

# Thorndown Primary School

## Newsletter

Hello,

The warm weather returned this week for another wonderful week at Thorndown.

It was fantastic to see so many parents and carers attend our parents evenings this week to be updated on their children's progress.

We have also had our Reception trip the Sacrewell Farm and visitors into school, more of which you can hear about in this newsletter.

Next week, our Year 4 children attend their Burwell residential and our Year 1 participate in a church visit as part of their learning.

Have a great weekend,

Mr Snape

### Attendance

Our whole school attendance for this year is 95.8% which is above the national average of 94.6%. This means we are in the top 20% of schools nationally for attendance. Well done Thorndown!

**MOMENTS  
MATTER,  
ATTENDANCE  
COUNTS.**

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This week, the class winning our attendance trophy for best attendance was Lemurs with 100% .



### School Dates



24th March - Y1 Church Visit

24th-26th March - Y4 Burwell  
Trip

25th March - Drumming  
Assembly

25th March - Netball Tournament

28th March - Y1 Tennis Taster  
Sessions

28th March - Y4/5 Astronomy  
Visitor

28th March - FOTS Easter Disco

31st March - Y2 Great Fire of  
London Day

31st March - Author Visit

1st April - Cross-Country  
Championships

2nd April - Year 6 English  
Challenge Final

# Achievement



## Pre-School

We've had such an exciting week at preschool! We were lucky enough to have some amazing visitors, including the local dance school Theatre Artz, a yoga instructor from Windmill Yoga, and Lee from Fun Football Factory. The children had a lovely time trying out these new experiences and learning fresh skills - it was such a positive experience for everyone!

The fun didn't stop there! The rest of the week has been all about staying healthy. We've been reading lots of fun books about keeping our bodies nice and healthy, and the children have really got into it! They've been using the doctor's kits to practice what they've learned and even showing off their teeth cleaning skills in the tuff tray. We've also had a mini dance party too, with everyone showing us their new moves to Danny Go! It's been such a fantastic week full of learning and fun!

Becky Smith  
Preschool Manager



## Writers of the Week

Each week, in Celebration Assembly, we congratulate those children that have been working particularly hard with their writing. Children from each class have the opportunity to display their work in the hall and receive a certificate. Well done to the children below for receiving 'Writer of the Week' this week:

Badger - Louis  
Hedgehog - Ollie  
Otter - Tilly  
Kangaroo - Myla  
Owl - Mollie-Rai  
Elephant - Amelia  
Bat - Iris  
Puffin - Izzy  
Giraffe - James F  
Meerkat - Dio  
Chameleon - Casey  
Lion - Aanayah  
Orca - Priya  
Panther - Jack P  
Toucan - Saul  
Lemur - Poppy  
Jaguar - Delilah



## Oracy Assembly

World Poetry Day



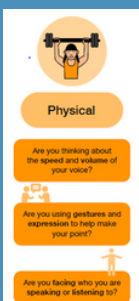
In our Oracy assembly this week, we talked about World Poetry Day. We discussed what a poem is and watched Michael Rosen talk about the art of storytelling and performing poetry. We used the physical aspect of the Oracy framework to discuss how we would perform a poem.

In KS1 we talked about the physical strand of the Oracy framework, in relation to performing poetry. Using the physical strand of the Oracy framework, we performed a short poem by Christina Rossetti called 'Mix the Pancake'. We talked about looking at the person we are speaking to, the speed and volume of our voices and our body language.

In KS2 we performed some of the poem 'Jabberwocky' by Lewis Carol.

Mix the Pancake by Christina Rossetti:

Mix a pancake,  
Stir a pancake,  
Pop it in the pan;  
Fry the pancake,  
Toss the pancake -  
Catch it if you can.



## EAL @ Thorndown

### Language of the Month!

This week Mrs Dunsdon was delighted to meet our Polish speaking children and chat to them about what they wanted to share about Poland during their 'Language of the month' assembly. The children shared knowledge about popular Polish food, landmarks, wildlife and the climate in Poland at different times of the year. Then the children taught the rest of the school some frequently used Polish words including...

Good morning- Dzień dobry (Gen dob bruh)  
Good afternoon: Dobry wieczór  
(Dobray Wee ek show)

How are you? - Jak się masz (Yag she mash)  
Good- Dobrze (Dob-juh)

Not good- Nie dobrze (Nah Doh-juh)  
Ok- Ok

Goodbye- Pa  
Thank you- Dziękuję (Gen koo yay)

Next up - Romanian!

If your child speaks a language other than English at home or speaks English as an additional language and they'd like to share their knowledge, please encourage them to speak to Mrs Dunsdon.



# Well-Being



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## What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# GROUP CHATS

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On messaging apps, social media and online games, group chats are among the most popular ways that young people engage with their peers online. Involving three or more individuals, these groups allow users to send messages, images and videos to everyone in one place. While they can be great for connecting with others, there are several risks posed by these tools.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

#### BULLYING

Teens are often trying to find their place in their social group. Unfortunately, group chats can sometimes lend themselves to unkind comments being shared freely, putting people down to make their peers laugh – often creating a vicious circle that encourages others to join in. Being bullied so publicly – in front of friends and acquaintances – can also amplify the hurt, embarrassment and anxiety that the victim feels.

#### EXCLUSION AND ISOLATION

This common issue with group chats can happen in several ways: for instance, starting a new group, but deliberately excluding a certain child. Likewise, the chat may take place on an app which one person doesn't have access to, meaning they can't be involved. A child can also feel isolated when a group chat is used to discuss events that exclude them – for example, sharing photos from a day out that they didn't attend.

#### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Some discussions in group chats may include inappropriate words, swearing and unsuitable images or videos. These could be viewed by a child if they are part of that group, whether they actively engage in it or not. Some apps have features that cause messages to disappear after they're viewed, so children may be unable to report something they've seen, as it can only be viewed once or for a short time.

#### SHARING GROUP CONTENT

Group chats can feel more private and protected, allowing children to share inside jokes and video calls with a smaller group of friends. It's important to remember that while the chat's content is private between those in the group, individual users can easily share material with others outside of the group, or screenshot what's been posted. The risk of something a child intended as private becoming public is higher if there are strangers in the chat.

#### UNKNOWN MEMBERS

Within larger group chats, it's more likely for children to communicate with people they don't know. These strangers may be friends of the host, but not necessarily friendly towards everyone present. It's wise for young people to avoid sharing personal details and remember that they have no control over what others do with the material they send into the chat.

#### NOTIFICATIONS AND FOMO

A drawback of large group chats is the sheer number of notifications they tend to generate. Every time someone sends a message, each member's device will be 'pinged' with an alert. This could result in hundreds of notifications a day. This is often highly distracting, and young people's fear of missing out (FOMO) can cause increased screen time as they try to keep up with the conversation.

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## Advice for Parents & Carers

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#### CONSIDER OTHERS' FEELINGS

Group chats can become an arena for young people to compete for social status. This could cause them to do or say things on impulse which could upset others. Help children consider how people might feel if they behave in this way. If the child does upset someone, encourage them to reach out, show empathy and apologise for their mistake.

#### PRACTISE SAFE SHARING

In any online communication, it's vital for young people to be aware of what they're sharing and who might potentially see it. Ensure children understand the importance of not revealing identifiable details like their address, their school, or photos that they wouldn't like to be seen widely. Remind them that once something is shared in a group, they can't be certain where it might end up and how it might be used.

#### GIVE SUPPORT, NOT JUDGEMENT

Group chats are an excellent way for children to connect and feel like they belong. However, remind them that they can confide in you if they feel bullied or excluded, instead of responding to the person who's upset them. Validate their feelings and empower them by discussing how they'd like to handle the situation. You can also encourage children to speak up if they witness others being picked on.

#### AVOID INVITING STRANGERS

Sadly, many individuals online hide their identity to gain a child's trust and serve their own ends – for example, to gather information on them, to exchange inappropriate content or to coax them into doing things they aren't comfortable with. Ensure the child understands why they shouldn't add people they don't know to a group chat – and why they should never accept a group chat invitation from a stranger.

#### BLOCK, REPORT AND LEAVE

If a child is in a chat where inappropriate content is being shared, advise them to block whoever sent the material, report that person to the host app or platform and exit the group. If any of this content could put a minor at risk, contact the police. Emphasise that it's OK for children to simply leave any group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

#### SILENCE NOTIFICATIONS

Having a device bombarded with notifications from a group chat can be an irritating distraction – especially if it's happening late in the evening. Explain to children that they can still be part of the group chat while disabling notifications – and that it would be healthier for them to do so, avoiding a situation where they could feel pressured to respond.

# Opportunity



## Reception Visit to Sacrewell Farm

On Monday, the Reception children visited Sacrewell Farm as part of their topic on growth. They enjoyed a tractor and trailer ride where they got to see all of the fruit and vegetables that grow on the farm, met and learnt about the lambs and saw goats, sheep, donkeys and a turkey amongst many other animals. Finally, they all had a great time in the soft play before returning to school.



## Y6 Humanist Visitor

On Thursday morning, a humanist came into our school to tell us about his life as a humanist. He shared how important he finds science and his beliefs in scientific research. Rishi also shared some interesting facts to get our brains buzzing! His story was fascinating as he grew up in a Hindu household but attended a Christian school which meant that he was not able to express his beliefs easily until he was older. We really enjoyed this knowledgeable experience!



## School Attendance Information for Parents/Carers



**MISS SCHOOL – MISS OUT**  
Don't let your child be the one to miss out!



[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

### What can you do to help?

- Establish good bedtime and morning routines.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time. This encourages habits of punctuality and lessens any possible classroom disruption. If your child arrives after the attendance register has closed without a good reason, this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised' absence for that session.
- All absences must be reported to the school office for each day of absence (your child's school will have an Attendance Policy explaining the school's expectations and procedures).
- If you know or think that your child is having difficulties attending school, you should contact the school. It is better to speak to them sooner rather than later, as most problems can be dealt with very quickly.
- *Always ask for help from the school to support you and your child's attendance.*

### Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Schools can only authorise absences for a limited range of exceptional circumstances. These are typically absences that are completely unavoidable. Absences that will not be agreed might include:

- Arrival after registers have closed.
- Absences that are not properly explained by parents or child.
- Day trips and Term Time Leave
- Leaving the school without school's authorisation.

### Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether to keep your child off school if when they are unwell.

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Term Time Leave

The Government has removed the discretion for head teachers to agree term time leave requests. Due to the disruptive effect on a child's education, you are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term-time.

Exceptional circumstances have not been dictated by the Government. Individual head teachers will make the final decision to authorise the leave

### The Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16 yrs.) must receive a suitable, full-time education suitable for the age and ability of the young person.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special needs. Most parents fulfill this obligation by registering their child in a school.

### Compulsory school age:

From: 1 September, 1 January, 1 April following the child's fifth birthday  
To: the last Friday in June in the school year in which the child is sixteen (1 September to 31 August)

Receiving a good **full-time education** will give your child the best possible start in life and best possible outcomes.

Attending school regularly and punctually is essential if children are to make the most of the opportunities available to them.

Government research suggests that 17 missed school days a year = 1 GCSE grade DROP in achievement.

### Attendance during one school year

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent number of missed:		
	Days	Weeks	Average lessons
95%	9	2	54
90%	19	4	114
85%	29	6	174
80%	38	8	228
75%	48	10	288
70%	57	11.5	342
65%	67	13.5	402

of absence based on information provided and the absence cannot be authorised retrospectively. The need or desire for recreation downtime is not considered exceptional.

Unauthorised leave of absence could result in a Penalty Notice fine being issued.

### Local Authority Education Attendance Service

It is the responsibility of the school to have their own arrangements in place to manage poor attendance by offering appropriate support to parents and children.

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure regular school attendance.

If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory and failing to improve despite support from the school, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Should it be considered that as a parent you are unwilling to ensure your child attends school regularly without good reason, you could be:

- parents may be subject to a Penalty fine of £160 (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days). Non-payment of this fine will result in case being listed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court, without further warning being issued.
- prosecuted in a Magistrates Court and fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for up to 3 months in accordance with the Education Act 1996 Section 444.
- made the subject of a Parenting Order.
- your child may be made the subject of an Education Supervision Order in the Family Court.

September 2024

For further information about school attendance, please see our website.

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/school-attendance)

[Non-attendance at school and the law - Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

[SEND Information Hub \(Local Offer\) \(cambridgeshire.gov.uk\)](#)

[www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family-support/accessing-support-for-your-family](http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/parenting-and-family-support/accessing-support-for-your-family)

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>



# Easter Craft Bags



Each bag contains a Wooden Egg  
with Pens to decorate, Bubbles  
and a Sweet or Lolly - £2 per bag



They will be delivered to your child's classroom the week  
before Easter holiday. LIMITED SUPPLIES - Order Now!  
Last orders FRIDAY 28TH MARCH @ 10PM