



Newsletter

November 2021



Remembrance Sunday

We held a Remembrance assembly in school on 11th November and observed 2 minutes silence to remember all those who have been affected by or lost their lives in war and conflict. The children showed highly respectful and thoughtful attitudes during the assembly. We have also had such a positive response to our poppy sales for the Royal British Legion. Thank you to everyone for your support.

Four children from Years 5 and 6 will represent our school on Remembrance Sunday, when they lay a wreath on behalf of school and a wreath on behalf of CHAD (Children's Hopes and Dreams) at the cenotaph in Witton Gilbert. It is always a lovely and poignant community remembrance service and some of our children have told us they would like to attend this year. If parents and carers are able to take them along, it would be lovely to see you there. The service starts around 10.45am and finishes shortly after 11am.

Children in Need

We are supporting Children in Need on Friday 19th November. Children are invited to make a £1 donation (via ParentPay) and wear something spotty, which could be socks, a headband etc. It will also be non-school uniform, but please remember that children still play outside during the day so they need to wear suitable clothes for outdoors.



[@WGPStweets](https://twitter.com/WGPStweets)

We have joined Twitter and will be tweeting school news, sharing tweets that other agencies post that link to our school community and also sharing reminders about events. The school Twitter feed also features on our school website homepage.

Our twitter handle is @WGPStweets and we look forward to gaining more followers over the coming weeks.

@WGPStweets also understands that Twitter requires people using the service to be aged 13 or older. We suggest that families exercise caution when sharing school Twitter posts with their children. We will not be using Twitter as a way of receiving messages; please continue to use Class Dojo, our school email and phone numbers as our contact methods.



We are supporting Feeding Families again this Christmas. Feeding Families is a charity based in the North East that offers support to those experiencing food poverty. Christmas can be particularly difficult for families and we are therefore keen to support this charity. The items needed are shown on the calendars below, which suggests certain days for each food item. You can, however, donate any of the items at any point until 3rd December. Please only donate if you feel you can. Many thanks.

November 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
14	15 Tinned vegetables Tinned soup	16 Baked beans Tinned spaghetti	17 Cooking sauce Pasta	18 Tinned tuna Tinned meats	19 Part-baked bread Chocolate spread	20
21	22 Hand wash shampoo shower gel	23 Jam Marmalade Peanut butter	24 Gravy granules Custard	25 Breakfast cereal	26 Coffee Tea	27
28	29 Chocolate Sweets	30 Festive cake Mince pies				

December 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Chocolate biscuits Savoury biscuits	2 UHT juice Squash	3 White sauce Christmas pudding	4

Feeding Families are also coming into school on 18th November to work with children in Years 1-6. They will talk to each class about their fundraising work and give them a £20 fund. The challenge will be to come up with ideas to increase the fund!

Attendance

Our updated Attendance Policy is now on the school website for your information, in the Policies section.

We would like to thank everyone for supporting children's good attendance, which is crucial for progress, as well as social and emotional wellbeing and development. We also understand that this can be challenging in current circumstances, with a number of bugs circulating as well as Covid related absence. We encourage children to eat well, exercise and sleep well to help keep healthy but we also know that children may still become ill and need to be absent from school. Please let the school office know if your child is absent as soon as possible.

Should ongoing attendance issues result in a pattern of persistent absence (under 90%), we will work with families and offer support.

We would just like to clarify the regulations around Covid absence and how this impacts attendance data. Where children are required to isolate while awaiting test results due to having symptoms, the code we must use does not impact on attendance and is usually only a day. However, if a child tests positive, the absence must be recorded as illness for the period of isolation, which will affect their attendance data. A positive result will also mean that the day or so absence while waiting for result, will also become 'illness' on the system. When looking at attendance data, we do take this into consideration. It remains crucial that we continue to follow government guidance and isolate for 10 days if a positive Covid test is received, in order to reduce the spread and protect others.

Lateness

Please remember that gates will close at 8.55am each day. Children should enter school between 8.45am and 8.55am. We have a very small number of children who are regularly late, which impacts on learning and their readiness for the day. Minutes late are recorded on the register and will be reported to parents termly. If a pattern of lateness happens, we will contact parents by telephone, text, letter or request a meeting to offer support.

If a child arrives after the close of the register at 9.15am, this is recorded as absence.

