



HALTON LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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NEWSLETTER 15

17th December 2021



Hey Ewe!

It has been a wonderful week in school! There is no doubt that the highlight has been our infant children taking to the stage to perform their Christmas nativity – Hey Ewe!

Our pupils never fail to impress us and it was magnificent to see their confidence, enthusiasm and energy shining through from the moment they walked through the hall doors to their final song.

I'm sure that those people who were lucky enough to get a ticket to join us for our socially distanced performances will remember this special occasion for a long time.

Thank you too to everyone who made a donation to Alder Hey Children's Hospital. We will ensure that this money is sent off before Christmas.

Christmas Pop Project

All of the children were able to enjoy some time singing and dancing on Wednesday morning as we had the Pop Project in school – and it was great to see the children (and staff) having such a fantastic time (and grooving away) to classic tracks from over the decades – including many well-known Christmas hits.

The two lead performers had a great rapport with the children and were able to encourage them to take part. It was great fun – and we've already had requests to invite them back next year (so we will see what we can do).

This is not the end of our Christmas festivities as – in addition to our Christmas Lunch today – we are still planning on having the pantomime company perform Dick Whittington to the whole school on Tuesday next week.



Staff Changes

When we return to school after Christmas, we will be operating without Mrs Ellis for the first three months – as she will be undergoing hip replacement surgery during the first full week of January.

Obviously, we all wish Mrs Ellis a very speedy recovery from her operation – and look forward to welcoming her back at the start of the Summer Term (in April).

In addition to being the school's Assistant Headteacher, many of you will realise that Mrs Ellis is our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

To ensure that we can continue to have effective safeguarding measures in place – and that we continue to

meet the needs of our all of our children with special educational needs and disabilities – the governors have agreed to a number of temporary staffing changes:

- Mrs Moss and Mrs Burge will both be appointed Acting Assistant Headteachers during the Spring Term;

- Miss Stephens and Miss Eustace will both be appointed as Acting SENCos during Mrs Ellis's absence;

We also discovered in recent weeks that our school was now eligible for funding to cover 95% of the salary of an Academic Mentor – following a review of the eligibility criteria by the Department for Education. This was something that no school in Halton was originally entitled to.

Academic mentors are graduates (or teachers) who have to undergo intensive training before being placed in a school. They will work alongside existing school staff to provide subject-specific work, revision lessons and additional support – as part of the national tutoring programme (which aims to support disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils to catch up on their missed education due to COVID-19).

This means that Mrs McCartney will be joining our teaching team in the New Year – and after completing her training on 21st January will be deployed throughout the school to support the children with their English, Mathematics and language development.

We are also hoping to be able to sign up the majority (if not all) of our Key Stage 2 children up to 15 hours of FREE online tuition – to give them the very best chance of achieving the highest possible standards they are capable of. More details about this initiative will be shared with you as soon as this is available to us.

Please remember our school closes for Christmas at 1:30pm on Tuesday 21st December. We reopen on Wednesday 5th January 2022!

New Social Supermarkets Now Open!

We have been informed about the opening of the four (new) Social Supermarkets in the area. They are open to all and provide food and household goods at a large discount.



Please visit the following website for further information: <https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/the-launch-of-four-social-supermarkets-has-taken-place-in-halton-with-all-now-open-to-the-public/>

The locations and opening times are as follows:

Queens Avenue, Ditton, Widnes WA8 8GR – Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm

The Route Café, Grenfell House, 116 Widnes Rd, Widnes WA8 6AX – Monday - Friday 10am – 4pm
Palacefields Community Centre, WA7 2UA – Wednesday 10am -12pm

British Legion, Castle Road Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2BE – Tuesday 12pm – 1pm, Wednesday 12pm -1pm, Thursday 6pm – 7pm, Sunday 12pm -1pm



Free Winter Holiday Activities Across Halton

We wanted to remind you about some of the FREE activities available to the children, young people and families throughout the holidays.

Thanks to funding from the Department of Education, there are a number of food and activity clubs this winter – at locations across Halton – which are completely free for eligible FSM children.

Find out more and download the flyer here: [Halton-Winter-flyer-Hi-res.pdf \(edsential.com\)](https://edsential.com/Halton-Winter-flyer-Hi-res.pdf)

School Attendance

Last week the Head of Ofsted, Amanda Spielman, said that while many children may be absent due to Covid or other illness, “it is important that they attend (school) every day that they possibly can”.



It is clear that school attendance has seen a renewed focus from the government following the pandemic as, in the worst-hit areas, almost one in five pupils are effectively missing a day of school each week – which is placing them at a significant disadvantage to their peers.

At the moment our school’s average attendance is 93.5% - which is lower than it has been in recent years. The national average is 96.5%. However, we have a growing number of pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% this term – for many different reasons.

It was only a couple of weeks ago that the education secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, ordered councils to tell parents that keeping their children off school will have “repercussions”. This came on the back of five new attendance advisers being deployed across local authorities and academy trusts in a bid to reduce children’s absence from school.

Now that this directive is in place, it is vital that we support all families to improve their child’s attendance if any patterns of absence are evident.

With this in mind, we will alert you to your child’s attendance (via Studybugs) over the coming days if we believe the Education Welfare Service may consider taking action; to help you avoid any measures they may take. This can include the issuing of fines and even prosecution.

Any absences due to Covid are authorised but they still affect your child’s attendance. It is regular patterns (e.g. the child is absent on the same day most weeks), the same reason being given for illness with no medical treatment being sought (e.g. headache), reasons that should not be given for a child missing school (e.g. too tired), the school not being given a reason for a child’s absence (which means it must be unauthorised), a child returning to school and giving staff a ‘different’ reason for their non-attendance or family holidays during term time that give rise to the greatest concerns.

Equally, unless your child has an underlying medical issue that a medical professional has stated is likely to adversely affect their attendance, then they are expected to have an attendance of at least 96%.

We know that nearly all families ensure that their child is in school on each and every day that they are physically well (and healthy) enough to attend – and, if this is the case with you, you should not worry about any of this!

However, if there are days when your child could be in school but you do not send them in – or you encourage them to stay at home – then it is likely that the consequences may now be greater; which is why we wanted to warn you of this so you can avoid any unnecessary action being taken by the local authority against you.

Equally, if your child is not well at the start of the day, but they get better throughout the morning, they can come in to school for the afternoon.

Halton Lodge School Holidays 2021/22

Here is a reminder of the school holiday dates for the remainder of this school year:

	First day of term	Last day of term
<i>Spring Term</i>	<i>Wednesday 5 January 2022</i>	<i>Friday 18 February 2022</i>
	<i>Monday 28 February 2022</i>	<i>Friday 1 April 2022</i>
<i>Summer Term</i> **	<i>Tuesday 19 April 2022</i>	<i>Friday 27 May 2022</i>
	<i>Tuesday 7 June 2022</i>	<i>Friday 15 July 2022</i>

* Includes Extra Holiday (Wednesday 22 December 2021) to account for the additional bank holiday in June 2022 to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

**Includes May Bank Holiday: Monday 2 May 2022

INSET Days

Wednesday 1 Sept 2021	Monday 6 June 2022	Monday 18 July 2022	Tuesday 19 July 2022	Wednesday 20 July 2022
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With cases of COVID-19 cases expected to rise over the next two weeks, could you please remember to administer a rapid lateral flow (home) test before your child returns to school in the New Year! Thank you!