23rd September) at 2pm

**Thursday 17th October** - all year groups from Rec - Year 6 from 3.30 - 6pm

**Monday 21st October** - all year groups from Rec - Year 6 from 3.30 - 6pm

You can book your parents evening appointments by logging in to the school website or the eSchools App which you can download onto your phone. The link to the school website is: [https://shaftesburyabbeycofe.eschools.co.uk](https://shaftesburyabbeycofe.eschools.co.uk/)

If you are struggling to book slots yourself, please ring the school office.

**Lost property and school uniform**

Please, please name your children’s school clothes and re-name items you have bought from our brilliant PTFA pre-loved supplies! We had a big pile of jumpers and cardigans left outside after the lovely weather on Friday, it’s much harder to return the un-named items.

When sending children in on PE days, please could you ensure that they wear the Abbey School PE T-Shirt, or a plain cotton blue or white t-shirt. Some children have been trying to wear branded football shirts and other sports tops, which is unfair on others who keep to the standard PE kit. We’re happy for children to wear other sports clothes when attending after-school clubs.

**MacMillan Coffee Morning in the school Hall – Friday 27th September 8.50-10am**

Please come to the School Hall after drop-off on Friday for coffee and cake to raise money for MacMillan cancer care, see flyer attached. Mrs Steele, a former member of staff, is organising the event with help from some Year 6 children. We hope some of you will be able to make a cake (nut-free) for this lovely community event. Babies and toddlers are very welcome, but we can’t have dogs at the coffee morning.

Any cakes left over will be on sale at the top of the school at the end of the day.

I hope you will be able to come along to this lovely community event in our school.

**School Admisions – Primary and Secondary Schools**

Families of children in Year 6 must apply for a place at their preferred **secondary school by 31st October 2024**please remind any parents you know to do this before that date, there are sometimes families who forget to apply in time!

For **Reception places, families have until 15th January 2025** to apply. We have tour dates available on our website or from the school office if you know someone who’s interested in a place for next September.

See the attachments for information and the link to the Dorset Admissions website to apply online.

**Nut-Free School site**

For our new families, please note that we are a nut-free school, including the outside areas. This is to support members of our school community with severe nut allergies. A child was seen at pick up time with a bag of nuts last week – a nice healthy snack for them, but not on the school site please!

**Competition organised by Shaftesbury School, open to Key Stage 2 children**

Please see attached flyer and information regarding a competition that your Key Stage 2 students can enter.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MWrWRSqPpksSaJimTuVqk2I6PgZ3VF_nhmBc38FhNGM/edit?usp=sharing>

**Shaftesbury Carnival – Saturday 28th September – PTFA Walking group entry**

Following our cup-winning entry in the afternoon carnival last year, the PTFA have entered again, this time on the theme of The Colour Run. Places should be booked on Classlist. Children and adult helpers in the parade should wear bright colours such as  white tops covered in bright paint, and running shoes. Faces that need painting will be done when the group gathers in the carpark at Abbey View Medical Centre at 1.45pm on the day. For any more information please email [abbeyschoolptfa@gmail.com](mailto:abbeyschoolptfa@gmail.com)

**Tea-Time Family Service in St James’ Church – Sunday 29th September at 4pm**

Please come along to this new service aimed at welcoming children and families to St James’ Church.

**Parking near our school**

Please could our new and existing parents who arrive by car be very mindful of the consideration for our neighbours that is needed when dropping off and picking up children. Please don’t park on yellow lines or where driveways or other cars will be blocked in. We are here to teach the children not act as traffic wardens in the streets around the school!

There is only room on the school site for adults who work in the school or parents who have been given a parking permit by the school due to a specific need.

We know it’s a difficult location with narrow roads and limited parking opportunities but we urge parents to park a little further away and walk for a few minutes to help avoid the congestion in front of the school.

Thank you to all of you who help us by parking considerately!

**Choir and musicians**

We have some lovely events planned for our school choir, please encourage the older children to join the choir if they enjoy singing. We also have a fabulous number of children learning musical instruments in and out of school time, please contact the office if you’d like your child to try learning the piano, guitar, violin, drums, flute or recorder with one of our lovely peripatetic music teachers.

**Christmas Shoe Boxes – To be ready for collection by Wednesday 23rd October**

We hope that lots of our families will feel able to put together a Christmas shoe box for a child in great need of your help.  It’s a wonderful way to help your children to learn the value of giving to those in need. Please come in or email the office if you would like to take part. Please get your boxes early to make sure we meet the deadline.

More information and a delightful video on

[www.wessexrotaryshoebox.org.uk](http://www.wessexrotaryshoebox.org.uk/)

**Attendance – message to all parents and carers from the new government guidance**

Good attendance and punctuality remain a top priority for us at Abbey Primary this academic year. This is because regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We work hard to ensure that your child is supported in school to feel safe, to be the best they can be, and to develop a sense of belonging both with their peers and as part of their wider school community. Regular attendance really does matter. As a parent it is your responsibility that your child attends school each day. We recognise that at times some children and young people can find attending school less easy than others. We are here to help. If your child is experiencing difficulties, please do get in touch. We welcome you taking the lead on starting conversations at any point about supporting your child as we want what is best for them too. As parents/carers you can best support your children to secure regular attendance and punctuality by:

