

Weekly School News Roundup

**Withycombe Raleigh
C of E Primary
School**

10th January 2025



Mrs Emma Jones, Headteacher
Withycombe Village Road
Exmouth, Devon, EX8 3BA

Please ring us on: (01395) 263397
email: admin@wrpschool.org
website: wrpschool.org

News from your Headteacher

Happy New Year! I hope that you and your family had a lovely Christmas with lots of tasty food and quality time with one another. The children have come back into school full of energy and excitement and it has been wonderful to welcome everyone back. It is going to be a fun-packed and busy term so please ensure you keep abreast of what is going on via our website, Facebook and newsletters as well as the other communications sent out by text and email.

Attendance and Lateness

We monitor attendance and lateness regularly and I am becoming increasingly concerned about the high numbers of late marks and persistent absentees. Research undertaken on attendance in schools clearly shows that good attendance at school has a positive impact on children's academic achievements. A good level of attendance is essential for children to make the best progress in their academic, social and emotional development. Teachers regularly comment that children who are persistently absent (attendance below 90%) find it difficult to catch up on missed learning, and often do not meet their targets for the year. Everyone at Withycombe wants the very best for the children at our school and we want every single child to have the best chance to reach their full potential.

Punctuality is an important life skill and we encourage children to attend school on time each day. If a child is just 10 minutes late each day, this equates to 50 minutes per week of missed learning. Over the year, these late arrivals will have a detrimental effect on the child's learning just as if they were absent from school.

The school gates open at 8:40am and they are closed promptly at 8:45am. Learning starts as soon as the children enter the classroom. Any child arriving after the register has been closed will be recorded as Late (L). We ask that parents and carers make every effort to get their child to school on time to avoid missing out on important learning. When children are late to school this also creates significant problems for both staff and children as lateness causes delays to lessons and disrupts our daily routines.

We employ a number of strategies to promote regular attendance and we will continue to monitor termly attendance. Attendance concern letters will be issued to children with attendance below 90%.

Thank you in advance for working with us on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like some support or advice about how we can work together to improve your child's attendance or punctuality.

Reporting absences

We operate a first-day response system which requires parents/carers to ring the school absence line on the first day to report a child's absence. It is beneficial to school if parents can inform us via the absence line as early as possible. When you leave a message, please state your child's name and class along with a short description of why they are absent, including any symptoms. If we do not receive notification of a child's absence, we view this as a safeguarding concern and therefore the school office will make contact via text to ask parent/carer to confirm the reason why their child is absent from school – it may also be necessary for us to make a home visit to check on the wellbeing of an absent child.



Growing

Happy

Caring

Hearts

and

Minds



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Medical Appointments

We ask please that medical appointments in the school day are avoided whenever possible. We understand that sometimes there may be a medical emergency where this is unavoidable. If you cannot avoid a medical appointment in the school day, parents/carers should inform the school office at the earliest opportunity, providing verification via a formal letter or an appointment card.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that any application for Term Time Absence, must be made using the Absence Request Form and submitted to the office at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Guidance is clear that Headteachers should not grant any leave of absence during term time (this includes holidays) unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Junior Parkrun Withycombe Takeover!



We are looking forward to seeing lots of runners at the Junior Parkrun on Sunday morning - Phear Park 8:50am! Lots of parents and staff have volunteered to help run this fantastic event and will be there to cheer the children on. It would be great to have lots of regular park runners as well as first timers at the event as part of our Withycombe 'takeover'. It's very rare for park run to be cancelled, but should the weather take a drastic turn for the worse we'll post on our Facebook page to let you know. Let's try to get a massive Withycombe presence at the run this week!

If you are not registered with Parkrun, you can do so here: <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/register/>
Thank you to the staff who have already volunteered, but we need more if possible please!
Volunteers need to arrive by 8:30 for a briefing.



Hand-made paper puppets and pockets for sale!
Friday 17th January
In the main playground straight after school at 3:15pm

Come along and support this event in aid of Hospiscare

Contact us

There are many ways you can contact school staff if you have any queries. You can email your child's class teacher directly using the class email account – you can find this on class letters and on the year group page of the school website (linked from the home connect page).

Alternatively, you can email admin@wrpschool.org, or call us on 01395 263397.

Please be aware that teachers do not have the opportunity to check emails during the school day and therefore if you have an urgent message for staff within the school day, please ring our office so they can help you right away.

Have a lovely weekend and we hope to see you on Sunday at Phear Park!

Mrs. E Jones

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Wellbeing

Starting the Day in a Calm Way

- Many parents find the rush of the morning before school hectic and sometimes stressful.
- Our children may feel this stress too, particularly when having a busy morning routine again after a school break.
- Some children may feel anxious about attending school and not want to leave their parents/carers.
- For some children this is called **separation anxiety**.

How can we start the day in a calm way and reduce our child's anxiety?

