



Heather Herald

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Dear Parents/Carers,

What a busy start to the term we have had! All the children have settled back into school life and our new wriggly little Caterpillars are great – they have settled in really well and are soon getting to know the routines and everyone around school. It is great to see them playing on the playground with their new 'big' friends.

Next week we have our first big PTA event of the year, a Sponsored Target – this is a new event for us this year following successful sponsored bounces and walks over the last few years. These sponsored events are usually a big fund raiser for our PTA with last year's funds going to our fabulous new garden area – which is blooming nicely and full of produce (as long as some of the new Caterpillars stop pulling up the onions 🥒). We are hoping to use this year's money to help further enhance the outdoor provision for play and lunchtimes developing the children's imaginative play, we are also looking at building up our Design and Technology resources as Mrs Goode has some exciting design and technology planning units up her sleeve for all the classes this year. The PTA do an amazing job at helping raise funds for the school allowing us to continue to develop and enhance the curriculum we offer at Heather.

Last week, some of the Dragonfly children, Miss Bryant and myself had an amazing time at Arete Outdoor Education Centre in Wales and took part in some very adventurous activities over the 3 and a half days we were there – we hope you managed to see the photos on our Facebook and Twitter accounts. We had plenty of liquid sunshine when we were there but that didn't stop us gorge walking, waterfall climbing, mine exploring, hill walking, coastering, canoeing, creating beach art and litter picking on the beach – it was a very busy few days and no doubt all were in bed early on the Wednesday evening. A big thank you to Miss Bryant for giving up time away from her family etc. to enable the trip to happen. All time is given voluntarily by staff who attend residential and as I say every year, it is no mean feat taking children on a residential, being responsible for their care and on call 24/7 – without such dedicated staff, such trips would not take place. The children were all brilliant – and I am pleased to say were asleep every night for 10pm and often needed waking up in the morning – which meant we also go some well-earned beauty sleep!! I am in no doubt that life lasting memories were created for all. For those children currently in Year 4 and 5 look out for information regarding Arete 25 which will hopefully be with you before half term – please attend the meeting (date to be decided) to find out more about it. The children have been enjoying the photos of our adventures in assemblies this week.

A big thank you to you all during our transition from WEDUC to Arbor – as always when trying anything new there have been a few hiccups on the way. Setting up payments has been a bit of a challenge – I know several of you are waiting to pay for T shirts – we should hopefully be on track with this for next week. Please see later on in the newsletter about school meals and paying for them – it is a bit moany, I am afraid.

Thanks to those of you who have bought some potatoes from the Hill, Straw and Luksaite Greengrocers – the apple shop (fruit not phones!) will be open next week. The children in gardening club were so excited to dig up their potatoes last week. Hopefully we should have cooking and eating apples to sell!

If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate, in the first instance, to contact your child's class teacher

Best wishes,
Maxine Michalowski

PTA - School Lottery and Easy Fund Raising

There are other ways you can help raise funds for the school via the PTA:

Your School Lottery is a really easy way to help raise much needed funds for our PTA without having to do too much yourself – well, apart from spending money 😊. Tickets are just £1 each week and can be paid for via direct debit. Weekly, somebody within our school family wins a cash prize, currently £6.60, with also a chance of up to £25,000. To join the lottery, please visit click the link above and search for Heather Primary. To date, we have raised £457.60 from only 22 tickets sold – last year we had 31 tickets sold – our all-time high is 41 tickets. We have the ambitious target of 51 tickets this year! The more tickets we sell, the higher the prize money and the more money we raise for school. We have some school adults joining too, so if a few more of you can join we could raise lots more money for school – another local school also uses this as a fund raiser – and they have sold 114 tickets with a weekly prize of £33.....! Friends and Family can buy too. A Mrs 'M' won at the weekend – alas not me – but I have won thirteen times since we started the lottery. Some people are far luckier than me – I spied that Mrs Goode won the other week! If you refer a friend, you get a chance to win £200.

Easy Fund Raising - Please download and use Easy fundraising and help the school receive a % on your purchases without you having to spend any money. Easyfundraising is partners with over 7,000 brands who will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice – hopefully Heather Primary School!! It does not cost you anything extra: the cost is covered by the brand!

The small amounts generate each time you shop/buy a ticket all build up over time and all monies are then donated back to the school by the PTA for various projects.

