

Dear Parent / Carer,

What brilliant news from Friends of Firside committee! They have managed to complete the fundraising for the *TRIM TRAIL* in record time! This is a truly fantastic achievement and we are all, not least the children, so grateful to everyone for the fantastic support.

We are now coming up to the final term of the school year. The summer term is always a great time in school when classes can get outside for lessons more than at any other time of the year! We are all excited about the practical learning opportunities we will have from starting an Orchard and Veg Plot! We have just planted the mini-orchard near the Meadow Way gate with eight local apple varieties and a Robin pear. The second stage is the Veg Garden. With some fantastic help from Mr Duffin and Mr Duffield (from Firside Athletic) we have removed the turves and now Mr Oakey is digging the ground over in preparation. Each year group will be planting up the plots over the coming weeks and we are all looking forward to cooking and eating the results!



With summer approaching we have received some requests for authorisation of holidays in term time, from this it seems there is still some confusion about whether or not this is OK. We have previously explained that the new regulations mean that since September schools have not been able to authorise holidays in term-time. Overleaf we have re-published the information about attendance including when we can (and when we can't) authorise absences. We hope this helps.

Quiz Club

On 17th March a group of children from across the school went to Fakenham to take part in an inter-school quiz. It may not have been University Challenge but it was just as challenging! Our two teams did really well and were leading until the half-way stage! Although the second half didn't go quite so well, we still finished a creditable fourth and fifth against some exceptionally knowledgeable opposition. Congratulations to them all.

Sports round-up

This has been a fabulous term for sport at Firside! The *Norfolk School Winter Games* took place across a range of venues and included 9 pupils running in the county *cross country finals* with 4 top 10 placings. 9 different pupils participated in the 'Playground to Podium' event and on the same day 3 pupils swam in the *County Swimming Gala* and our year 6 *tag-rugby* team coming 3rd in the county finals. We are so proud of all these pupils for not only qualifying in their respective sports, but for achieving so highly at all stages.

The Year 6 girls and boys *football* teams have won their respective inter-school leagues with the boys topping the schools' 'Premier League'! The boys and girls teams combined to win the prestigious Community Sports Foundation Schools Cup and will represent Norwich City Football Club at the Premier League tournament at the Etihad stadium in Manchester in May. The boys' team have the opportunity to complete a League and Cup 'double' when they play in the U-11 cup final tomorrow against Hethersett.

It was wonderful to see the whole school running together last Friday. It was a good opportunity to contribute to personal Golden Mile targets as well as to raise funds for the *Sport Relief* charity.

You are amazing! To date everyone has raised £1500!



Book Week 2014



Diary

April	Wed 23 rd Mon 28 th	First day of summer term Hi-5 Netball tournament	□
May	Mon 5 th Mon 12 th Mon 26 th	May Bank Holiday Year 6 Tests Week Half-term week	Meadow Way Holiday Club The Holiday Club at Meadow Way Chapel is running on April 8 th , 9 th and 10 th , from 10:00 until 12 noon. For more information please contact Shelley. mob: 07989783336 email: shelleylogan@live.co.uk
June	Mon 2 nd Wed 4 th Thurs 26 th Mon 30 th	Year 6 residential to Kingswood Year 5 residential to Holt Hall School closed – staff training Learning Festival week	
July	Mon 7 th Wed 9 th Fri 11 th Mon 14 th , Tues 15 th Wed 23 rd	School Sports (carousel) Summer Productions (afternoon and evening) School Sports (field and track games) Prom on the pitch (evening) Hellesdon High transition day – Year 6 pupils to Hellesdon High Last day of term	

Attendance and legal intervention

You will be aware that the law requires all parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. Research shows that children often do not catch up on work missed, and this is highly likely to have serious consequences for their learning and progress. The government is very clear that all schools must aim to have the highest possible attendance possible for all of their pupils in order for them to achieve their potential.

In November 2013, the Local Authority introduced a system where any pupil who has an attendance of 85% or less with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a six week period or 10 consecutive sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence will meet the criteria for legal intervention which could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Any pupil, at any Hellesdon School, who meets either criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 fine per parent/carer per child which has to be paid in a single payment and within 21 days. If unpaid a further invoice for £60 fine per parent/carer per child is issued. Both individual invoices would then have to be paid (making a total of £120) within 28 days. Failure to pay within these timescales usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

What is an "unauthorised" absence? An Unauthorised Absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for, or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

What is an "Authorised" Absence? Regulations make it clear that schools can only authorise a leave of absence for:

- Medical appointments
- Religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family funeral).

Neither should schools authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

What about family holidays in term-time? The regulations make it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays do not constitute exceptional circumstances.

What happens if we still go on holiday anyway? If you still go on holiday, the school has to refer the case to the Local Authority for action to be considered. You could be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice.