



# ABOYNE LODGE

CREATIVE • CURIOUS • CARING

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Friday 26th April '24



## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

I thought that I would share this week about the upcoming changes that the UK Government are implementing on attendance. While we have traditionally had really strong levels of attendance, it is disappointing to see that our percentage figure has dipped slightly this year. I appreciate that there has been an awful cough and sickness bug going around which hasn't helped, but our aim should always be to get the children in school as much as possible - there is no coincidence that children who attend more are more likely to achieve well in school and there is a direct correlation between academic outcomes and attendance.

Schools previously had autonomy over the issuing of fines, but this is being taken out of our hands. Penalties for absence will be brought under a national framework, with fines increasing to £120 for each parent. In addition, all schools in England now need to share their daily attendance registers. For most parents this isn't going to affect you, but we do have a handful of families whose children fall into the persistent absence category who may well be affected.

If you are unsure if your child is too sick to come into school there is some guidance from the NHS which can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

We had some amazing news from our swimming team this week, after the children did fantastically well in the Annual Schools Swimming Gala at Hertfordshire University. There were some great individual and team performances including gold winning swims from Nancy and Emily. Many congratulations to all the team and thank you to Mrs Hobbs for being there on Saturday. We won the Girls Team event, with the trophy now sitting proudly in the central area. Very well done.

This afternoon the Year 3 children performed a music assembly for their parents and the rest of the school. They have been learning to play the ukulele in their music lessons, which has been supported by the Herts music service. It was really good to see the children smiling as they plucked away, singing as they played. Thank you to Miss Hayden for her teaching and congratulations to the children.

Tonight we have the Drag Bingo and Disco event for the adults, hosted by ALSA. It should be great fun and hopefully I will see lots of you there. These things take a lot of planning, work and time and they are all done voluntarily. Thank you to everyone at ALSA for making the evening possible and all our support. It is really appreciated.

## EFFORT CERTIFICATES

Nancy Y6 Stella Y5 Ivy C Y4 Sara Y3 Alisha Y2

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri 26th Apr—ALSA Drag Bingo & Disco night (18+ only)

Wed 1st May—YR Health Check NHS

Thu 2nd May—YR classroom being used as a polling station.

Mon 6th May - BANK HOLIDAY

Mon 13th to 17th May - KS2 SATs week

Thu 23rd May—Year 3 Stone Age off the page workshop

## Mobile phone use in children

97% of 12-year-olds in Britain have a smartphone. When children started getting them, there was little to no research about their impact. Over recent years the results of mobiles on children's lives is now starting to show and, while there are many benefits to using smartphone technology, the potential downsides do not make good reading: Smartphones can expose children to harmful content, raise the likelihood of developing a mental illness and are highly addictive.

For many parents, the end of Year 6 is a time when many parents make the choice of allowing children to have a smartphone—both of my daughters received phones when they reached secondary school. Unfortunately, we are getting more and more incidents coming into school that are associated with mobile phone use. Perhaps we all need to reflect on why our children would need a phone at the age they are and consider if we are all starting this too young.

Young people routinely use social media and much of their lives in secondary school are now on line. This can create a false sense of security; for example, chatting online feels different to talking face to face and it can be easier to say or reveal things that wouldn't be said to someone directly. For example, something cruel, aggressive or flirtatious. Comments intended to be funny can often be misinterpreted whereas if said face to face they could be acceptable as facial expressions, body language, tone of voice and context all help to ensure that comments are taken in the right way.

What we do know is that increasingly younger children are signing up to social networking sites and they may not have the maturity to handle their online identity in a safe and responsible way. Social networking can increase existing social pressures and reinforce a sense of isolation; for instance by people purposefully not liking a young person's status update or photo so they seem unpopular, or by excluding them from group chats. Online bullying often involves a large audience and this increases the pressure. Parents and carers have a challenging job. They need to know what their children are doing online and also help them to do it in a safe way. Social Networks have a minimum age restriction, usually age thirteen. Parents should talk to their children about the reasons behind the age restriction as they are there for a reason.

I did read something recently that made a lot of sense to me. At whatever age you do decide to give your child a phone, as parents, we are in a stronger position if we provide them to our children with the understanding that the device does not belong to them. It's on loan and therefore something that we as parents have the ultimate control of. By purchasing a phone for your children for a birthday or Christmas present, we are effectively saying to our children that this is their possession. By making slight adjustments like this, the relationship dynamic with the phone changes and subsequently enables more openness. It also makes it a lot easier to remove the privilege of them having a phone if we ever need to.

The St Albans Primary schools are currently working on a joint statement about use of mobile phones in our schools, but also are thinking about the wider implications of children's use of tablets at very young ages. Phones are not permitted in school at Aboyne but Year 6 are allowed to store them safely at school when they have permission to walk home.

You can find more information and support through <https://smartphonefreechildhood.co.uk/> and <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