• Ensuring they arrive at school on time every day by 8.50am

• Arranging dental and medical appointments outside of school hours where possible

• Informing the school if your child is too unwell to attend by phoning the school office (The NHS have produced a weblink you mind find useful: Is my child too ill for school? - NHS ([http://www.nhs.uk)]www.nhs.uk))

• Taking holidays during school holiday periods only

• Attending parents’ evenings and school events

• Discussing any problems or difficulties with the school as soon as they arise – staff are here to help

Our attendance policy is available to read on our school website. This explains how we monitor attendance and follow up absence. If you have any difficulties accessing our policy, please let us know so that we can provide it in an alternative format. Thank you for working with us and continuing to support us in maximising your child’s attendance to help their learning, well-being and future success. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

**Bluebirds after-school club**

We are very pleased that the new Bluebirds after school club is up and running, based in our school library and using our Hall and outside spaces during the club. You can drive on to the school site to pick children up, collecting them from the door at the top of the slope on the right-hand side of the school building. Please use the link below to book places:

<https://bluebirds.pembee.app/>

If you have any problems please email them on [abbeybluebirds@outlook.com](mailto:abbeybluebirds@outlook.com) or call on 07831160604 (it will be answered between the hours of 9am and 6pm).

**Forest School – Wednesday afternoons**

Year 3  have their final session on Wednesday,  followed by Year 4 from 2nd October and the our new Reception class from 23rd October. Every class will have three weeks, then some more weeks later in the year.

Children need to have trousers and long sleeved tops, wellies and a waterproof coat (with overtrousers if they have them). The Forest School philosophy is to wear the right clothing to go out in all weathers.

**Our concerns about smart phones, gaming and social media**

Thank you for all the positive messages on this subject. We intend to form a group of parents and staff to look at this area - in the meantime, some information about taking action on delaying when children have Smart phones, and some reminders on age-rating for games below, thanks to some of our parents for both these contributions:

Link to the pledge: <https://parentpact.smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/>

Their guide for schools: <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/schools-guide>

Brilliant links in this guide, including how to join local groups against Smart phones for young children and a link showing a good range of alternative, non-smart phones on the market.

Information on game age-ratings:  
- Minecraft has been rated as suitable for 7+ up to 13+ depending on which version of the game you are playing.  
- The Fortnite age rating is PEGI 12, ie children over the age of 12, or teens  
- Lego Fortnite has been rated as PEGI 7, meaning that the content is suitable for children over the age of 7. You do have to install the main Fortnite to get it, but then you can add age restrictions.  
- Although Roblox is PEGI 7+, the user-created content falls outside this rating and may contain elements that are only suitable for older children. There is an age limitation system for restricting what content can be added, though it is imperfect.  
- Nintendo Switch has an age limitation system, which is imperfect but pretty good.  
- Steam has a wide range of games, including a lot of unsuitable ones, and you can see the videos there too. Steam is not intended for children under 13, and has little or no age restrictions for younger children. Other games platforms have similar issues.

- Videos of these games are accessible  on YouTube, Twitch or TicTok, etc.

**Holidays in term time**

Over the summer holidays, schools were issued new guidance to support higher levels of attendance at school and a reduction in days missed due to family holidays in term time.  Parents are required to email the school office with the dates of any planned time off for family holidays in term time. Schools are required to mark all days missed for family holidays as unauthorised. If a child has 10 or more periods of unauthorised absence (5 days or more) in a 10 week period, one or both parents (depending who was involved in the holiday) will be fined by Dorset Council at a new rate of £80 per parent, rising to £160 if not paid within 21 days.

**Welcome Service in St James Church for our Reception families – Wednesday 25th September at 9am**

We would like to invite all our Reception families to join the Reception class and Year 6 class for a short service of welcome in St James Church at 9am. Rev. Helen will lead the service and give a little welcome item to each of the Reception children. Please drop them at school at the normal time, then go over to the church. The children will come in to the church at 9am with the staff and Year 6 children. It will be a lovely, gentle event to welcome them all to our church school community.

**Photos of activities and holidays**

Please send in a photo of your child at a club or activity for our activities display. If you went away for a holiday in the summer, please send a photo for our Geography display

Michael Salisbury, Head teacher

**TERM DATES 2024 – 2025**

**Autumn Term**

**INSET DAY                                                      Tuesday 3rd September 2024**

Children start back                                       Wednesday 4th September 2024

Autumn Half Term                                        Monday 28th October – Friday 1st November 2024

**INSET DAY                                                      Monday 4th November 2024**

Autumn Term ends                                      Thursday 19th December 2024

**INSET DAY                                                      Friday 20th December 2024**

Christmas Holidays                                       Monday 23rd December 2024 – Friday 3rd January 2025

**Spring Term**

Schools due to start back                           Monday 6th January 2025

Spring half term                                            Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February 2025

Spring Term ends                                         Friday 4th April 2025

Easter holidays                                              Monday 7th April to Monday 21st April 2025

**Summer Term**

Schools due to start back                            Tuesday 22nd April 2025

MAY DAY Bank Holiday                                 Monday 5th May 2025

Summer half term                                          Monday 26th May to Friday 30st May 2025

**INSET DAY                                                       Monday 2nd June 2025**

Summer Term ends                                       Tuesday 22nd July 2025

**INSET DAY                                                       Wednesday 23rd July 2025**