

Spring Term Newsletter



Children's Mental Health Week 2026

UNCRC Article 24: Every child has the right to the best possible health.

As part of Children's Mental Health Week, the children explored this year's theme, "This Is My Happy Place," by reflecting on the people, places, and experiences that help them feel safe, connected, and valued. We focused on the idea of **belonging**—understanding where we feel we fit and what supports our wellbeing.

Class 1

The children in Class 1 created their own **personal belonging maps**, choosing to include places, groups, activities, or even non-physical spaces — such as feelings, memories, or moments — where they feel most at ease. This activity encouraged them to recognise what contributes to their happiness and emotional security, while celebrating the uniqueness of everyone's happy place.

Class 2

We joined a whole-school assembly all about Belonging and

talked about how everyone is important in our school community. We also worked with the amazing Piece of Mind team to create our very own worry monsters to help us share our feelings.



Class 4

Class 4 spent time reflecting on what makes us unique, identifying the qualities we appreciate most about ourselves and the people who help us feel a sense of belonging. We discussed the teams, friendships and personal strengths that make us feel connected and valued. This activity encouraged us to recognise our individuality while celebrating the supportive relationships and communities that help us thrive.

Punctuality

It is great to see so many children arriving to school on time and being involved in their learning right from the beginning of the day. Class 1, 2 and Class 3 begin their phonics sessions at 8.45 am and Class 4 and Class 5 begin their challenge time activities at 8.45 am. We also have co-ordination programmes, reading/maths/speech and language interventions and lego therapy running at that time.

Being frequently late for school means lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Lateness to School

School starts at **8:45 am**. Your child will receive a late mark if they arrive after this time. If your child arrives after the register closes at **9.15 am** they will be given an unauthorised late mark. Persistent Unauthorised late marks will result in a referral to the Local Authority School Improvement Officer for further intervention and enforcement action may be taken.

Please can you ensure children arrive at school for 8.45am. Thank you so much to parents/carers for your continued support.

Important Information of Changes to the issue of penalty notices.

Changes to the issue of Penalty Notices to address School Attendance from 19th of August 2024: THE EDUCATION (PENALTY NOTICES) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2024 No. 210.

From 19.08.24 new legislation comes into force regarding the criteria for and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance. A national framework for parental fines is being introduced for any pupil who misses 10 or more half-days within any 10-week period. Please note that if you have requested a Leave of Absence that commences from September 2024 onwards, any Penalty Notice/s issued will be at the new rates and trigger the start of the three year threshold period, as specified below. The following changes have been made:

- the number of unauthorised absences that may trigger a potential fine: 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in a 10 school week period.
- the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child: a maximum of 2 penalty notices will be issued (per parent, per child) within a 3 year period
- for the first penalty notice issued to each parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period: the amount of the penalty notice has increased from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days
- any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice issue is now set at £160 to be paid within 28 days - NB: No discount for earlier payment is offered.
- any further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same

child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued - The maximum fine the court can impose for a first offence is £1,000 per parent, per child. If, however, you have a history of offences of this nature you may be prosecuted under Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 and the court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school. Please speak to us if you have concerns about your child's attendance - we want to support you to address any barriers which prevent your child attending on time every day.

Texts/Emails

We regularly send texts to parents with details of events happening in school or just reminders. We are now also sending emails. Thank you for your patience while we are updating this. Letters have been sent out explaining our new systems. Please notify school if you haven't received any texts/emails in the last week. Your contact details may need updating.

School Website

Please continue to look at our school website on www.nettlesworth.durham.sch.uk for diary dates, latest news, celebrations, advice and information.

Diary Dates

Thursday 19th February-
Springtime Disco

Friday 20th February- End of Half Term

Monday 2nd March- Children return to school

Further letters/details will follow about each event

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Absences

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. As a parent/carer, you are responsible for making sure this happens. **Once your child is registered at Nettlesworth Primary School, you are responsible for making sure your child has regular and punctual attendance at school.**

The Local Authority (LA) is responsible for making sure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities, and the school must tell the LA if your child is regularly absent from school. As a parent/carer, you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. You run the risk of being prosecuted by the LA if your child's attendance is poor.

Reporting School Absence

We appreciate there may be times your child is unwell or unable to attend school. As a parent you have a responsibility to:-

- Contact school on the first morning of absence, providing a reason for their absence.
- Keep school informed on a regular basis if your child is absent for a long period.
- Provide medical evidence if this has been requested by the school

If school are not informed and unable to contact you via telephone regarding your child's absence a letter will be sent requesting details of the absence or our Parent Support Advisor will come out and visit to see if you need any support. If this is not returned and still no reason for the absence is provided the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Only head teachers can authorise absence and it is at their discretion as to whether the reason provided is acceptable or not.

If your child is unwell, please contact school office as soon as possible by 9am. It is important that children attend school as often as possible because if they are not in school they cannot learn.