Harvest Festival

It is that time of year again. This year our Harvest festival will take place in St John's Church on Tuesday 8th October starting at 1:30pm. All parents/carers are more than welcome to join us. As we have done in previous years, we are asking for donations for local foodbanks who are in particular need of tinned soup, baked beans, tinned potatoes/carrots/sweetcorn/fruit/tuna/pulses/spaghetti – especially hoops/sponge puddings, jars of pasta/curry sauce, dried pasta, rice, breakfast cereal, tea, sweet treats – penguins/kit-kats etc., snacks – cuppa soups, pot/instant noodles, jam, long life milk, tea bags as well as toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, bars of soap, shaving foam and razors – NO alcohol please and please ensure all food is unopened and in date (it isn't always). Feed the Need in Coalville are also in need of cat/dog food. Staff and members of the PTA will also be organising fruit and veg hamper raffle (again fresh fruit, vegetable and preserve donations are very much appreciated). Teas and coffees will be available in the school hall after the service for all to attend and the fruit and veg raffle will be drawn before the end of the school day. Gardening Club will also be holding a pumpkin (squash), which they have grown themselves, raffle. Raffle tickets will be for sale on the Monday 7th October on the playground and outside the church. Donations for the hampers need to be taken into the classroom by the children on Tuesday 8th October. All donations will be split equally between Feed the Need in Coalville and the Ashby Foodbank.

Holidays in Term Time

We are only a few weeks in and already the holiday leave of absence requests are coming flooding in. We are very fortunate in Leicestershire where some of our school holidays fall outside the holiday periods of most local authorities where sometimes breaks away can be cheaper. I fully appreciate the importance of family holidays but school attendance is very high on the government's agenda and headteachers are given very clear guidance regarding dealing with attendance in schools – our attendance data is collected by the Local Authority and the Department of Education and the governors and I are held to account when the data is considered to fall below the national expectation. Our school holidays total 13 weeks in which holidays can be taken. We have always had high expectations at Heather regarding attendance with our target for attendance being 97%. Last year we just made that with our overall attendance being 97.6% but we have found a significant increase in the number of children who fall under the criteria of being a persistent absentee – this means 90% attendance which equates to 19 days missed off school in an academic year. Attendance is monitored every month and I usually send out attendance letters from November onwards to families of children where attendance is of concern – it is essential that schools and families work together to ensure good attendance is maintained across the school year and your support in this matter is much appreciated. Please note that unauthorised absences of more than 4 days in an academic year will result a referral the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice which is now £80 per parent if paid within 21 days. Three fixed penalty notices in a 3 year period could result in prosecution. Please note when we are alerting you to attendance concerns, we are just doing our job!

Lunch Times and Play Times

As always at this time of year it is useful to send some reminders regarding expectations for lunch times and play times – lots of you will be familiar with the content below but I am sure will appreciate the reminder.

Snacks at play time need to be as healthy as possible. Ideally that means a piece of fruit/vegetables/cheese. Caterpillar and Ladybird are entitled to a free piece of fruit every day. We prefer, as much as possible, for snack to be wrapper free as this is much better for the environment. Crisps, chocolate bars etc. are not acceptable at Heather as a play time snack. Children who bring these items will be asked to put them away, and will be offered a piece of fruit as an alternative.

We have been impressed with some of the great eaters in Caterpillar class – it is always fab to see clear dinner trays and children trying and enjoying new foods; however, some have needed reminding that they need to eat their main meal first before their pudding! They have enjoyed eating their lunch with the support of their Year 5/6 buddy.

As a reminder, if children eat a hot school dinner, they are expected to use a knife and fork to eat their main meal. Spoons are for pudding or soup and we don't have soup – we do not use our fingers. If this is something your child finds difficult or is not part of your meal time routine at home, please practise accordingly.

Children are encouraged to cut up their own food, stabbing larger items of food and nibbling away off their fork whilst they're holding it like a lolly pop is not the table manners we expect in school. Mid-Day Supervisors are more than willing to support children in the cutting of the trickier items on the children's tray.

I know I have said we have some good eaters, but this is not all children. Children are expected to eat a wide selection of the food that they have chosen, and this includes the vegetables they have been given. They are required to ask if they have eaten enough before they start their pudding. They will always be encouraged to eat more before they are allowed to start their pudding. Most children will know the 'eat ??? (insert a number) more rule', which usually depends on their age – this will include the vegetables on their plate. I am so looking forward to the 10 more Brussel sprouts conversation with year 5/6 when we are having Christmas lunch!

