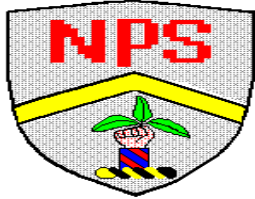


Spring Term Newsletter



National Story Telling Week 2026

This week, we are delighted to be celebrating **National Storytelling Week 2026** in school. Storytelling plays a vital role in developing children's imagination, language skills and love of reading, and the children have been enthusiastically taking part in a range of creative activities linked to stories.

As part of our **Go All In Reading Campaign 2026**, all classes have enjoyed **Music for My Story** workshops. These sessions encouraged children to explore how music can bring stories to life, helping them to express characters, settings and emotions in new and exciting ways. The workshops supported children to deepen their understanding of stories while building confidence, creativity and enjoyment.

We are proud of the children's engagement and enthusiasm throughout the week and thank you for your continued support in encouraging reading and storytelling at home.



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

W/B Monday 9th February- Mental Health Week

Wednesday 11th February- International Day of Women and Girls in Science

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.

Class 1 and 2 visit to The Reform Synagogue Newcastle

UNCRC Article 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion).

During our visit to the Reform Synagogue in Newcastle, we learned more about Judaism and the importance of the synagogue as a place of worship for Jewish people. The children explored key features of the synagogue and discovered how it is used for prayer, learning, and community gatherings.

We also learned about some of the most important Jewish festivals, including how they are celebrated and why they hold special meaning within the religion. The pupils were especially interested in the various religious artefacts we were shown.

A highlight of the visit was seeing the **huge Torah scroll**, beautifully written by hand on parchment. Everyone was amazed to hear how long it takes to write a Torah and how carefully it must be treated.

To finish our experience, we enjoyed tasting **grape juice and challah bread**, foods often associated with Shabbat, giving the children a lovely, hands-on insight into Jewish tradition.



OASES Assembly and Workshop

We welcomed Tori from OASES into school to lead a whole-school assembly all about climate change. She helped us learn what climate change means, how it affects our world and why it's important to take care of our planet. We discovered simple things we can all do—like saving energy, recycling and looking after nature—to help make a big difference for the future.

Then, Tori worked with our Eco Group within school to use lux meters to begin exploring how light works. They used the devices to measure how bright different places in school were, from sunny spots by the windows to darker corners of the classroom. The children enjoyed comparing the numbers and discovering which areas had the most and least light and deciding if we need to use lights throughout the day.

UNCRC Article 29 – education should foster respect for the natural environment.



We loved welcoming our parents and carers into school to celebrate Safer Internet Week – we showcased our amazing work that we have completed on studying the responsible use of AI.

UNCRC Article 17 – children have the right to use media.



Energy Saving Week Competition Winners

To celebrate Energy Saving Week, we held a whole-school competition to see who could create the most eye catching posters to promote saving energy within our school! Members from our Rights Respecting Council worked together to vote for the winners of each class, which will be proudly displayed in their classroom! Well done to every child who participated – your posters were beautiful!

UNCRC Article 12 – every child has the right to be heard.



Tudor Rose Clay Work in Class 4

We began to create some beautiful Tudor Roses in our DT session, using clay! We looked at some Tudor inspiration online before crafting our own designs, using various tools to perfect our sculpting.

UNCRC Article 31 – every child has the right to take part in a wide range of artistic activities.



Final Mini Police session

We had our final session with DAAC and the Mini Police Project today – we were lucky enough to meet 2 local PCSOs who told us all about their jobs, how they keep us safe, the various types of crimes and their names and how we can help keep our communities happy and safe!

UNCRC Article 29 – education should develop a child’s personality and interests.



Safer Internet Day Coffee Morning

