
NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley and Whalton Church of England Aided Schools

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Dear Parents,

As the end of term and Christmas approaches; just a couple of updates and lots of thank yous!

Storm Arwen

We have had a few challenges this term and Storm Arwen definitely added to it. Although the damage was minimal at both schools, our thanks go to Nick Gale who looks after our grounds, for his caring and speedy responses to check the damage at both schools over that weekend and for repairing the fence on the first day back at Longhorsley - delaying other projects to ensure the safety of our children. Guy Young also deserves a special mention at Whalton, who supported us during our Caretaker Marlene's absence and again, was in school on Sunday tidying up the devastation and ensuring that the school was safe for the children's return. We really do appreciate all that you have done and do.



Following the storm, and subsequent power cuts, we then had problems with the electrics at Whalton, leading to its closure for 3 days so a huge thank you to all of the parents at Whalton for your understanding and patience and for bringing your children to Longhorsley to continue their education during these difficult times. Also, many thanks to the parents at Longhorsley for your understanding of sharing the school with additional children and staff during Covid too. We know that many of you were without power yourselves at Longhorsley, so again, thank you for your community spirit when bringing our two schools together. The staff at both schools had to adapt too and I cannot praise them all highly enough for their flexibility and resilience to ensure that the children felt welcomed and safe. The cleaning and sanitising of sinks and toilets was also second to none and with a bit of timetabling wizardry, separate breaks, lunchtimes and learning spaces were achieved - what a team effort!

Aspire ~ Believe ~ Achieve ... to be the very best that we can be



Covid update

As we continue to respond to the ongoing presence of Covid, please read the most recent guidance provided to us by the DfE in their school guidance:

From 14 December 2021, adults who are fully vaccinated and all children and young people aged between 5 and 18 years and 6 months identified as a contact of someone with COVID-19 are strongly advised to take a LFD test every day for 7 days and continue to attend their setting as normal, unless they have a positive test result.

Daily testing of close contacts applies to all contacts who are:

- *fully vaccinated adults – people who have had 2 doses of an approved vaccine*
- *all children and young people aged 5 to 18 years and 6 months, regardless of their vaccination status*
- *people who are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons*
- *people taking part, or have taken part, in an approved clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine”*

We are so very thankful to those of you who have reported positive cases so promptly and kept your children at home or arranged for PCR testing to ensure the safety of all of the children and staff. Please can we ask that if you are contacted by Test and Trace identifying your child as a close contact, that you follow the most recent guidance above. We also know that parents have also contacted close contacts personally to help further.

PTA

We are also very grateful to our parents of our PTAs at both schools who have continued to support us through their fundraising and activities this term. The doughnuts and Pumpkin trail were a great success at Whalton; not to mention the personalised Christmas cards and gifts. At Longhorsley, the class cinema nights have (and will hopefully) allow many a Christmas elf to have an extra couple of hours to shop or wrap or collapse whilst knowing their children are having fun and popcorn! Calendars and snow globes will be finding their way to you too. Look out for both PTA's updates in the new year to see how each school has used your generous donations to enhance the environments and resources available to your children... and the plans afoot for a certain Wellbeing pod at Longhorsley - all very exciting!

Performances

A quick update. For Longhorsley parents, each class's performance is currently being filmed ready to be viewed on School 360 from Monday 20th - Sunday 26th December. The staff have been tremendous in getting the children ready for their star performances and they all certainly look the part - you are in for a real treat.

For Whalton parents, the wait will be a little bit longer to see the full performance of Peace Child. As it is a whole school performance, Mrs Potter has filmed everything she can to date, however, with key children absent due to Covid, this will need to continue in January. There will, however, be a preview of photos as a trailer and other delights to share with you on your child's school 360 account from Monday 20th December too - thank you for your understanding. Something to look forward to when we get back to school in January.

Trim Trail at Longhorsley

It has finally arrived! Designed by our present and past pupils in April, promised in June and July and now finally installed in December. We have put our Sports Premium money from the government to good use to give our children another space to explore, balance, enjoy and get their daily exercise. Mrs Robinson's children were the first to give it a go!



Unit Manager at Whalton

We are currently advertising for a new cook at Whalton for the start of the new year. Please ask around and if anyone is interested, please could you contact Whalton as soon as possible - even if they require training. We are so proud of the fact that we can offer hot food at both of our school sites but we need someone to do it. Fiona, who used to be our cook at Whalton has come out of retirement to help us out - thank you Fiona - it is so lovely to see you again!

Christmas Services

As advertised in our Longhorsley monthly newsletter, there will be a Christmas Carol Service at the Longhorsley Tree on Christmas Eve at 4pm. Reverend Audrey would love to see you all. At Whalton, there is Carol Singing at Whalton Village Hall on 20th December with the Crib Service on the 24th at 6pm. Pam and Fiona were hoping that some of our Whalton children would like to be involved in the crib service, doing a reading. If you would like your child to take part, please contact Whalton directly by phone or email.

Many thanks to Reverend Audrey, Reverend Fiona and Pam, our Lay Minister, for all of their continued support for our schools.

A Final Thank You!

What an Autumn term! It has been a real pleasure to have your children back in both schools. We have very much tried to make school life as normal as possible within the current restrictions of school risk assessments and Covid that we are learning to live with and hope that you agree, that for the children, they have had a wonderful learning time back with their friends. For the staff, it has been a lot of hard work trying to build back up to the new normal (and then to have to film Christmas performances!), but they have certainly risen to the challenge and they very much deserve a rest and break with their own families over the Christmas period as I'm sure that you will agree. Thank you to each and every one of you! In the background, our Governors continue to work hard to support The Federation with critical decision making and support for all staff and children; a heartfelt thankyou to all of our Federation team - as the saying goes:

It takes a
village to
raise a child....



All that is left to say is a big thank you for your continued support as parents; you have been so lovely and thank you for all of your kind treats/gifts and emails of thanks and appreciation that have been sent into both schools to keep everyone going- much appreciated in these still tricky times.

We return to school on Tuesday 4th January at Whalton and on Wednesday 5th January at Longhorsley, following the Morpeth Partnership training day.

We wish you a very happy and healthy Christmas break and a peaceful New Year.



Kindest regards,

Mrs Brannen
Executive Headteacher