Most children bring in a healthy packed lunch – pasta salads, soup, cucumber/carrot sticks, peppers etc. which is great to see. Heavily processed, sugar/salt laden food in some children's lunch boxes such as Dairy Lea lunchables are really not suitable and are also incredibly expensive. A substantial carbohydrate (e.g. bread, crackers, cold pasta/rice, rice cakes) is necessary at lunch to give the children the energy they need for their learning. Heavily processed items tend to be filled with empty calories. We have observed that children who eat lunches of these heavily processed foods can demonstrate poor behaviour at lunch time due to the sugar rush, and then display a lack of concentration in the afternoon. Sweets and chocolate bars are not allowed to be part of a school packed lunch at Heather Primary. Please don't be offended if these are removed – don't worry your child will not go hungry, as we will offer them a healthy alternative.

The school nurse can provide guidance for families who find it difficult to ensure that their child has a varied diet – please do not hesitate in asking for a referral. Likewise, if you are struggling financially to buy food for your family then also get in touch as we will be able to help provide you support with this.

Paying for School Dinners and Trips etc.

In the last newsletter, you were politely asked to ensure all outstanding dinner monies were cleared on WEDUC (this is families who had children in Year 3-6 last year); however, this still amounts to over £250 outstanding to be paid by multiple families. If you are not sure if this is you, can I suggest you log into WEDUC, go to payments and check your child's catering purse. We have also started to notice some families are already building up lunch time debt on Arbor. Somebody asked me how often they should be paying for school meals and I likened it to going out for a meal to a pub or a restaurant – we would not eat the meal and then pay 2/3 months later and I find it somewhat infuriating that some people think this is acceptable for school meals. If you are unsure if you owe money for school dinners for this academic year then please check payments on your Arbor app. Please check WEDUC as multiple families still owe for – Faith Trail visit, Swimming bus payments, the Little Princess Contributions and PE T-shirt Payments. Individual letters will be going to families over the next few days from the Governing Body highlighting what is owed and the potential of possible legal action. Please do not be offended by this – we have sent out several reminders. We are aware that a number of families are in credit for dinner money on WEDUC – thank you for your patience whilst we transfer these balances to Arbor.

Key Dates for the Diary - these will be on ARBOR soon!

- Monday 16th - Wednesday 18th September - Beaumanor Residential Year 3-4 children
Thursday 19th September Primary Ambassador Training - selected Year 5/6 children @Coalville Leisure Centre - 9:15am-1:45pm
- Friday 20th September - PTA Sponsored Target Challenge- please remember forms
Friday 27th September - Play coach training for all children in Dragonfly - PE kits needed
Saturday 28th September - Unity Cross Country Congerstone @Market Bosworth Country Park 11:15 am start
Monday 30th September KS 1 multi skills event @ Woodstone School - selected children
Tuesday 1st October - Year 5/6 Tag Rugby @Ashby Rugby Club 12-5pm - selected children
Wednesday 2nd October - Caterpillar class assembly - all parents/carers welcome - 9am start
Friday 4th October - Mrs Thornley's SEN Surgery - please contact the office if you wish to make an appointment
Tuesday 8th October - Harvest Festival @ 1:30pm to be held in St John's Church **** NOTE CHANGE OF DATE**
Wednesday 9th October Year 3 Multi Skills Festival @Coalville Leisure Centre 10:30am-12:15pm
Monday 14th October Bumblebee Forest School session (please ensure appropriate clothing is into school that day)
Tuesday 15th October - Individual Photographs
Wednesday 16th October - Year 1 and 2 Multi Skills @Coalville Leisure Centre 10:30am-12:00pm
Thursday 17th October 2024 - School closes for half term for children
Friday 18th October 2024 - School open for staff Heather INSET Day 3
HALF TERM Break - Monday 21st October to Friday 25th October 2024
Monday 28th October 2024 - School opens to pupils
Tuesday 29th October - Inclusive Multi Sports @ICC 1pm - 2:45pm selected children
Wednesday 30th October PTA Halloween Disco 5pm - 6:30pm details to follow
Friday 1st - November Mrs Thornley's SEN Surgery - please contact the office if you wish to make an appointment
Tuesday 5th November - Bumblebee Class assembly - all parents/carers welcome - 9am start
Saturday 9th November NWL Cross Country @ St John Moore School 10am start
Monday 11th November - Dragonfly Bikeability - details to follow (children need a fully functioning bike and a helmet)
Tuesday 12th November - Parents' Evening 3:30pm-7pm (details to follow)
Thursday 14th November - Parents' Evening 3:30pm- 5pm (details to follow)
Thursday 14th November 12:30pm - 3pm Year 5/6 Sports Hall athletics selected children
Friday 15th November - Anti Bullying Odd Sock day -- £1 contribution for Children in Need
Monday 18th November - Dragonfly Forest School Session (please ensure appropriate clothing is into school that day)
Monday 18th November Year 3/4 Dodgeball Festival @Castle Rock 3:30pm - 5:30pm selected children
Tuesday 19th November Year 1 and 2 Dodgeball Festival @Ashby School 3:30pm-5:30pm selected children
Thursday 21st November - Ladybird Class Assembly - all parents/carers welcome - 9am start
Thursday 21st November Year 5/6 Dodgeball festival @ICC 3:30pm-5:30pm selected children
Monday 25th November - Ladybird Forest School Session (please ensure appropriate clothing is into school that day)
Wednesday 27th November - Dragonfly class assembly - all parents/carers welcome - 9am start
Wednesday 27th November Year 5/6 Dodgeball Competition @ ICC 3:30pm-5:30pm selected children
Thursday 28th November NWLSSP Let's Get Moving Awards @Ashby Leisure Centre 2:30pm-4pm selected children to attend
Friday 6th December Mrs Thornley's SEN Surgery - please contact the office if you wish to make an appointment
Friday 6th December PTS Christmas Fayre 6pm -8pm (details to follow)
Tuesday 10th December Caterpillar and Ladybird Christmas Production 2:00pm (details to follow)
Wednesday 11th December Caterpillar and Ladybird Christmas Production 10:00am (details to follow)
Thursday 11th December Caterpillar and Ladybird Christmas Production 2:00pm (details to follow)
Friday 20th December 2024 - School closes for pupils for Christmas
CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS - Monday 23rd December to Friday 3rd January
Monday 6th January 2025 - School open for staff Heather INSET 4
Tuesday 7th January 2025 School opens for pupils
Saturday 18th January NWL Cross Country @ Hugglescote Primary 10am
Saturday 25th January Unity Cross Country @Woodstone School 10:30am
Saturday 1st February NWL Cross Country @Measham 10am
Friday 14th February 2025 School closes for half term
Half Term Break Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February 2025
Monday 24th February 2025 - School opens for pupils
Saturday 1st March Unity Cross Country @ Packington 10:30am
Saturday 15th March Unity Cross Country @Snarestone 10:30am
Saturday 5th April Unity Cross Country @Griffydam 10:30am
School Closes for Easter - Friday 11th April 2025
Easter Break - Monday 14th April to Friday 25th April 2025
Monday 28th April 2025 - School opens for pupils
Monday 5th May 2025 - May Day Bank Holiday

