



Thornhill Primary School
Thornhill Gardens
Shildon
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DL4 1ES

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1st September 2023

Dear Families,

We are almost ready to welcome the children back to school for the Autumn term and we are very excited to see their faces on Thursday morning! During the holiday, we have had new carpets fitted in the corridors and cloakrooms, as well as a new paving area for Nursery parents/carers at the front of school.

We cannot wait to meet our new Reception class and we wish the best of luck to our Y6 leavers from last year as they embark on their next step to secondary school.

If you have any queries once we start back at school you can contact the school office, speak to myself at the entrance door each morning or email your child's class teacher. We are always happy to help.

Here are some reminders for the new term.

School Day

- The school day will be the same for all pupils this academic year 8.45am-3.15pm.
- Gates on a morning will be open as usual from 8.30am, but pupils must be supervised as there is no member of staff until 8.45am. Gates will open from 3pm on a night. Children are not allowed on the low level / sandpit area before or after school and cannot play with school equipment during these times.
- Entrance for each year group as follows:
Y6 – top door / back of Y6
Y5/Y4/Y3 – back door / junior corridor
Y2/Y1 – back door / through hall and infant corridor
Reception – top gate into EYFS area – pupils will be met at the gate by a member of staff.
Reception parents/carers may wait at the side of Y6, further up the yard.
- Exit for each year group as follows:
Reception – top gate to meet parents/carers
All other year groups – back door to meet parents/carers on the yard. Parents/carers to wait on surface. Parents/carers must pick up from the yard and not wave from the fence. This is to ensure the safety of our pupils with traffic and congestion.

A reminder that only adults on the pick-up list can pick up children. To add additional adults we must have this in writing via email. Only Y6 can walk home from school, but need a letter

to authorise this (however Y6 cannot walk home on their own from an after school club or wrap around care).

Arbor

- We have a new system for payments and booking after school clubs. Information has been sent out about log ins etc. The system means all your child's information is now in one place, which hopefully will make life easier. As this is a new system, we would expect some teething problems to start so we ask for your patience. Further parent information will be sent out next week.

School Dinners

- Details are on our school website - <https://www.thornhill.durham.sch.uk/parents/school-lunches/>
- All pupils from Reception to Year 2 are eligible for universal free meals and all our pupils in those year groups have a school dinner.
- School dinners need to be paid from Year 3 onwards unless your child receives Free School Meals. Can we please ask that school dinners are paid immediately and kept up to date on Arbor. If balances are not paid, then we may need to ask you to provide a packed lunch for your child. Nursery children also pay for school dinners and are not eligible for FSM. .
- If you think your child may be eligible for FSM, please contact the office and we can check this for you. The form is also available on the website.
- Pupils from Year 3 – Year 6 can have a packed lunch. Please ensure the contents adhere to our Packed Lunch guidance. We are a NUT FREE school.
- CAN WE ASK THAT SCHOOL DINNER DEBTS FROM LAST YEAR ARE PAID BEFORE THURSDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER. There will be staff in next week if you need to speak to the office.

Wrap Around Care

- Breakfast club starts at 8am or 8.30am.
- Breakfast club is free for pupils eligible for Free School Meals from 8.30am.
- After school care is until either 4.30pm or 5.30pm – children cannot be picked up at any other times.
- This can be booked via Arbor. Again this service needs to be paid for in advance and outstanding balances may result in the school not being able to provide the service.
- CAN WE ASK THAT ALL WRAP AROUND CARE DEBTS FROM LAST YEAR ARE PAID BEFORE THURSDAY 7TH SEPTEMBER. There will be staff in next week if you need to speak to the office.

Uniform

- Details are in our uniform policy on the website - <https://www.thornhill.durham.sch.uk/parents/our-school-uniform/>
- Shoes /trainers must be plain and dark coloured.
- A reminder that earrings / jewellery are not permitted to be worn for school. If your child has had their ears pierced over the holidays, they should be able to now take them out.
- Hairstyles should be as simple as possible.
- Pupils must not come to school with their hair dyed, shaved, patterned or sculptured or with any styling products applied. Hair styles such as 'rat's tails' and 'Mohicans' are prohibited.
- Hair should be neat (e.g. not over the face / eyes) and presentable and long hair should be tied back for Health & Safety reasons.

- Hair bands and bobbles should be plain red or black.
- A simple watch which cannot receive messages or connect to the internet can be worn. Please do not allow children to wear expensive items or watches which may distract them.
- Pupils do not require a school bag or PE kit – these are provided.

Attendance

- Our attendance leaflet is available on the website - <https://www.thornhill.durham.sch.uk/parents/attendance/>
- The National Expectation for attendance is 96% and the school monitors attendance closely in order to support good attendance. This year, we are working really hard to try and achieve this target. Evidence shows children who attend school regularly benefit socially, emotionally and academically.
- For absences, contact must be made before 9.15am otherwise this is recorded as unauthorised.
- Holidays are also recorded as unauthorised as DCC guidance advises no holidays can be authorised during school term time. A referral to the Local Authority will be made for unauthorised absences and this year (following DCC guidance) this will include holidays longer than 5 days, which will result in a fixed penalty notice. For any leave of absence, a form must be filled out and submitted to the school at least 2 weeks prior – this form is available on the website.

After school clubs

- This year we will continue to offer free after school clubs. Details will be sent out next week and places can be booked via Arbor or the school office. We have a great selection of clubs including Ultimate Frisbee, Cookery and Quiz Club!