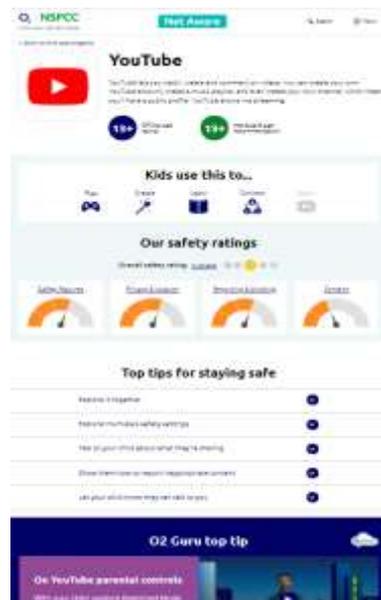
Training Days

Just a reminder that school will be closed to children on **Friday 26th November and Monday 29th November** for teacher training days.

Online Safety Update

With the dark nights drawing in, children may be using more technology at home to keep in touch with their friends and to play. It is really important that they know how to stay safe online and what to do if they see something that worries them, and of course, that the adults caring for them know what they are accessing or watching online.

The NetAware website <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/> is an excellent way of finding out about any new apps, games and social media sites that your child may ask to join or begin using. It is hosted by the NSPCC and O2, and by typing in the name of the site, app or game your child wishes to log on to, you can see a snapshot of how safe the site is for children of all ages. The site also gives tips for how to keep children safe if you do wish them to access the site, such as how to use parental controls to make sites more child-friendly.



Durham County Council advice for additional Covid measures

Please see the letter from Durham County Council, which provides additional advice for schools and parents to limit Covid cases in schools. In terms of our own measures in school:

- At this point, we have only 2 cases Covid from separate classes and have no outbreaks.
- Our breaks and lunchtimes continue to staggered and children are grouped into only 2 year groups at these times. They also sit with their own classes in the dinner hall.
- Our 10 minute window for entry to school on a morning, together with continued use of different entrances, reduces contact.
- We are continuing with assemblies separately for KS1 and KS2 but any class with an outbreak would not attend.
- We continue to have cleaners on site for the majority of the day to ensure touch points, sink and toilet areas etc are cleaned regularly.
- We still plan to hold our Nativities in the school hall, separately for each year group, with a strict limit of 2 tickets per child. However, should an outbreak occur, we may need to cancel and send a recording to parents of children in the class with an outbreak.
- We are also still planning to attend the Christmas Pantomime, but are aware we will need to continue to assess the situation as we get closer to the time.

We really appreciate parents' support with testing when children present with symptoms. Although a cough may present as 'just a cold', experience tells us this is not always the case. In line with guidance, we will always request that children with symptoms get a PCR test and ask that the result is shared with school. This helps to limit the occurrence of an outbreak and consequently greater impact on families and the running of the school.

Christmas Festivities

Monday 6 th December 2pm-3pm	Reception Open afternoon with Christmas song and dance
Tuesday 7 th December 2pm-3pm	Year 1 Nativity
Wednesday 8 th December	Whole school visit to Pantomime at Gala Theatre
Friday 10 th December 10am-11am	Year 2 Nativity
Monday 13 th December	Years 1 and 2 Christmas Party (PM)
Tuesday 14 th December	Reception Christmas Party (AM) Years 3 and 4 Christmas Party (PM)
Wednesday 15 th December	Christmas lunch for children in school. Christmas jumpers encouraged!
Thursday 16 th December	Years 5 and 6 Christmas Party (PM)



Additional Bank Holiday

As part of the celebrations for Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, an additional bank holiday is being added to the calendar in 2022. The additional bank holiday falls on Friday 3 June 2022 and the existing May bank holiday is being moved from Monday 30 May to Thursday 2 June to create a 4-day weekend.

As the additional bank holiday falls within half term, schools have been asked to take an additional day's holiday in the 2021-2022 school year.

Our additional day will be **Thursday 21st July**, meaning that school will break up for the summer holidays on Wednesday 20th July.

School holidays 2021-2022

Holiday	Closing date	Date re-open for teaching purposes
Autumn half term 2021	Friday 22 nd October 2021	Monday 1 st November 2021
Training Days Fri 26 th November 2021 Monday 29 th November 2021	Thursday 25 th November 2021	Tuesday 30 th November 2021
Christmas 2021	Friday 17 th December 2021	Wednesday 5 th January 2022
Spring half term 2022	Friday 18 th February 2022	Monday 28 th February 2022
Easter 2022	Friday 8 th April 2022	Monday 25 th April 2022
May Day 2022	Friday 29 th April 2022	Tuesday 3 rd May 2022
Summer half-term 2022	Friday 27 th May 2022	Tuesday 7 th June 2022
Summer 2022 (Additional bank holiday 21 st July)	Wednesday 20 th July 2022	To be confirmed