

2 December 2022

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

***'Intelligence is the ability to adapt to change.'* – Stephen Hawking**

Dear Parents/Carers,

Last week Ofsted released their report into the inspection of Outstanding schools. There has been a focus in the media on the large number of schools that have dropped from the Outstanding grade (86% of Outstanding primary schools inspected between 2021-2022 dropped a grade). It is important to highlight that a new Ofsted framework was introduced in 2019, that now rightly focuses on the curriculum and every child's learning. However, this exacting framework has made it much harder for schools to attain an Outstanding grade, hence the headlines 'Ofsted downgrades hundreds of Outstanding schools in England'. At William Murdoch Primary School we will continue to focus on doing the right thing for our children as opposed to simply doing things for Ofsted. As you will know the school was graded as Good across all areas in the June 2022 Ofsted inspection.

You can read the Ofsted report on Outstanding schools here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hundreds-of-formerly-outstanding-schools-reinspected>



It is already starting to sound a little bit Christmassy around school this week as children and staff begin to prepare for the festive season. And today it started to look Christmassy too as the school Christmas trees were put up and the Christmas post box was put up in the foyer outside the Lower School hall.

On a related note, when we consider the festivals celebrated recently, whether it be Diwali, Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday or Advent leading to Christmas, the candle is a symbol of light where there is darkness all around. It is no coincidence these festivals are celebrated at this time of year! The message is a simple and universal one; a small amount of light (hope) drives away darkness (fear and worry).

Christmas Cards

The school will be running a Christmas card postal service. Children can bring in their Christmas cards from Monday 5 December 2022, and the service will run until the 16 December 2022. Pupils will have the opportunity to post their cards at break and lunchtime in the post box placed outside the foyer to the Lower School hall. They will then be sorted and distributed the next day to the classes by a selection of Year 6 pupils.

Christmas Lunch

As part of the Christmas celebrations this year, the school will again treat all children to a **free** Christmas lunch on **Wednesday 14 December 2022**. All pupils will have received a Christmas lunch letter where parents are to select their child's menu option. Lunches on this day will be unavailable to order through SchoolGrid. In order to make catering provisions for this, I would be grateful if you could return your child's meal choice slip to the class teacher by **Monday 5 December 2022**.



Christmas Jumper Day

The school will be taking part in the 'Christmas Jumper Day' appeal on Friday 16 December 2022. Pupils and staff are invited to wear their Christmas jumper to help raise funds for Save the Children. We would like everyone to take part so please send your child into school on the day wearing their Christmas jumper. It will also be a non-uniform day. The contribution for this will be £1.00. If you don't have a Christmas jumper there is no need to buy one, why not design your own by adding some tinsel to a colourful old jumper? Let your imagination go!



Wrapping Up Warm

In the last week the weather has turned colder and the forecast ahead is that temperatures will drop further. On these cold days, please make sure that your child has a coat in school and that they wear warm clothes, particularly on PE days when the children wear their PE kit. If children do not have the school hoodie then they must wear their school jumper over their PE t-shirt. No other forms of hoodie should be worn.

Sickness & Absence

The cold weather has made a return this week and it has coincided with a spike in absences due to raised temperature, vomiting and/or diarrhoea (see guidance below), coughing, stomach ache, asthma related illness and general cold and flu symptoms. There is a similar picture in schools up and down the country. I am grateful to parents who continue to do a lateral flow test where COVID-19 like symptoms are being presented.


Diarrhoea and Vomiting

From time to time children are sick (vomit) either at home or at school. Unfortunately, it is not possible to distinguish between the causes, and therefore it is essential that the same rule of exclusion applies in all cases of vomiting or diarrhoea.

In the Health Protection Agency document, "Guidelines for the Control of Infection and Communicable Disease in School and Early Years Settings", the guidance is:

Diarrhoea and Vomiting exclusion

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and staff and can be caused by a number of different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. In general, it is recommended that any staff member or child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.



Diarrhoea and vomiting in children

Keep kids home from school for **48 HOURS** after symptoms have passed. This is enough time to let the virus run its course.

If your child already has a serious illness, or symptoms last longer than a few days, contact your GP to seek advice.

Washing hands frequently and thoroughly helps limit the spread of the virus.

You don't need to visit the GP for stomach bugs such as **Norovirus**. Symptoms usually clear up in a few days. Visit [nhs.uk/norovirus](https://www.nhs.uk/norovirus) for advice on managing the spread of Norovirus.

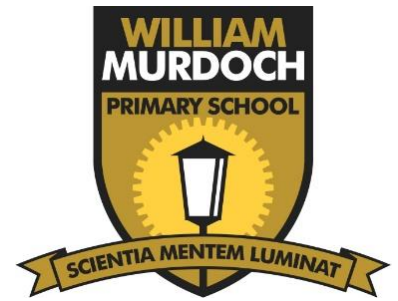
Home Treatment

- Paracetamol is useful for fever or aches and pains.
- Give kids plenty of water to stay hydrated and replace lost fluids.
- If your child feels like eating, give them bland foods.

