

NORTHUMBERLAND County Council

The Federation of Longhorsley and Whalton Church of England Aided Schools

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5th January 2026

Dear Parents

Happy New Year!

Welcome back to the Spring term and 2026! I hope that you all had a great festive break with your family and friends.

Firstly, I would just like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you, on behalf of myself and all of the staff, for your kind and generous gifts/bakes/sweets for Christmas (and all of your well wishes too!). There really is no need as we all do it for your children, and love doing it, but it is greatly appreciated and never expected.

I would also like to thank the PTA for all of their hard work and support leading up to Christmas. Amazing raffle prizes and extra goodies for the children, including Christmas crackers, party 'lucky dip' and all of the personalised goodies which could be bought along with their Christmas cards (not to mention our surprise visitor's pressies too!). We really appreciate all of the time and effort which goes into this!

Alongside this newsletter, we are also circulating our Spring 1 Update Letter that has all of the details of our upcoming Diary Dates (with details of parent lunches, sports and after school activities etc). There is also a 'winter closure letter' just so you are aware of the procedures if we do have to close school due to health and safety reasons. This is always a last resort, but we want you to have all of the information you need just in case.

Emotion Coaching Parent Workshop- Wednesday 14th January

Before the holidays, we advertised our very first joint Federation Parent workshop designed to support you in understanding and nurturing your child's emotions. Please see the details below. Thank you to the parents who have already signed up for this.

Location: School Hall, Whalton NE61 3XH

Time: 9:30 a.m - 11.00 a.m. start (plenty of time to drop children off)

Extras: Enjoy a warm drink and a snack on arrival!

This workshop is open to all parents and carers in our Federation. All staff have also taken part in this training, so we are thrilled to share this valuable opportunity with you too. There is still time to book a place by emailing longhorsleyadmin@fedlongwhalschools.uk Many thanks.

New Starters

We look forward to welcoming our new Nursery children into school this week and look forward to getting to know you better in the coming months.

Y4 Robinwood Residential

We have again arranged for children in Year 4 to attend the fabulous Robinwood Activity Centre at Barhaugh Hall, Alston for three days and two nights in May (11th to 13th) with the Year 4 children from Whalton and Cambo. The children will have the opportunity to take part in a range of activities over the three days and make new friends ready for Middle School.

Although we do subsidise through our Sports Premium Grant, there will be a cost involved depending on the number of children attending; last year the cost was £210. To help, payments can be made in four monthly instalments prior to the visit through your child's School Gateway account.

Please can you complete the following [google form](#) to indicate whether you would like your child to attend the visit. Further information about Robinwood is available on their website [here](#). The centre is Barhaugh Hall.

Attendance

Many thanks for keeping us informed of absences related to illness or emergency appointments. We continue to follow our Attendance Policy and any unexplained absences will be followed up by the Office on the morning of the absence, so we know the whereabouts of your children to ensure that they are safe. There is still the 48 hour rule if your child has had a sickness bug.

With respect to leave of absence requests, unfortunately, unless exceptional, they are all deemed unauthorised. Again, we are so thankful for your honesty but need to ensure that we are fulfilling our statutory duty of emphasising the need for your children to be in school - every day counts for their learning and every day is planned for carefully by staff. Unfortunately, work will not be provided for in-term holidays. Missing continuous days will also lead to gaps in your child's learning which is planned carefully by your child's class teacher. Please look out for and use training days to get cheaper deals or long weekends which don't impact on your child's education. Many thanks for your continued support with this. We will be sending you an update of your child's current attendance from last term next week as we review our attendance figures. We aim for 96% attendance and are very proud of the fact that the vast majority of children achieve this.

The Education Welfare Officer visits us termly to monitor our attendance and if we feel that we need to support anyone to improve attendance, we will be in touch.

There are a series of model letters that we will need to send out too if your child hits a trigger point. Please understand that these are what we are being asked to do, but we also know that we have great relationships with yourselves, so please do not be put off by the wording of some of these!

Teaching and Learning

Newsletters outlining the term's topic and curriculum for each class will be sent home this week, so that you know what your child will be learning.

Although our next formal Pupil Progress Update Meetings for parents will be held next half term, please remember that you can make appointments to see your child's teacher at any point in the year to discuss your child's progress or if you have any questions.

Reception Places

Please remember to apply for your child's Reception place for this September by the deadline of 15th January. Even if you are currently attending our Nursery, you still need to apply formally.

The application process for a Reception school place in Northumberland is handled by the Northumberland County Council. The key dates for the 2026 intake are:

November 1, 2025: The online application portal opens.

January 15, 2026: The closing date for applications.

April 16, 2026: National Offer Day - you will find out which school your child has been offered a place at.

Further details are on our website under admissions.

<https://www.longhorsley-st-helens.northumberland.sch.uk/admissions/>

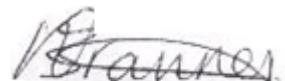
The online portal can be found directly here: [Citizen Portal - Sign in](#)

For new Nursery parents, please note, unfortunately a place in our Nursery does not automatically give you a place for our Reception, so please remember to apply when the time comes for your child entering Reception (from November this year).

Finally, many thanks to you all for your continued support in all areas of school life.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any queries or questions. Here's to a fabulous 2026!

Kindest regards,



Mrs Brannen
Executive Headteacher