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26th November 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's the end of another week and we find ourselves one week closer to Christmas. We have counted the donations for last week's Children in Need non-uniform day and we raised an impressive £204.92! Many thanks for supporting this worthwhile cause.

We have decided the focus for our school fundraising this year will be to develop our outdoor learning area and pond and to continue to improve our supply of books for the children to take home. All fundraising for the school fund will go towards these projects. The pupil parliament are going to name the two charities that we will raise money for at our coffee mornings that are planned in for later in the year this week.

Attendance

School gives your child a wide range of experiences in the form of academic lessons, educational trips and clubs. It's no secret that the more your child is in school the more they increase their opportunity to fulfil their potential. School can also help your child's social skills, such as making and keeping friendships. A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

Whilst we obviously recognise that children do get poorly and that there are times when they will be too sick to attend school, here at Westdale Junior School, we have an ambitious target of 98% for children's attendance. We consider a child's attendance a cause for concern if it drops below 95%. When attendance falls below 90%, a child is considered to be a "persistent absentee". But what does this look like in terms of days? In order for a child to have an attendance of 98%, they would only be off school for 4 days over the course of the academic year. 95% equates to 9 days off. A child would be considered to be a "persistent absentee" if they were to have 19 days off over the course of the year. We track attendance on a weekly basis and the whole-school attendance figure for last week was 93.71%, which is quite some way below our target. The year group with the best attendance at 97.22% was Year 5 and the individual class with the best attendance at 99.12% was 3LM. Congratulations to them!

Christmas

Plans are coming together for the festive season and today I am going to fill you in on arrangements for Christmas Jumper Day, the Christmas Carol Concert and the Christmas Food Bank collection. I am also planning to finalise details of Christmas Parties this week. I will let you know about these in next week's letter.

Christmas Jumper Day (Save the Children) – 08.12.22

Children are welcome to come in school uniform with a Christmas jumper instead of their school jumper and bring a voluntary donation for the charity Save the Children who organise the day. You can donate in a number of different ways: Cash on the day or visit our Just Giving page at: <https://christmas.savethechildren.org.uk/fundraising/ruth-kyle-christmas-jumper-day> or scan the following QR code to donate.



Christmas Carol Concert

We are going to hold a Christmas Carol Concert on Tuesday 20th December 2022. We are going to hold a matinee and afternoon performance and, due to Health and Safety considerations, it will be necessary to limit numbers to 2 tickets per family. Tickets will be allocated on a strict first-come-first-served basis. A letter will be sent home with your children to reserve tickets for this event on Monday. There will be a donations bucket into you which you can make contributions to our school fund. Pushchairs will not be permitted in the hall due to Health and Safety measures that we must put into place but there will be a place to store them if it is necessary for you to bring them.

Morning performance 9.20am-10.20am approx.	Tickets available: 150 max
Afternoon performance 3.30-4.30 approx.	Tickets available: 150 max

Christmas Cake Decorating Competition

On the last day of term, which is 21st December 2022, we are going to hold a Christmas Cake Decorating Competition and Cake Sale. This will be an optional event which many of our children will love getting involved in. The remit is as follows:

1. Bake a Christmas themed cake, set of cupcakes or Christmas cookies and bring them to school on the morning of the last day of term.
2. They will be on display in the hall for the rest of the children to see.
3. They will be judged by our head chef, Justyna and one of our governing board.
4. We will then sell the cakes at the end of the day to raise money for our school fund.

We look forward to seeing the wonderful designs the children (and their families!) come up with.

Christmas Food Bank donation box

We have decided to organise collections for food banks ahead of each of the main school holidays this academic year. The Cost of Living crisis is impacting on everyone and more families than ever are finding themselves relying on support from foodbanks to feed themselves. This situation is made harder when children are at home all day and not accessing a meal at school. We will be setting up a collection box in the foyer later this week. Please send any donations of tinned or dried food in with your children or drop them off in reception at drop off or pick up time. Thanks in advance for your support with this.

Music lessons

As I mentioned in a previous newsletter, we may be in a position to broaden our offer of music tuition lessons. An "expression of interest" letter will be coming home with your children this week. Please complete and return by Monday 5th December 2022.

Have a brilliant rest of your weekend!

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Kyle - Head of School