



Explore, Learn and Grow Together

Brewery Road
Wooler
Northumberland
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Friday 10th December 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this letter finds you all well and recovering from the impact of the storm. The last 10 days or so have been very challenging for us all and I hope that my messages over the days that followed the storm managed to get to you all even if the order of the text messages was a little jumbled in transit! Communications were very difficult with no power, phones or internet connectivity. My colleagues across our schools were magnificent in managing not only their own situations at home but also dealing with the immediate issues presented by the storm with me here in school and from home getting work up and available over the two days that we were forced to close the schools last week. It was lovely to be able to welcome everyone back into school again on Wednesday and to work our way back to some kind of normality. The Storm has left us with damage to our schools and some restrictions on movement for everyone while the damage is made safe and then repaired. The main areas of damage are as follows:

- **Swimming pool roof. This means that there will be no swimming for the rest of the term.** We have made temporary repairs and once we have had the electrical connections checked to the damaged extractor fans we hope to be able to reopen the pool again for the start of next term (fingers crossed).
- **Toilet roof and skylight** (in both the gym corridor and one toilet block). This damage was also temporarily repaired on Monday/Tuesday last week to enable us to open on Wednesday.
- **Hall roof/Gym roof/Science Lab roof.** All of these rooves sustained damage to tiles and ridges. It is these areas that present us with issues moving around the side and rear of the buildings. We are able to use these rooms but there are loose tiles and ridges still on the rooves that present a risk of falling debris and need to be made safe. We have reached out to our local Fire Service who have confirmed that they will be able to help us to remove the debris from the high rooves which will be a HUGE help – many thanks to David Lightfoot and the crew at the Fire Station.
- **Forest School.** We are devastated by the damage to our Forest School – following an assessment on Thursday we sadly will have to fell the majority of the trees that are still standing. There are a small number of larger deciduous trees that we hope we will be able to keep but the rest will have to go. Miraculously our Forest Classroom survived the many, many trees that the storm blew down (Nick Walsh came to our rescue this week and made safe the two trees that could have fallen and hit the building – pheww!).

We have had the insurance assessor with us last week and we are now working to sort out contractors and get the damage repaired as quickly as possible.

Harvest Festivals

This seems like such a long time ago but our Harvest Celebration films have been available on our school websites for the last few weeks. The children do ask me when they are available and enjoy seeing their performances at home with family and friends. If you have not been able to view these films please take some time with you children to enjoy sharing their celebrations – website links below:

<http://www.wooler.northumberland.sch.uk/website> <http://www.glendale.northumberland.sch.uk/website>

Christmas 2021

Christmas Concert - Sadly we are again unable to welcome family and friends into school to share our celebrations for Christmas (please also see the letter from Audrey Kingham regarding COVID and schools). We have however been very busy working on songs and music to create a Christmas Concert across our schools to share with you all. We have been filming the classes and year groups this week to enable us to make a film to share before the end of term next Friday. This will be uploaded (again in several parts) to our school websites later next week. The children have all been brilliant and it was a joy to hear and to see them singing and playing together over the last few weeks and for our recordings this week.

Visiting Panto – We had arranged a visiting panto for the children across the schools for today. This event has had to be moved to Monday next week as the theatre company suffered a car accident on Thursday (they are all fine but their van was not so lucky!). They will be performing three shows on Monday afternoon across the first school and for Key Stage 2 at the middle school to observe group distancing for COVID procedures at school. We are really looking forward to this – getting a to enjoy a live show will be a real treat.

Christmas Lunch & Christmas Jumper Day – These events will both take place on Wednesday next week (15th December). Lunch letters have already been sent home and returned ready for Christmas lunch day and everyone is invited to dust off their best Christmas jumper in support of Save the Children. The suggested donation is £2 but please give what you can to this very worthwhile charity. Further information about Christmas Jumper Day 2021 can be found on the Save the Children website via the link below:

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/christmas-jumper-day>

Christmas treats – next week each class and form group will have a special Christmas Treat. These are being organised by teachers in each class, children do not need to bring in anything special unless instructed to do so by their teachers. Wooler First School classes will have their treats across the week in each class and Glendale will be on Thursday afternoon in year groups.

Christmas Cards – Children are welcome to bring in Christmas cards this year. Teachers are managing this within each class following COVID secure procedures. We are not having a central post box this year for cards.

Extra Bank Holiday in 2022/ Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022

The above is to take place on Friday 3rd June 2022; this has resulted in the late May Bank Holiday being moved from the Friday(3rd) to Thursday 2nd June resulting in two Bank Holidays falling in that week, which for our schools is in half-term. We have been waiting for confirmation from the DFE to allow schools to change their academic year from 195 days (190 being taught) to 194 (with 189 being taught). This has now been agreed and our Berwick partnership of schools have decided together on the best day for our schools to close, causing the least disruption.

Please note school will therefore be closed on Friday 18th February 2022.

KS2 testing over Christmas, New Year and for the start of term in January 2022

All staff and our Key Stage 3 pupils (Year 7 & Year 8) are being asked to continue home COVID testing, using the LFD test devices provided from school, over the Christmas & New Year break. If the LFD test is positive it needs to be followed by a PCR test and isolation rules followed as instructed by NHS Test & Trace. I do not need to be informed of the test results during the break from school but we will need to know if any children return a positive PCR test during the break as we get back to school on Wednesday 5th January. Messages can be left on the school answer machine at any time over the Christmas & New Year period or an email can be sent to either school admin address:

woolerfirst@woolerandglendale.co.uk

glendalemiddle@woolerandglendale.co.uk

Testing will also take place at the start of the term in January – further information will follow for our Year 7 and Year 8 pupils.

And finally...

We are currently putting together our traditional end of term newsletters for both schools. These will be heading home electronically by the end of term next Friday. I also have a plea for parents and wider family members...we need new governors to join the governing body of the schools. Being a school governor is a very special role to support and challenge the work of the schools. I will be writing again to invite nominations to the governing body in the New Year – if you would like to know more about the role of a school governor, including the time commitments involved please let me know via the school office. Your schools need you!

M.Deane-Hall
Executive Headteacher