It starts with the night before! Review your child's bedtime routine. Is it as calm as it could be? Predictable activities help - tea, talking time, bath, story, bed.

Plan ahead. Prepare as much as possible the night before eg. get uniform ready, packed lunch done, breakfast laid out for the morning - anything to reduce the busyness of the morning.

Create a visual timetable or checklist. Children function best with a predictable routine. Create a checklist together with your child about what needs to happen next - get dressed, have breakfast, brush teeth, toilet, get bag ready, put shoes on, out the door. Using pictures can help younger children.

Reward reluctant or anxious children when they are fully ready to leave the house. Keep rewards simple, cheap and short – a 5-minute cartoon or read a short story to them.

Be positive yourself. Talk about all the good things that your child enjoys at school, no matter how small. Keep conversation light, short and upbeat. If your child sees that you are ok with their anxiety, they may feel more confident. Look happy and smiley yourself!

Manage anxious talk. Children may want to talk about school worries in the morning, but doing this may only increase their anxiety. Encourage them to talk about their worries the day before. Create a *Talking/Worry Time* for your child each day *after* school. Choose a time when they are not hungry or tired, perhaps after tea. Keep the time short - 15 minutes at most. Use paper and pens if your child likes writing or drawing. Tell them this is a time to chat about anything and also to talk about any worries for the next day.

Distract, Distract, Distract! On your journey to school, help distract your child's worry thoughts. Play I-spy, use songs or rhymes, use your senses (tell me 5 things you see, hear, smell, touch), use exercise if you walk (do 5 hops, 4 jumps, 3 skips etc).

Use transition objects. Give something to your child to help them know you are thinking of them when they separate from you to go into school - something they can keep safely in their bag just to know it is there. A picture of you, a piece of soft material that you have both cuddled or a little note to say you love them. If your child has packed lunch you could put a different lovely note in their box each day.



Create a quick and positive good-bye ritual together with your child.

'One kiss, one hug, one fist pump', do a 'high-five' etc. Remind your child that you will see them very soon and if you have something to look forward to after school, remind them of that. Prolonging the good-bye will only serve to increase anxiety. Keep it short and sweet.

Stories can help. We recommend 'The Invisible String' by Patrice Karst. You can find this story read for free on YouTube. It looks at how a child is always connected with their parent/carer, even if they are not together.

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Sports and Achievements



Freddie in dolphins class achieved his yellow belt in Martial Arts at the end of last term.



On Christmas Eve Ebony and Arlo from Hedgehogs played the roles of Mary and Joseph in the crib service Nativity at Withycombe Church.

BBC

NEWS

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Girl, 8, determined to win BMX championships



Ella trains at Exeter Eagles BMX Club

Chloe Parkman
BBC News, South West

Did you see the BBC Spotlight piece on our very own Ella, and her BMX success? In case you missed it we have share the clip on our Home Connect page. They also printed an article featuring her interview.

Congratulations to Ella and thank you to her supportive parents who keep us informed, as we have been watching her compete for some time. It's very possible we'll be cheering her on at a future Olympics should she continue her passion for the sport – she's smashing it so far!

Ella you're a total star – well done!



Cooking Healthy Meals on a budget

Call 01395 446896 to book

6 Week Course only £18.00

We do not want finances to be a barrier so please talk to a member of the team when booking if this is more than you can afford.

Time: 10.30am-1.00pm
Days: Wednesdays 29 Jan - 12 March inc
Place: Seachange, Budleigh Salterton, EX9 6HF

Aimed at those finding things tough during the cost of living crisis who would like to develop their cooking skills

- Batch cooking
- Tips for reducing food costs
- Simple recipes to take home to feed the family or freeze for later!

Kindly sponsored by **SEACHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY CHARITY**

SEACHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY CHARITY
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WINTER SUPPORT 2024 / 2025

For the WEB community who may need a bit of extra help this winter

Thanks to funding from the National Grid Community Matters team we are able to help with the purchase of energy saving items this winter i.e.

BLANKETS / INSULATION / WARM CLOTHING / SLOW COOKERS

Due to limited funds we can only offer one item per household

For more information and / or an application form please contact Seachange on 01395 446896.

SEACHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY CHARITY
Registered Charity No. 1196373



Cost of Living Fair

Wednesday 15th January
Brington Church, Churchill Road, Exmouth EX8 4JJ
Doors open 2PM - 4PM

Come and meet our partner organisations. Together we will try and help you to navigate the cost of living this winter.

- Money Saving tips
- Cookery tasters using Food Bank ingredients

SEACHANGE YOUR COMMUNITY CHARITY
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Seachange, based in Budleigh Salterton offers lots of support to East Devon families, including Exmouth. They currently have a range of winter support, including blankets and warm clothing if you, or someone you know, needs a little extra help during this very cold spell.

There's also a Cost of Living Fair in Exmouth next Wednesday.

Please reach out, Tel: 01395 446896