The Governing Body

In order to raise the profile of the governing body and what they do, they have decided to place a small bit in the newsletter each month about their role in the strategic direction of the school.

Introducing the governors – what do we do exactly?

It's not only the children and staff who will be returning to School for the new academic year. As governors, we will also be back to carry out our duties. But who are the school's governors and what exactly do we do?

Well, we are a group of 12 volunteers who give our time to help the school by working with the Head Teacher. We are a mix of parents, independent people and some staff members too. We are all elected, and we pledge to serve the school for terms of four years to make the most of our skills. We don't deal with the day to day running of the school – that's the Head Teacher's responsibility.

Instead, our responsibilities revolve around three main tasks: managing budgets; encouraging high academic standards and setting the overarching, long-term plans for the School. At this time of year, we focus on planning, deciding what the priorities are for our children, to enable them to succeed both at their next school and beyond that to their future workplace and their life. It's no easy task but we work together to pool our knowledge and set out plans for the children's progression. But more of that in a future governor update!

During the Spring term, we will be monitoring progress to check that the school is ambitious, rigorous and consistent in delivering the curriculum from Reception Class to Year 6.

And by the Summer term we will be assessing successes or areas where we need to focus in the next academic year.

Our Chair is Dawn Guzzetta and she can be contacted through the Office if you want to find out more.

Your Parent Governors are:

Claire Ottery – Rosie year 5

Hannah Kendrick – Martha Year 5 and Frank Year 2

Miles Blackburn – Fraser Year 2 and Ainsley Year R

Sammi Martin – Frankie Year 5 and Edith Year R

We currently have a vacancy for two co-opted governors. Co-opted governors are usually member so of the community not directly linked to the school i.e. not a parent, who wished to give something back to the community in a voluntary role. Heather is small school with big aspirations and we are looking for people who have an eye for detail with inquisitive mind. Someone who enjoys making the most out of finite resources and is committed to delivering the best possible education to the next generation of pupils for the world of work.

Full training is provided and new Governors are offered a mentor during their first year of service. We welcome expressions of interest and visits to our school to find out more so, if you know of someone in the local community who would be interested in becoming a governor, then please speak to Mrs Michalowski or ask them to get in touch with Dawn Guzzetta via the school office.