Boosters

- We will also be offering after school boosters for pupils who would benefit from some extra tuition. We find these sessions are invaluable in helping with your child's education as well as promoting their confidence in lessons. They are informal and fun for all involved. Letters will be sent out if your child is selected to start w/c 11th Sep.

Parking

- Just a reminder about safe parking and driving outside of school. This is such a busy time of the day and it is important we all put the safety of children first. Can I remind parents/carers to not park on the yellow zig zag lines outside of school, drive slowly and also to be respectful to our neighbours. The Park & Stride facility is available and you may park in Elm Road Club or Nellie's Nursery carpark and walk the rest of the way.

Smoking / Vaping

- Parents/carers are reminded not to smoke or vape outside the school. We had a number of incidents last year with children picking up cigarette ends and disused vapes, which I am sure you will agree is not very nice.

Dogs

- Please can we ask dogs are not tied up to railings or that you wait directly outside the gates with dogs. We have children who are nervous of dogs and it can affect the start and end to their day. Please also make sure dog dirt is picked up.

Educational Visits

- This year, we are trying to make sure we offer as many of our educational visits at no cost to our families. This is the 3rd year, we have strived to ensure visits are free or minimal amounts. Letters regarding visits / events will be sent out separately. In instances where payment is required, such as the Y6 residential visit, we aim to give parents/carers the opportunity to pay in instalments over the year. We have some brilliant visits and activities planned as always!

Calendar

- The school aims to try and give parents/carers as much notice about school events and term time dates. This way, time can be requested from work for events at school and holidays can be booked well in advance during school holidays. A full year of dates will be sent out in September once we have all events confirmed.
- Swimming starts for Year 3, 4, 5 w/c 11th September and will be every Wednesday. Further details will be sent out next week.
- Autumn term events and academic term time dates for 2023-2024 are below:

Date	Event
Thursday 9 th September 2023	Back to school Reception will do either Thursday or Friday and start full time next week.
Tuesday 12 th September	Year 6 Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Monday 18 th September 9.15-10	Y6 Meet the Teacher & Parent/ child open morning inc Book Fair
Tuesday 19 th September 9.15-10	Y5 Meet the Teacher & Parent/ child open morning inc Book Fair
Tuesday 19 th September	Year 1 Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Wednesday 20 th September 9.15-10	Y4 Meet the Teacher & Parent/ child open morning inc Book Fair
Thursday 21 st September 9.15-10	Y3 Meet the Teacher & Parent/ child open morning inc Book Fair
Friday 22 nd September 9.15-10	Y1 Meet the Teacher & Parent/ child open morning inc Book Fair
Monday 25 th September 9.15-10	Y2 Meet the Teacher & Parent/ child open morning inc Book Fair
Tuesday 26 th September 9.15-10	YR Phonics meeting and Parent/child open morning inc Book Fair
Tuesday 26 th September	Year 2 Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Tuesday 26 th September 3-4pm	Book Fair in hall
Wednesday 27 th September	Nursery - Stay and Play session – Times to be confirmed
Tuesday 3 rd October	Year3 Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Friday 6 th October – 9.15-10	Y6 assembly
Tuesday 10 th Oct	Year 4 Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Friday 13 th October – 9.15-10	Y5 assembly

Tuesday 17 th October	Year 5 Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Friday 20 th October 9.15-10	Y3 assembly
Monday 23 rd October & Wednesday 25 th October	Parent's Evening Online
Tuesday 24 th Oct	Year R Forest School – Forest school clothes to be worn for school and change of footwear
Tuesday 24 th Oct 6-7.30pm	Year R & KS1 Halloween Disco
Wednesday 25 th Oct 2-3pm	Piece of Mind coffee afternoon – informal advice and information
Thursday 26 th Oct 6-7.30pm	KS2 Halloween Disco
Break up – Friday 27th October Half term – Return Monday 6th November	
w/c 13 th November	All week – Anti-Bullying week Friday – Children In Need
Tuesday 14 th November	Photos
Friday 17 th November 9.15-10	Year 4 assembly
Thursday 23 rd November	Flu immunisations
Friday 24 th November – 9.15-10	Y2 assembly
Friday 1 st December – 9.15-10	Y1 assembly
Tuesday 12 th & Thursday 14 th Dec 2-3pm	Year 1-6 Christmas Songs Concert
Friday 15 th December – Date and time TBC with St John's Church	Reception Nativity with Y6
Tuesday 10 th December	Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day
Break up for Christmas– Tuesday 19th December – Return Wednesday 3rd January 2024	
Break up for February Half term Friday 16th February – Return Monday 26th February 2024	
Break up for Easter– Friday 29th March – Return Monday 15th April 2024	
Year 6 Easter School	3 rd -5 th April 8 th -10 th April
May Bank Holiday – Monday 6th May 2024	
Year 6 KS2 SATS – children must attend school	w/c 13 th May 2024
Year 6 Residential	22 nd -24 th May 2024
Break up for May Half term - Friday 24th May – Return Monday 3rd June 2024	
Break up for Summer– Friday 19th July – Return Wednesday 4th September 2024	

I know that there is a lot of information, but thought it would be useful to be in one place at the beginning of the term. You can also find all information on our website - <https://www.thornhill.durham.sch.uk/>

Also don't forgot to look at our Facebook page as we add pictures and activities of what the children are doing in school.

I look forward to a busy, happy year at Thornhill and can't wait to see what our pupils achieve this year – our 'Promise for the Future'!

Children return to school on Thursday 7th September and look forward to seeing everyone.

Kind Regards,
Miss Overfield – Head teacher