

8th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of term, I am writing to you with information under a number of headings.

End of Term Arrangements

Following consultations with the Trust, we have decided to **end the current term at lunchtime on Friday 18th December. A staggered finish will still be required and details can be found below.**

The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- i) This will provide additional time for staff to prepare their classrooms and lessons for the start of term on 4th January. We do not know what the holiday period may bring in terms of positive cases amongst staff and it will help to be prepared in advance. **Just to reiterate that term starts for all pupils on Monday 4th January.**
- ii) This will also enable us to bring our cleaning team into school earlier on 18th to ensure that the building receives additional cleaning and sanitising.
- iii) The SLT will have to maintain a track and trace service from the start of the holiday, as they did during half term. Although it is only a matter of hours, the earlier finish will reduce the duration of the track and trace window by half a day, which, in turn, will reduce the potential for staff and families having to self-isolate over the Christmas period.

Closure plan for classes on Friday 18th December

To enable us to carry out this plan, **all pupils will require a packed lunch on Friday 18th December.** Please note that a **packed lunch will be provided by school for those pupils who normally receive a hot dinner at school.**



Departure times

Collection/departure time	Groups/classes
12.00 midday	All Nursery pupils
12.15 p.m.	All Reception pupils
12.30 p.m.	Miss Taylor's class Mrs Coatesworth's class Mrs Brooke's class
12.40 p.m.	Miss Sykes' class Ms Smith's class Miss Chadwick's class
12.50 p.m.	Miss Ward's class Mrs Collett's class Miss Riddle's class
1.00 p.m.	Mr Hebblewhite's class Miss Wray's class Mrs Howes'/Sadowski's class

For those of you collecting your child/ren, please remember to observe our social distancing measures and to wear a face covering when on the school premises. Current arrangements for parents with children in different year groups will remain.

Communications

At present, we have a number of means of communicating with parents, and feel that the current system is too complex, unwieldy and potentially confusing. Current communication channels include email, text messaging, Classlist, the school website, Twitter and the weekly newsletter. Our intention is to reduce the number of channels we are currently using in order to simplify and streamline our systems.

The newsletter is mainly used as a means of sharing and celebrating the learning and activities which pupils engage in each week across the different phases in school. We would prefer – moving forwards – to use Twitter for this purpose. Not only does it reach a wider audience, but it is also an excellent way of promoting and celebrating the successes of our pupils and our school and of reaching out to fellow educationalists around the world.

Our other proposal is to stop using Classlist in January. The phase email addresses which we started to use during lockdown, perform the same function and are linked with our Arbor information management system. Parents will still be able to communicate directly with their child's class teacher by sending an email to the phase email address, for the attention of an individual teacher. Before taking any action however, it is important to seek the views of parents and carers. To this end, I would be grateful if you could use the link below to respond to a simple survey – just 3 questions. Many thanks in anticipation.



https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=1dig2eyv10GLrF7vv7B8WLJWnh_SJp1Eu4142AZ_MENUN0Q2UERPTDAwM1RSSUM4VEFHS0ZFQUFIVy4u

Twitter

As mentioned above, Western now has its own Twitter account and staff are working hard to make the most of this platform by promoting our school and the achievements of our pupils and also by tapping into the wealth of educational resources which are available on the site. We would like as many parents, carers and friends as possible to **follow the school on Twitter**. Our main account is @PrimaryWestern but you will also find accounts for each phase across the school. Follow us today!

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is extremely important as it minimises the damaging impact of learning gaps and helps to ensure that learning is embedded over time. In order to celebrate high attendance levels, we have decided to issue certificates at the end of the academic year in bronze, silver and gold categories for attendance at 98%, 99% and 100% respectively. We will be sharing this idea with children in assemblies over the next two weeks.

Road Safety – good news

After several months of campaigning, I am delighted to share the email below which I received from Councillor Mackenzie on Sunday 6th December. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those parents and carers who have added their voices to this campaign in recent weeks and I look forward to having a safer environment outside school for all of our pupils.

Dear Tim

Your local county councillor, John Mann, and I discussed your request for a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) on Cold Bath Road over this weekend, and I am pleased to confirm that John has agreed to fund such equipment from his NYCC Locality Budget.

Highways officers will need to approve this installation and advise on its positioning.

We shall be in touch again shortly.

Don Mackenzie

Executive Member for Access

North Yorkshire County Council

I have discovered today that funding has only been made available (£3,200 + vat) for one sign which will be positioned on the lamp post directly outside school. This will have to be rotated by school staff at weekly intervals and is only temporary. So, a step in the right direction but far from ideal. It seems that, legally, such signs now have to be temporary. By having just one sign and rotating it regularly, it maintains its temporary status and can be kept indefinitely.



Guidance for parents and carers

The latest government guidance for parents and carers (Nov 27th) can be found here: [guidance on what parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges](#)

I am sure that all parents and carers will agree that 2020 has been a challenging year in many respects. As a school, it has required us to make many changes to our normal way of operating and has seen the unprecedented closure of Western for a lengthy period.

However, challenging times often serve to bring out the best in people and we have certainly seen that in abundance. It also forces organisations to reflect on the way they operate and to adapt to the prevailing circumstances – adaptations which are sometimes eye-opening and which may point the way ahead. Our virtual parents' evenings, for example, have proved to be very popular and successful and we will certainly consider what we can learn from this and other changes we have had to make. Remote learning has also been extremely successful and we need to consider how the lessons learned could be used to provide for pupils who may be absent for significant periods due to illness or injury.

As we contemplate the start of a very different Christmas holiday period, I would like to thank and pay tribute to our pupils, staff, parents and carers who have all responded (and continue to respond) magnificently to this crisis and who epitomise our school values of kindness, respect and generosity of spirit.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the staff and governors of the school, to wish all of our families a joyful and happy Christmas, with the ambition that we can all meet 2021 with renewed optimism and the hope that we can eventually get back to a semblance of normality, whilst still maintaining all of the positive side effects this crisis has had on the way people act, respond and behave towards each other.

Kind regards,

Tim Broad

