Spring 2020
Housekeeping letter

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https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/

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ATTENDANCE AT WEST ACTON MUST IMPROVE!

Firstly thank you to all families who have good attendance, make their appointments outside of school hours and are punctual. This letter does not apply to everyone but is a reminder to all and has some useful advice. I am having to write this letter as our school attendance has dropped to below 96% and is now becoming an area of concern.

I appreciate those of you who bring your child in, on time, as much as possible often find these reminders annoying but unfortunately I need to reinforce these messages, however - once again thank you. If you aren’t already – make use of soft start to ensure your child is ready to learn from 8.55am.

Attending school is essential for pupils to make good progress, achieve their academic potential, have positive relationships and better social interactions with teachers and classmates and consequently have better chances in life. Every pupil at West Acton School, in line with government expectations is expected to maintain an attendance of at least 96%. A ‘good’ level of attendance would be 96% or higher. It is concerning that after making a strong start, a number of pupils have suffered poorer attendance over the last term. It is the belief of many educationalists that missed time from school is detrimental to pupil education. Below are examples of how attendance is impacted upon by school absence.

Pupil attendance over 1 school year

98% attendance = approximately 4 days absent from school
95% attendance = approximately 10 days absent from school
90% attendance = approximately 4 weeks absent from school
85% attendance = approximately 5 ½ weeks absent from school
80% attendance = approximately 7 ½ weeks absent from school

Pupil attendance over 5 years

85- 90% attendance = similar to having half a year off school
80% attendance = similar to having a whole year off school

Pupils that have below 90% attendance at the end of each half term are known as persistent absentees. This is bad, as it clearly shows a child is missing a lot of school and is therefore disadvantaged compared to pupils that have higher attendance. The Local Authority Attendance Officer may contact you as will school senior leaders and/or the Attendance and Transitions Officer.

Please see our full Attendance policy here: https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/parents-1/attendance
While some school absence is unavoidable, other absences should be avoided. The following examples are intended to help you to maximise your child’s attendance and learning. The content is not intended to patronise and may or may not apply to your child. Please read and share this information with your child.

- If a child has a minor ailment, they should still come to school. Where possible, school will make arrangements to support pupils that may not be feeling their best. Whilst in the first instance it is for parents to decide whether a child is well enough to attend school, the school asks that parents default position be that they send their child to school, unless it is clear that they are suffering what can only be described as a ‘significant illness.’ Coughs and colds cannot normally be considered ‘significant illness.’

- Dentists and GP surgeries etc. are used to being asked for appointments outside of school hours. The school asks that parents / carers request appointments that do not clash with school time. If an appointment can only be made during school time, pupils should attend school whilst not at the appointment i.e. before / after as appropriate.

- The weather seems to influence some pupils in deciding if they wish to attend school or stay at home. On wet days, especially if it is raining as pupils leave home to come to school, it appears some pupils try to avoid a wet journey in, by making some plausible excuse to not face the weather. Please ensure your child is equipped for travelling to and from school even if the weather is not ideal. I am making sure that on wet days the classrooms open earlier and that pupils can go straight in and there is more playground shelter than before.

- If a child attends a school trip or other activity the day before, the child must attend school at the normal time the next day. It is not acceptable to miss or be late for school due to being tired.

- Parents / carers should be mindful of the possibility that their child may wish to avoid school for a reason other than being ill. It can be easier for a child to tell a parent / carer that they are too ill to go to school, rather than explain that they have fallen out with a friend, haven’t done their homework etc. If parents / carers feel their child is experiencing something that is reducing their willingness to attend school, please contact school to share your concern. As long as school are aware of the problem, the problem can often be solved.

- Children should not be off school due to siblings or yourself being tired or ill. Keeping your child at home for this reason could become a safeguarding concern. Please let us know of any difficulties you may be experiencing so that we can find a solution.

It is the responsibility of everyone in our school community – parents, pupils, staff and governors to ensure pupils have a high level of attendance at school. We constantly monitor pupil attendance and encourage you to monitor the attendance of your child. It is important that you are aware of your child’s percentage attendance so that you can encourage them appropriately.

Finally, if you are having difficulties please do speak to our Attendance and Transitions officer Mrs Ghaderi in the school office. We want to work with you and your child. Above all, let us know how we can help. We want your children, our pupils, to succeed. That means attending school every day possible.
May I also take this opportunity to remind you about our Healthy Eating ethos at West Acton. Packed lunches should only have treats on Friday. Our lunchtime champions will be watching for pupils eating healthy food.

We want our children to develop healthy eating habits at West Acton. A reminder of our healthy packed lunch policy:

Food contained in a packed lunch: Packed lunches should be based on the Eat Well plate model and should include the following every day:

- Fruit and Vegetables - at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad.
- Non-dairy source of protein - meat, fish, egg, beans or pulses such as lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus and falafel.
- A starchy food like bread, pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other type of cereals. Dairy foods such as milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais.
- Water or reduced fat milk. The school provides this for all pupils.
- Oily fish, such as salmon, should be included at least once every three weeks.