NHS Food Standards Agency

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours. We appreciate that this is inconvenient in many cases, and you may not believe your child is ill, but you will appreciate that we do this in all cases and it should reduce the risk of infection for all children in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting.

Thank you for your understanding with this.



Projects

All pupils were set an autumn term project back in September, and the deadline to submit these to their class teacher is Monday 12 December 2022. Pupils should continue to work on their projects during their weekends, and submit a photo of their progress on Class Dojo every two weeks. The titles of the projects which were set for each year group were as follows:

- Reception: Look at Me
- Year 1: People That Help Us
- Year 2: The Royal Family
- Year 3: Law and Power
- Year 4: Ancient Egypt
- Year 5: Ancient Rome
- Year 6: The Tudors



Projects have been a long-standing tradition of the school and provide an opportunity for pupils to develop their research, analysing, organisation and presentation skills. It also provides a chance for parents to get involved by helping their child complete their project.



Winter Food Boxes and Activities

As part of the winter Bring it on Brum! programme, which is supported by the Department of Education and Birmingham City Council to help support families with the rise of living costs, families are able to request winter food boxes. All families and households with and without children eligible for benefits-related free school meals can apply. For more information or to apply, please visit <https://www.bringitonbrum.co.uk/activity-packs-and-food-boxes/>.

Bring it on Brum are also working in partnership with Handsworth Association of Schools in delivering winter activities for children during the Christmas break. For more information, please visit <https://www.haos.org.uk/news.php?story=62>.





Book Fair

It was that exciting time of the year again when the Book Fair came to school. Sadly, for the past couple of years, we have not been able to host the Book Fair due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, this year, to welcome it back in full swing, we didn't just have a book fair. We went even bigger. We hosted a Book Event. For three whole days, children attended a storytelling workshop based around the theme of Japan. They got to sing songs, converse and even dress up in traditional Japanese clothes before hearing a traditional Japanese story. The children thoroughly enjoyed it and this was evident with the long queues of children waiting every day after school to purchase new books. Thank you to all of you who helped support it. It was a great few days and the children and the school got a lot of out of it. Thanks to your help, the school was given many books which we will now be able to use to further support lessons for all children.

Mr Slinn's Artists of the Week

The children in R.1

In Reception the children have been learning about the seasons. They placed a silhouette of a leaf in the centre of an image and used colour spots of paint around the image to represent the seasons. The work produced was very creative and colours were used well to represent autumn, winter, spring and summer.

Hiba Y5.1

In Year 5 the children have been learning about Islamic art and architecture. Hiba produced a brilliant piece of art using a wide range of colours and geometric shapes. She used felt tip pens very carefully when applying the different colours and should feel very proud of the work that she produced.



Mr Panichi's Book of the Week

Lower School



The Night After Christmas - Kes Gray and Claire Powell

Have you ever wondered what Father Christmas does after Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are over? Well now that all the presents have been safely delivered, Santa and his elves enjoy their own festivities on Boxing Day. The Owls deliver a giant cracker filled with fun things, which everyone pulls, Mrs Klaus switches on the Northern Lights to brighten the party sky, the reindeer show off their dance moves and everyone makes merry, before starting the 364 day countdown until the next Christmas Eve. A rich, rhyming text, accompanied by bright vibrant illustrations full of humour, make this a picture book perfect for reading aloud to KS1 children.

Upper School

The Miracle on Ebenezer Street - Catherine Doyle

Three years ago George's mum died in a car accident on Christmas Eve. Since then his dad Hugo has cancelled Christmas entirely, much to George and his Nana Flo's sadness. Then one day George stumbles upon Marley's Curiosity Shop and in it he finds a mysterious snow globe that seems to show a scene from a past Christmas, a time when he and his family were happy and celebrating. What he doesn't know is that "Old Marley's magic leaked out" and that night he and his Dad and intrepid Nana Flo are swept away on an adventure, visiting a past, present and future Christmas, along with Randolph the purple reindeer and Trixie the miniature elf who somehow always manages to cause chaos! This is a heart-warming, modern re-imagining of A Christmas Carol and I you'll LOVE it. It has a wonderful cast of characters, is full of magic and humour, but also deals very sensitively with the issues of grief. There is something almost 'Narniaesque'. There are 26 chapters and it would be the perfect book to read a daily chapter, to your little ones, during this Christmas period.



Many thanks for your continued support and cooperation. Have a relaxing weekend.

Your sincerely,



Mr M Singh
Headteacher

Dates

6 December 2022	Reception trip to Hatton Adventure World
12 December 2022	Project Deadline for Pupils
14 December 2022	Pupil Christmas Lunch
14 December 2022	Nursery AM & Reception Nativity
15 December 2022	Nursery PM & Reception Nativity
16 December 2022	Christmas Jumper Day
16 December 2022	Pupils Break-up