The minimum acceptable level of school attendance is 96%. **We believe as a school that identifying poor attendance and issues affecting attendance early as well as working in partnership with parents we can significantly improve attendance and prevent a child becoming a persistent absentee and involvement with the Local authority.** Below outlines the procedure that we follow to support and improve attendance:

- Notice to Improve Letter - sent home to indicate to parents/cares that attendance is starting to decline. This will be sent to students below 96% attendance.
- Medical Evidence Request Letter - sent home to request medical evidence to be provided to support absence, without this future absence will be marked as unauthorised. **This could be in the form of an appointment card or proof of medication given by the doctor**

- Parents/carers to be invited to attend a school attendance meeting to discuss concerns and set targets to improve attendance.
- If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, this is considered, by the Government, to be persistent absence. Where attendance falls below 90% and there are unauthorised absences a referral will be made to the Local Authority School Improvement Officer for further intervention and enforcement action may be taken.

History Day

We had a fantastic time immersing ourselves in History Day! Each class dressed up to represent different historical periods, helping us step into the past and experience history in a fun and meaningful way. Our costumes sparked curiosity, inspired discussion and brought our learning to life across the whole school.

UNCRC Article 29 – education must develop every child's personality and talents to their full potential.

Class 1

Class 1 stepped back in time to experience life as World War II evacuees. We imagined what it felt like to leave home with a packed suitcase and label and we learned about the journeys children took to stay safe. The children enjoyed acting out the roles of evacuees and exploring what daily life was like during the war.

Class 2

We have been learning all about the Victorians. We explored what school and home life were like in Victorian times, compared old-fashioned objects with the ones we use today and tried out some traditional Victorian activities



Class 3

Class 3 have been exploring the fascinating world of Ancient Greece. We learned about the powerful gods and goddesses, took part in a Greek style dance and enjoyed making Greek crafts – we even the chance to try a selection of traditional Greek food!



Class 4

We had an amazing time celebrating History Day as Tudors! We dressed up in Tudor clothing to help us step back in time, took part in traditional Tudor weaving and even performed a Tudor dance for the whole school. We finished the day with a fun and lively class quiz, celebrating the fascinating lives and dramatic trials of the Tudor era



Class 5

Class 5 stepped into the past as Edwardian passengers aboard the Titanic! We explored what life was like for people travelling in different classes and imagined the excitement of boarding the famous ship. The children enjoyed taking on the roles of passengers, learning about their stories and discovering how the voyage changed their lives. This experience helped us understand the hopes, challenges and social differences of the Edwardian era.



Class 3 Visit to Church

The children enjoyed a visit to church as part of our RE topic. We have been learning all about worship in a Christian church. Reverend Michael told us about all the different symbols we can see in church and how the colours in church change depending on what celebration is taking place.

UNCRC – Article 14 – children have the right to learn about different religions



Pancake Day

UNCRC – Article 14 – Children have the right to learn about different religions.

Class 3 celebrated pancake day! We explored the meaning of Shrove Tuesday and how it is a special day that comes just before Lent. The children talked about things they would like to give up for Lent and why Christians choose to do this. We then enjoyed eating some yummy pancakes with delicious toppings!



Career Encounter in Class 5

Career Encounter

Class 5 had a visit from Mr. Bell's University Tutor – Dr Ryan Crosby. He explained to us how he became a Doctor of Computer Science, telling us about his journey through education and the research he carried out in order to achieve his PHD.

Thank you for sharing your journey into a Computer Science lecturer at Durham University.



Tag Rugby Year 6 Team

Tag Rugby Event

We are super proud of our tag rugby team, representing our school at the Durham and Chester le street SSP competition at Consett rugby club. They all worked so hard together as a team and came an impressive third in their group!

Well done!



Week 6 Highlights in Class 1

UNCRC Article 28: Every Child has the right to an education.

We've had a wonderful and busy week of learning in Class 1!

In Literacy, the children have been creating silly sentences inspired by our story of the week, **Bear on a Bike**. The jungle animals have given us lots of opportunities for fun, imagination and laughter, while also supporting the children in verbally constructing sentences and beginning to write them with increasing confidence.

In Numeracy, we have continued exploring **odd and even numbers**. The children are growing in confidence with this concept and have worked incredibly hard to sort, identify and explain their thinking.

As part of **Women in Science Week**, our Science learning focused on inspirational women who have shaped the scientific world. This week we learned about **Sally Ride**, the first American woman in space, and the children were fascinated by her achievements and bravery.

Today we also took part in **History Day**, where Class 1 travelled back in time to experience what life might have been like as an evacuee. The children engaged brilliantly with the activities and showed great curiosity and empathy.



Have a lovely half term holiday and see you when we return to school on Monday 2nd March.

Breakfast Clubs, After School Clubs and Wrap Around Care will resume as normal.

Thank you for your continued support.