To keep packed lunches in line with the food based standards for school meals, packed lunches should not include:

- High fat, high salt, high sugar snacks such as crisps, chocolate bars, cakes, chocolate-coated biscuits, pastries, puddings, fried foods, sweets and chewing gum.
- Chocolate spread as a sandwich filling.
- Fizzy / sugary drinks or fruit flavoured squash. This includes diet drinks and energy drinks which can contain high levels of caffeine and other additives and are not suitable for children. Water and milk are the only drinks allowed at school.

One of the following may be included ONLY on Friday:

Meat products (such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas), crisps, cakes and biscuits.

Fizzy drinks are not allowed on any day. The only drink should be water or milk. The school will provide water for packed lunch pupils.

KS2 pupils should only have Fruit or Vegetables as snacks for break time – do not send anything else in for your child.

At home time please do not give your child unhealthy snacks to eat whilst leaving school.
Antibullying

Last term we celebrated Antibullying Week – but we expect that there should be no bullying at West Acton ever.

Sometimes people make unkind choices which upset us but it is not bullying. All our pupils have had lessons on what is bullying and what isn’t and how to get help. Please encourage them to tell school adults promptly if they experience anything that upsets them.

Please more information on our website: https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/parents/antibullying

Bullying behaviour is defined as – “the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or through cyberspace.”

If it does not contain one of the four highlighted words it is not bullying. (Anti-Bullying Alliance 2014)

For a pupils it can be said in child speak ‘Bullying is when someone hurts you on purpose, it keeps happening and you cannot get it to stop’.

Bullying can be:

- Verbal Bullying – hurting someone’s feelings
- Physical Bullying – hurting someone’s body
- Indirect Bullying – hurting someone’s friendships
- Cyberbullying – hurting someone virtually

1. Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding others, tormenting (e.g. hiding belongings, threatening gestures)
2. Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
3. Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
4. Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
5. Homophobic – because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
6. Verbal – name calling, put downs, threats, spreading rumours, teasing, ridiculing, belittling, excessive criticism or sarcasm
7. Cyber – all areas of the internet, such as email, internet chat room/social networking sites misuse, mobile threats by text messaging, picture/video clips and calls, misuse of technology
8. Relational: relational aggression is manipulation calculated to hurt or control another child’s ability to maintain rapport with peers. Relational aggression is not typical bullying but a more subtle form of aggression that uses relationships to damage or manipulate others

These days people (adult and children) often use the term ‘banter’ – which is to speak in a playful or teasing way. However, banter could easily turn into bullying behaviour – it goes through 3 stages:

- Friendly banter – there’s no intention to hurt and everyone knows the limits
- Ignorant batter – crosses the line with no intent to hurt, will often say sorry
- Malicious banter – done to humiliate person, very often in public

At West Acton we embed the Fundamental British Values in our curriculum.
ONLINE SAFETY – taken from https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/

The popularity of gaming

Gaming is a popular pastime for both young people and adults across the world. Many games have adopted an interactive online element - whether it's playing against other users, chatting or making purchases.

For most children and young people, gaming is a fun way to spend time with friends and create opportunities to develop teamwork, concentration skills and problem-solving.

Chatting within gaming

Gaming is a type of social network. Many games have functions allowing users to chat with one another.

Gamers will usually communicate within the game to coordinate game tactics, although it can just to be to chat as they play. Depending on the game and its chat functions, they may be able to type messages or talk to one another through a headset. Some consoles also allow them to leave voice messages and chat when a game is not in play.

Depending on their privacy settings, gamers can be contacted by people they may or may not know, or play against 'bots' (a computer-controlled character that may send messages to gamers).

Bots can be hard to spot as their messages can seem very realistic. These messages often contain links to external websites which are inappropriate for young people; showing violent or sexual content.

If your child receives a message from an unknown user, ask them to not respond or click on any links contained within the message. Report these users directly to the site.

The risks

Playing games can be exciting and consuming and sometimes this can mean that children can become a little less guarded when considering who they talk to and what they share. It may also be seen as 'normal' to talk to adults in a game – especially if children can learn from them – than it would be to talk to an adult on another social media platform. Some offenders seek to exploit this and encourage children to chat with the aim of building a relationship with them.

Offenders may also try to encourage a child to move from a game to a private messenger platform to have one-to-one conversations with them. These platforms help offenders to build a relationship with a young person quickly, and are often harder to moderate than group chat within games.

