



Kirk Merrington Primary School Newsletter

Spring Term 1

February 2026

You will be pleased to hear the constant rain has not dampened the children's spirits and they have continued to work hard and make progress this half term. The recruitment process has started for my replacement with interviews planned for the end of March. Once we have the details we will let you know who the successful candidate is.

We are still waiting for our two new Portakabin classrooms to arrive. I am really pleased with the design of them. It will be lovely for our Year 5 and 6 children to benefit from the extra space and quietness. It will also be brilliant to finally have our hall back!!!

We are expecting them to be up and running for Easter so fingers crossed.

Please see key dates overleaf as some are for the first week back.

We hope you all enjoy the half term.

Mrs Murray



Visits and Visitors:

Many of the children contributed to the **mural project** with the local artist Olga Ayre. We will let you know when the artwork is going to be put up.

Year 4 and Reception children improved their bike handling skills with sessions led by **Bikeability**.

Cake sale: Thank you so much for your generous contributions- £566.50 was raised!

Year 5 visited the **Life Centre** as part of their Science topic on Earth and Space.

Reception children enjoyed a visit to the church in the village.

Safer Internet Day: We hope the children have shared with you their learning about Keeping safe on line!

Lunch staff:

Mrs Lazenby and Miss Hall are both leaving us today. I know the children will miss them. I would like to thank them for their hard work and wish them well for the future.

100% attendance:

There are 32 children who have been at school every day. Well done.

Amazing they have avoided any illness!

Our school attendance is low for us at 95.4% with the National Average at 94.8%.

We have 8.8% of children whose attendance is below 90%. The National Average is 18.9%.

The Reception class has the lowest attendance and Miss Rawlings class has the highest!

We know you all value the importance of children being in school every day.

For some children it is being late that impacts their attendance percentage.



Holidays:

We always understand why people choose to take term time holidays. We know the costs are so much cheaper, however, the DFE and the local authority have a firm stance that children need to be in school every day. Please make sure you know the rules:

- **Fine:** £80 (within 21 days) or £160 (within 28 days).
- **Applicability:** Per parent, per child (e.g., two parents taking two children can be fined £320-£640).
- **Threshold:** 5+ days (10 sessions) of unauthorized absence within a 10-week period.
- **Repeat Fines:** A second fine within 3 years is automatically £160.
- **Legal Action:** A third offence (or non-payment) can lead to prosecution, with fines up to £2,500.

Parents Evening:

Letters for this will come out after the half term.

Monday 16th March or

Tuesday 17th March

Training Days for 2025/2026:

Monday 20th July 2026

Homework:

We are delighted with the progress children have been making with their **Times Tables** on Times Table Rock Stars. This starts in Year 2 as by the end of Year 4 children need to know them all ready to sit a Multiplication Check test.

Children use their tables almost on a daily basis in Maths so being able to recall them quickly is a huge help to them.

Children are rewarded at school for **reading** at home and completing their **Mathletics and Spelling tasks**. Many of our children find spelling tricky so they need practice of writing the words correctly.

It is really important our older children get into a routine of this as part of being prepared for Secondary School.

If you are having trouble accessing the homework then paper copies can be sent home. If you need any support with this then please let the class teachers know.

Safeguarding:

Should you have a concern about a child outside of school you can report this yourself anonymously on 03000 267979. Keeping children safe is our number one priority and we always respond immediately to any concerns.

Birthday cakes: We promote healthy eating in school but as you may guess, the children like to keep bringing cakes in on their birthday. Please be aware of allergies of other children in the class and the number.

If you choose to send a full cake then this **must be cut into the correct number of pieces** as staff cannot cut it.

We appreciate this has a cost attached so please do not feel any pressure to bring anything in.

Parking:

Please do not use the school car park unless you are using Nutmeg and Sprout or you have a blue badge. This is for safety reasons but equally it has to be fair for everyone!

Our school risk assessments do not cover families being in the staff car park.

Please park with consideration to residents in the village, we continue to get complaints about parents swearing and blocking drives!

School Meals

From Monday 20th

April sadly the price of a lunch will increase to £3.08

Keeping children safe online:

Safeguarding our children is at the heart of everything we do at school. We know that many children use a range of sites and social media and it is important that we work together to make sure we are all safe online.

Online Wellbeing - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/online-wellbeing/>

Facebook- <https://swgfl.org.uk/assets/documents/facebook-checklist.pdf>

Parental Controls - <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/parental-controls/>

National Crime Agency's Education Programme provides information for the children's workforce and parents and carers on protecting children and young people from online child sexual abuse. www.ceopeducation.co.uk

[Report Remove from Childline and IWF](#) is a free tool that allows children to report nude or sexual images and/or videos of themselves that they think might have been shared online.



Dates for the diary: (More information to follow nearer the time)

2.3.26 Back to School

5.3.26 World Book Day- wear a costume or your own clothes- potato book character competition

Reading Cafés 2:30pm - 5.3.26- Reception, 6.3.26- Y5 + Y6, 9.3.26- Y1, 10.3.26- Y2, 11.3.26- Y3, 13.3.26- Y4

16.3.26 + 17.3.26 Parents Evening

16.3.26 Year 4 visit to Hardwick Park

20.3.26 Red Nose Day- wear red for a donation to the charity

22.4.26 Reception class visit to Hall Hill Farm

6.5.26 Year 4 STEM event at Shildon

18.5.26-20.5.26 Robin Wood Residential for Y6

Assessment Dates for your diary:

(Please do not book holidays at this time)

Year 6 Sats wc: 11th May 2026

Year 4 multiplication check any time in the 2 weeks from 1st June 2026

Year 1 Phonic Screening Check-wc: 8th June 2026

Year 2 Phonics for children who need to re-sit wc: 8th June 2026

Training Days for 2026:

Monday 20th July 2026

Key calendar dates were emailed out in September. Please let us know if you need another copy.

We use the **STOP** sign to help children understand the word bullying.

Several Times On Purpose

