



West Exmoor Federation

'Educating with love, for life in all its fullness'

Spring Term 2021 – Newsletter 4 – 14th February 2022



Quick Reminders

Final Payment £25 for Pinkery was due 31.01.2022

The third instalment for St Georges House was due 31.01.2022

Initial £50 deposit for Lee Valley is due 28.02.2022.

Mrs Peacock

Dear Parents/Carers

THANK YOU

As the half term draws to a close, I would just like to say a heartfelt thank you for your understanding, co-operation and support throughout what has proved to be a challenging half-term. For the federation, this has probably been the most testing half-term since the covid-19 pandemic began.

Since Christmas we have had the highest number of children and staff absent due to covid. The pressure that this has put upon my staff has been immense. First and foremost, planning cohesive learning for a class that is fluctuating on a daily basis is not easy, with teaching and intervention plans requiring constant revision to take account of covid absences. Thanks to the dedication of my teachers and teaching assistants, we have been able to minimise the gaps in learning for those children who have been isolating (especially if they have been poorly and unable to fully engage in remote learning), whilst also ensuring that those who have been in school without interruption continue to progress at pace.

Additionally, staff absence due to covid has resulted in all members of staff volunteering to cover breakfast clubs, playtimes, lunchtimes, after-school clubs, cleaning and even driving the minibuses. Each and every one of them has done this willingly to ensure that even during these tricky times we have, in the main, been able to maintain a 'business as usual' approach to ensure that our children continue to receive the very best educational experience. Thanks to their genuine selflessness, we have not had to close any classes due to staff shortages and we have continued to offer wrap-around care for those who need it.

I am so incredibly proud and grateful to each and every member of the federation team; they have truly exemplified our CARIS values; 'educating with love' to ensure that our children continue to enjoy 'life in all its fullness'.

I very much hope that next half term will be a little easier for us all, but if there is one thing that the pandemic has taught us, it is not to take anything for granted. However, I have no doubt that whatever the new half term brings, my staff will continue to do their very best for our children and that we will be graced with your continued support and respect, for which we are extremely grateful.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In collective worship this half term we have been considering our CARIS value of achievement. We have linked this to the Parable of the Sower and our children have considered what nourishes them and enables them to be their very best selves. We have considered how achievement can be tricky and using the story 'After the Fall' by Dan Santat, which explores what happened to Humpty Dumpty after his fall, we have talked about the importance of being brave, overcoming our fear of setbacks and enabling our hopes and dreams to take flight. We have also explored the story 'Before She Was Harriet' by Lesa Cline-Ransome which tells the life story of Harriet Tubman, the American abolitionist and political activist. Our children have discussed the personal qualities that she displayed to achieve what she did within her life, and have considered what drove her on, enabling her to be a courageous advocate. Our Year 6 Associate Governors have also led collective worship, viewing achievement in school from their perspective. Throughout the half term, our children

Curiosity ~ Achievement ~ Respect ~ Inspiration ~ Support

have made connections between the stories discussed and their own lives, both within and outside of school, and they have constantly impressed me with their depth of thinking, self-awareness and empathy for others.

ATTENDANCE

Thank you to all those families who, within the confines of covid, have ensured the good attendance of their children this year. It is imperative that all of our children attend school when they are fit and well to do so.

With covid restrictions continuing to be lifted, I know that many of us are hoping to be able to travel more widely again and I have been receiving a steady stream of requests for Exceptional Absence for holiday leave. Our Attendance Policy, which is in accordance with DfE guidance, clearly states that exceptional absence is authorised only under exceptional circumstances. Finding it tricky to book an affordable holiday at your chosen destination is not, unfortunately, considered an exceptional circumstance. Nor is it taking a day off for a birthday treat, meeting up with friends or family, travelling home from a weekend away, or other potential reasons for being absent when well. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- when a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family member's bereavement, crisis or serious illness;
- funeral of immediate family member;
- wedding of an immediate family member;
- religious observance;
- children of service personnel about to go on deployment;
- children of service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays;
- graduation ceremony/passing out parade for an immediate family member;
- proven parental employment restrictions that do not enable the family to take holiday during the normal school holiday periods.

An exceptional absence is discretionary and only one period of absence will be authorised within an academic year (up to a maximum of 10 days). Also, it is important to note that the request must come from the parent/carer that a child normally resides with during term time. An absence cannot be authorised retrospectively and must be requested by the completion of an S2 Absence Request Form (available from the school office) at least 10 working days before the planned leave. Exceptional absence will not be authorised during the first two weeks of a new school year or during the week prior to, or of, SATs for children in Year 2 or 6. Unfortunately, a request for an exceptional absence can not be agreed if a child's absence is already below 96 (including absence due to ill-health but excluding isolation due to covid). In the case of a request for absence prior to our November half-term, attendance data will be taken from the previous academic year.

FINALLY

I would like to wish you all an enjoyable half term break - let's hope that the weather improves and that we can all enjoy plenty of time outside enjoying the slightly longer days. Your children should be incredibly proud of their achievements this term. Despite all of the covid interruptions, they have remained focused on their learning and I have been truly impressed by the determination, resilience and 'bounce back' spirit demonstrated by each and every one of them.

With Best Wishes,



Jayne Peacock
Executive Headteacher

Raindrops, Streams & Saplings

What a busy half term it has been. It feels like only days ago that we were welcoming the children back to school with confident and smiling faces following the Christmas break.

In computing, the children have been using a programme called sketchpad to practise using a mouse and clip art to create colourful pictures. In science we have been looking closely at seasonal changes alongside the flora and fauna

connected to each season. We were fortunate to have some beautiful frosty weather and took the opportunity to go for a winter walk observing the signs of winter for ourselves. We used our observations to create descriptive word banks and write a winter poem. In history, the children have been making comparisons between their school day and a school day in the 1950's. They have considered things that have changed both at home and within school over this period of time, using photos and different artefacts to compare the changes. Thank you to those of you who have shared memories of your own school days with the children.

Young Buds, Rivers and Oaks

The children have had a very busy half term and it has been wonderful to see such fantastic learning attitudes displayed by everyone. So far the children have recapped how to log in to the school laptops and how to use a search engine to access safe websites. They should now all be able to log in at home and complete their home learning tasks on Mathletics and Literacy Planet, independently. They have also been learning about how to stay safe online; what to do if they are unsure and how they need to apply the same learning on bullying and unkindness to the online world as well as face to face.

The children completed some beautiful winter poetry at the start of term and used the great examples of our colder weather to inspire them. Their current English sequence is based on myths and legends, linking to the history topic of Ancient Greece and, in particular, the many wonderful Greek myths. By the end of the unit, the children will have completed their own version of a Greek myth which I am sure they will be excited to share with you.

Finally, many thanks to those who have been completing the Mathletics and Literacy Planet home learning, as well as the daily reading logs, each week. This makes a huge difference to the children's learning in school, enabling them to apply it with much more ease and fluency.

Oceans and Forests

Oceans and Forests have worked extremely hard over the past 6 weeks and battled through the challenges they've faced. Forests have had a particularly disrupted few weeks due to Covid but the children have shown a huge amount of character to continue learning at school and home when possible.

Year 5 have had a ball at Forest school, we've been so pleased to see the progress in teamwork, communication and perseverance; especially during the winter months. From Favala's to tradianion Benin houses, the children have been taking their learning outside. Year 6 will be having their Forest School sessions later in the year.

Our Year 6's have been busily preparing for SAT's on Year 5's Forest school days. They've made huge strides in the past 6 weeks. Much of our focus has been to prepare the children for the rigours of a 40 minute test and how best to apply their knowledge.

Next half term, we are hoping to have our space launch in addition to our twice postponed Ocean's sleepover. Miss Constant has been busy procuring all the necessary equipment and licences needed for the launch. In Science and Design Technology sessions, we will be delving into electricity and light. We will also be looking deeper into the Ancient civilization of Benin and learning to use the printing press in Art.

We hope you have a lovely half-term break.
Mr Mackenzie and Miss Constant

Other News



Mr Mackenzie is running the Brighton Marathon on April 10th in aid of Cancer Research. Not only has cancer affected his own family over the past 12 months, he was struck by the amount of children affected by cancer when they took part in the 'Schools: Race for Life' event last year. As part of the fundraising events, Mr Mackenzie will be arranging activities in the run up to the marathon. If you have ideas to help fundraise for this amazing cause please contact Mr Mackenzie.

A just giving page has been set up and can be found on Class Dojo. You may have to scroll down to find it.

Admin News

Absence Reporting

Please can we remind you that any absences must be called through on the morning of each absence by 9.30am at the latest. You can either leave a message on the absence reporting line or speak to the school office. Please can you also ensure that letters or appointment cards are provided for medical appointments. You should always endeavour for medical appointments to be arranged for out of school. Where this is not possible, please try to ensure that only a morning or afternoon session is missed.

School Dinner Payments

Please can we ask that any meals taken for Key Stage Two children are paid for either in advance or on the day they are taken. We are required by Devon County Council to ensure dinner payments are up to date. If you have an outstanding balance for any school dinners, please can this be settled as soon as possible, failure to do so may mean we have to refuse future school meals.