Four tips to help you to support your child to stay safe when chatting

Chat functions in games do differ however there are ways that you can support your child to stay safe if they chat whilst gaming

- Have ongoing conversations with your child about who they are talking to online. Discuss whether they know them in real life and what they share with them.
- Take time to explore games with your children. Ask them to show you what they like about the game and take an interest. Speak with them about making their profile private if possible and talk with them about information that is safe to share e.g. nicknames as opposed to full names.
- Be aware of the chat platforms your child is using. Ask your child about what they would do if someone within a game asked to talk to them in private whether that’s on another platform or within the game. Help your child to identify this warning sign and explain what they can do can help them to keep safe.
All young people need support to make safe decisions online. It is recommended that primary aged children remain under adult supervision whilst gaming, for example ensuring an adult is within earshot of conversations and able to see any chat taking place.

**Gifts within gaming**

Some games and apps allow users to make purchases. Gamers can buy tools that can be used in the game to give them an advantage such as weapons, coins or cheats.

Many children do not have access to money to make purchases in games, so it can be tempting to accept ‘in game currency’ to help them progress.

Offenders use gifts in gaming to encourage children to trust them. They may offer gifts asking for nothing in return, this can be part of the grooming process and can help to build a close relationship with a young person. Others may try to use gifts as ‘leverage’ to persuade young people to do something such as moving to a different online platform, going on webcam or taking a photo of themselves.

**Talking to your child about gifts within gaming:**

- Speak with your child about bribery and ‘too-good to be true’ offers. Encourage them to question anything they are offered online from someone they do not know offline, and remind them that it’s always better to check in with a parent or carer if they are unsure what to do if offered a reward or gift.
- Speak to your child about ‘warning signs’. Talk to your child about the feelings they might get when something doesn’t feel right, or be specific with examples. These might be inappropriate words that someone could use in a conversation (e.g. sexually explicit language) or behaviours such as asking for lots of personal information.
- Young people can sometimes feel complicit in abuse if they have chatted with someone they feel they shouldn’t have or accepted a gift and something has gone wrong. Reassure your child that no matter what might have happened you are always there to confide in and it is never their fault. Ongoing reminders that it’s never too late to get help are important.

**Online Safety for younger Children**

Please see the resources here to help support 4-7 Year olds:

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/jessie-and-friends/

Children are accessing technology and the internet at a younger age than ever before. It’s never too early to talk to your child about what they do online and who to tell if they come across anything online that makes them feel worried, scared or sad.

*Jessie & Friends* is a series of three animations that follow the adventures of Jessie, Tia and Mo as they begin to navigate the online world, watching videos, sharing pictures and playing games. There’s also a storybook for each episode, to help you and your child keep the conversation going.

The key message throughout *Jessie and Friends* is that if a child is ever worried by anything online, they should tell a grown-up they trust, who will help them.

**Please see our policies and guidance here and report any safeguarding concerns to Mrs Ives or Miss Kondo**

https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/parents/safeguarding
Dates for Spring 2020

Parent/Carer Consultations Evening
Tuesday 11th and Thursday 13th February, after school.
Attendance is vital - You will receive copies of your child’s latest assessments and their level.
Online booking was a huge success last time – we will let you know when it opens.

Term dates
Half term 17th -21st February 2020
End of Spring Term Friday 3rd April at 1.30pm
Easter holidays 6th -17th April 2020
Back to school for the summer on Monday 20th April
https://www.westactonprimaryschool.org/news-and-dates/term-dates

PTA Events
AGM Friday 17th January at 9.00am
Disco Wednesday 4th March after school

Parent/Carer meetings and workshops
Drop in for advice with our SENDCO Wednesday 5th February at 9.00am
Whole school NSPCC PANTS day –Thursday 6th February
NSPCC Number day – Friday 7th February
Coffee morning with Lia School Counsellor Monday 10th February at 10.00am
Children’s Mental Health weeks 3-14th February
Safer Internet Day - Tuesday 11th February
Love of books with our SENDCO Wednesday 4th March 9.00
World book day – Thursday 5th March
Science week - 6-15th March
Spring Sing Year 3 and 4 – Thursday 2nd April at 9.00am
Easter Bonnet Parade Year 1 and 2 - Thursday 2nd April at 2.15pm
Spring Sing Year 5 and 6 – Friday 3rd April at 9.00am
Easter Bonnet Parade Reception – Friday 3rd April at 12.45pm

Parent/Carer Workshops

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<td>1 21st January 9.00am</td>
<td>Introduction to safeguarding</td>
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<td>2 28th January 9.00am</td>
<td>Good and bad touch and the PSHE curriculum</td>
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<td>3 4th February 9.00am</td>
<td>Online safety</td>
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<td>4 11th February 9.00am</td>
<td>Relationships and Sex Education</td>
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<td>5 25th February 9.00am</td>
<td>My Body, My Rules, including FGM 1</td>
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