

Atwood Primary School Newsletter

Atwood Primary School, Limpsfield Road, Sanderstead, South Croydon CR2 9EE

Telephone: 020 8657 7374 Fax: 020 8657 3785 email: school@atwood.croydon.sch.uk

For absence reporting/lateness parents should call: 0800 072 6413

For important announcements call our emergency information line: 0870 141 7374 or check our website



www.atwood.eu

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Support during the snow

Thank you for all your support during the last few weeks. We only had to close for one day and hope that this disruption did not cause too much inconvenience for families. A significant number of our staff live to the south and east of Croydon where the condition of the roads made it impossible and unsafe to travel. Our emergency line (shown above) and our website were used extensively over the period for updates.

Please continue to use these methods to check for possible closures as staff are not always available to answer the school phones on such occasions.

SRE videos for parents

At this time of year I run a session for Y3 - Y6 parents to view the video material used as part of our on-going Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programme, and in this instance, the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) section. This will be new to Y3 parents. A letter will be sent home with junior children tomorrow, so please look out for this. If you would like to view the videos, the session is on Tuesday 26th January (the times will be on the letter).

Clocktower visits

Apologies to Y2 parents who may have thought that Orange and Green classes were visiting the Clocktower this week. This was a diary mistake, and it has now been corrected as it is Y1 that are visiting.

Better communication

I am so aware of the issues of effective communication between the school and parents. Letters often don't get home, we struggle to get replies back from parents, and parents say they are unaware of various important things.

A prime example of this was when seven children arrived for school on Friday when we had an INSET day. It has been on the calendar for 18 months, in

newsletters, and on the website. We need a better way of sending information. We discussed this at the recent Parents' Association meeting. Although three years ago the results from a questionnaire showed that parents were not keen on receiving text messages, we now feel that the culture has changed. One solution, however, will not suit everyone, so I am currently looking at systems that will meet the needs of all our parents. I will be writing to you separately in the next few weeks for your views.

Changes to admissions

Those of you with children in Year 5 will already be considering your child's secondary school. Many of you will consider independent education or selective grammar school education as well as local secondary schools.

I must make you aware of a **proposed** change to the test dates for both Wilson's (boys) School and Wallington High School for Girls. In the past they have been around November to January. However, the Code of Practice for school admissions states that schools should give the result of such tests to parents before they make their application in October. This is to ensure that preferences are not 'wasted' on schools where a child cannot gain a place. Wallington Boys' moved their test last year. Both schools are currently consulting on the proposed changes. If they are accepted, then Wilson's announced that their test (for current Y5 pupils who will enter secondary school in September 2011) is on 27 September 2010. Their opening evening will be on 29 June 2010.

Please don't get caught out! I normally run a session for parents and pupils on secondary school admission early in September in Y6, but I will bring this forward, possibly early next term.

Filming at school

Thank you for your support with the filming that took place on a very snowy day in the first week of term. I

have seen the first edit of the video and it really does show off our outstanding school. Many thanks to the parents and children who got involved. The film will be played at a prestigious conference at which Mrs Sachs and I are speaking on Wednesday. Shortly after that I will be able to play the DVD to the children, and I will make it available through our website for you to see.

NSPCC

Support for the carol singing outside Fairfield in December for NSPCC was not well supported. Thanks to the rest of my family, the O'Sullivans, Mayhews and Mrs Swaysland, I was not alone in entertaining the crowds! We raised a superb £88 for such a cold evening. The date for this year is Saturday 18th December. Please put it in your diary now!

UNICEF

There was tremendous support for our charity collection last term. At the end of each performance we asked for donations for UNICEF. The total collected was £583.70, which will pay for five 'School in a Box' sets. Many thanks for your generous support.

Parents' evening

All appointments made for last Wednesday's parents' evening, which had to be postponed, will take place this Friday (22nd January). If the time given is not convenient for you because of the change of day, then please make a separate appointment to see your child's class teacher at another time.

Note: no clubs on Friday except football and karate

MFL workshops

On Wednesday all of our Y3 and Y4 pupils will have the opportunity to experience and take part in a storytelling performance presented in French to support Modern Foreign Language (MFL) teaching. Two stories will be presented: Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and The Three Little Pigs. This interactive approach is aimed to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills and increase the enthusiasm for language teaching. On this occasion, there will be no charge for this workshop.

Join us on Twitter!

As many of you have Twitter on your phones or computers, I have added a Twitter feed from the RSS feed

on our website. Any 'news' that I add to the box on the right, gets sent as a Tweet too. Our Twitter name is atwoodprimary. If you don't have Twitter you may add your email to the box and receive the messages to your email inbox (although this is sent only once a day so there is a delay).

Warning to parents: In my opinion, most of the facilities available on the Internet are valuable and useful, but have to be used with caution and with an understanding of safety. This is one aspect of ICT that we teach at school.

If your child has a Twitter account (do you know if they have?) there are two things I think you should do to protect your child. Firstly, make sure that in their profile settings they have chosen to keep their Tweets private (only to followers whom they have approved). That way, they must authorise a request to be followed, rather than anyone being able to see what they write, or to click on other people that may be following them. Secondly, have you checked the people your child is following or who is following them? I have already spoken to a few of the children about their accounts!

Twitter is a really useful networking and information sharing tool - just use it carefully!

Haiti earthquake

In the past we have collected for disasters, and parents and children are always very generous. Please make any donations directly to charities managing this. However, one of our parents, Mrs Holland, will be on the school premises when you drop off your Bags2Schools bag on Thursday morning with a collecting tin.

Children's centre update

Our children's centre will be known as 'Sanderstead Children's Centre' and is likely to be operational in a physical building around September/October 2010. Mrs Gilley is our centre's manager, and she begins her contract on 1st February. During the 'virtual' period until October, you will begin to see literature about what will be on offer to support parents of children 0 - 5. Later in March there will be an afternoon for interested parents and members of the community to find out about the provision and have an input into shaping our centre. The provisional date for this is Monday 22nd March, 1.45 - 3.15pm.