Kitchen News

Jacket Potatoes

We have noticed over recent weeks the number of jacket potatoes the children are ordering is increasing. Please can we ask that you discuss the menu each morning or the night before with your children and try to encourage them to have the main or vegetarian options. The number of jacket potatoes on Wednesdays is particularly high at the moment and there isn't much oven space when cooking a roast. If you have any feedback or suggestions regarding the menu, please email admin@westexmoorfederation.org.uk

Emily Baker, Kitchen Manager

Governor Update

Governors continue to carry out their work with the schools in the federation. We would like to welcome a new Parent Governor, Charlie Lycett-Smith who has joined the existing members of the Governing Board. If any Parent/Carer or Grandparent is at all interested in the work of the governing body, please email myself at jan.stokes@westexmoorfederation.org.uk to discuss.

Jan Stokes Chair of Governors on behalf of the Governing Body

Diary Dates

18th February	End of Half term
28th February	Back to School
3rd March	World Book Day
3rd March	Harbour Clean
14th - 16th March	Lynton Year 3/4 Residential
16th - 18th March	Kentisbury/Parracombe 3/4 Residential
4th - 8th April	Year 5/6 Residential

Community

Free Science kit if self isolating due to Covid

The kits, called Busy Bag Science, intend to keep youngsters busy and engaged in science whilst they are at home. Kits contain the resources & instructions for 4 experiments plus 3 colouring pages. They can be ordered from the Sciencedipity's website below and are posted 1st class to your home address:

<https://sciencedipity.co.uk/free-busy-bag-science-kits-for-torridge-north-devon/>

The project runs for 4 weeks to mid March, and kits can be ordered for free any time during this period while stocks last.

Half Term Activities



FUN IN THE FOREST!

**FREE HALF TERM ACTIVITIES AT
THE FOREST SCHOOL AT COMBE MARTIN**

If you don't mind getting muddy wellies, giving a worm a cuddle, splashing in our stream, engineering epic dens and learning the best technique to toast a Marshmallow - then The Forest School at Combe Martin is for you!

This half term we are throwing open our beautiful forest school site gates and we would love to welcome you for some free-play activities and a cuppa around the campfire. Our stay and play forest school activities will be run by our expert practitioners.

Tea and coffee will be provided, suitable warm clothes and wellies advisable, all ages welcome.

Any questions? email hello@outdoorsgroup.co.uk

Wednesday 23 February 2022
10am-12pm or 1-3pm
[Click here to Book](#)





w/c 21st February 2022
MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY
10AM TO 4PM - LUNCH INCLUDED

HALF TERM KIDS CLUB

£15 per child per day inc. lunch
Offer: 4 days for the price of 3
Ages 5 and up
Limited numbers
Call 01271 623130 to book

Football
Obstacle Courses
Treasure Hunt
Group Games
Table Tennis
Uno
Daily Pool Parties
Badminton
Arts and Crafts



February Half Term Tennis Camps



Develop your child's tennis whilst having fun, making friends & playing games.

Our dedicated, passionate & engaging coaches welcome all ages & abilities in great locations.

Junior Camp

5 - 14 yr olds | 10am - 1pm | £20 per day*

Tiny Tots Camp

3 - 4 yr olds | 10 - 11am | £6 per day

**For every full day purchased on our Junior Camp, bring a friend or sibling for free to either the Tiny Tots or the Junior Camp!*

Half Term Dates

Braunton - Mon 21st, Tues 22nd & Wednesday 23rd February

Barnstaple - Monday 21st - Friday 25th February

Locations

Barnstaple Park Lane Tennis Club, Rock Park, EX32 9AH


Braunton Braunton Tennis Club, Wrafton Road, EX33 2BP



To book email: bookings@devonshiretennisacademy.com

www.devonshiretennisacademy.com

Winter Fuel Support Fund

**Torridge, North,
Mid & West Devon**

Are you struggling with fuel costs this winter?

Household Support Fund


This fund is available to people in North Devon who have a pre-payment meter and are struggling to afford food, energy, water bills and other related essentials this winter.

The fund is available until 31st March 2022.

If you have a pre-payment meter and are struggling with bills or you know someone else who is we can advise on eligibility and help you to apply. Simply turn over to see all the ways that you can contact us.

If you do not have a pre-payment meter but are also struggling with essential bills and you live in North Devon contact NDDC direct on

01271 327711
or email
customerservices@northdevon.gov.uk



Here are the ways you can contact us

**Call our local, free AdviceLine on
0808 27 87 999**

**Get advice and webchat via
<https://ruraldevoncab.org.uk>**

**Email us on
info@ruraldevoncab.org.uk**

**Message us
www.facebook.com/TorridgeNorthMidWestCA**

citizensadvice.org.uk



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