

ESKDALE NEWSLETTER



Spring Half Term Newsletter

Dear Parent/Carer,

After the busy run-up to Christmas and then the two-week festive break, I often think that the first half of the spring term is a challenging term to return to (both for the children and the adults!) It typically tends to be a quieter time at school (certainly by Eskdale standards); however, that has given us plenty of time to start the new year and the new term in the best possible way!

Staffing Update

For those who may not be aware, Mrs Hunter is expecting her second child (a baby girl!) and leaves Eskdale at the end of this half term to begin her maternity leave. I'm sure you will join us in wishing her all the best as she begins another exciting chapter in her life. As a result of Mrs Hunter's departure, Mr Lloyd (currently Thursday and Friday in 4B) will step in to teach 3GH on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday for the remainder of the school year. I know he is looking forward to getting to know the children in Y3. Eskdale welcome two midday supervisors who will be joining our team after the half term break. Miss Mcginlay will join us from Alderman Pounder Infant and Miss Cunningham who is new to the role. I know both are looking forward to starting with us to support your children during lunchtimes. In other, less positive news, we are still struggling with finding a replacement for Miss Linley, our Music teacher who left Eskdale at Christmas. I can assure you that we are doing all we can to find a suitable replacement (although my hands are tied somewhat while relying on PPA Ltd to provide us with a teacher). We hope to have this situation resolved next half term and I will keep parents/carers informed on any developments. Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding.

Childrens Mental Health Week

Each year, we team up with children's mental health charity Place2Be to support children's mental health week. The theme this year was 'This is My Place' focusing on the importance of belonging as a way of keeping mentally healthy. We looked at the places that we feel we belong. including school, home and with friends. In addition to this, we looked at other ways of keeping mentally healthy such as diet, sleep and exercise.

Mrs Armstrong-Lomas also spoke to the children about Take Care Club as just one of the support mechanisms we have in school to support pupil mental health. Back in class, pupils demonstrated their creative side, producing a personal map exploring their sense of belonging, which included places, groups or activities where they feel they belong.



Football.

Our boys football team started their football league fixtures this half term. In the only league game able to played (2 cancelled), through freezing temperatures and a very muddy pitch, the boys finally overcame John Clifford Primary, scoring the winning goal in the last 3 minutes, winning 5-4. Well done to all those boys who have represented school who have shown resilience and determination (especially in challenging weather conditions!). Many thanks Mr Holmes for helping out with refereeing. More games for both girls and boys next half term!

Rugby Taster Sessions

It was great to welcome Michael 'Pickle' Green from Nottingham Rugby Club back to Eskdale for two visits this half term to deliver rugby taster sessions for pupils across school. Despite the challenging weather conditions, the children had a fabulous time with many children showing a developing aptitude for the sport. This will hopefully serve them well when they play competitive games later this year. Well done to all those pupils who took part and many thanks to Mr Holmes for organising this enriching opportunity.



Behavior Update

Thank you for the positive and supportive response to the tweaks that we made to our behaviour management system at the start of this term. So far, the trial seems to have gone well and we will continue to implement those changes for the remainder of the school year. The next phase is to refresh our approach to reward which will be part of the focus on our Inset day at the start of next half term. Thank you in advance for your continued support.

Chinese New Year

It was great to be able to celebrate Chinese New Year once again at Eskdale this term. Our fantastic meals provider, Coomb0,s delivered a great themed meal complete with fortune scratch cards and chop-sticks (with some children having more success than others using these – forks were provided in emergencies!)

In assembly, the children found out more about Chinese New Year traditions and were able to make meaningful comparisons to known festivals in other cultures. The highlight, however, was when midday supervisors (and parents) Mrs Kwok and Mrs Chow shared with pupils their experiences of Chinese New Year, sharing more amazing facts and some wonderful artefacts that exemplified all that is special about this global festival.



School Website - New Page

Our website gets frequent updates which ensure that we remain compliant with DfE expectations as well as communicating what we believe to be the important information that parents/carers need to know. Parents/carers may have noticed a new dedicated safeguarding page in the 'Key Information' tab. Safeguarding is at the heart of all that we do at Eskdale as keeping pupils safe is our number one priority. The page details our approach to safeguarding, what to do if you are concerned about the safety of a child and a number of useful links.

Y4 Viking Workshop

Year 4 pupils visited Nottingham University earlier this term to take part in Viking workshops to enrich their understanding of this period in history. They got to take part in four different activities aimed at helping them to explore Viking life in Britain. Pupils were able to dig for Viking artefacts and guess what they might have been used for. They had a go at translating Viking Runes and even wrote their own messages. They learnt about Viking place names and even got to hold different Viking weapons and shields. I hear the children had a fantastic time. Many thanks to the Y4 team for organising this enriching opportunity and a huge thank you to all those volunteers who were able to accompany the children.



Writing Event at Trent College

Earlier this half term, five of our Year 6 pupils attended a writing event at Trent College with Mr Dransfield, where much-loved children's author Alex Foulkes led an engaging workshop on spooky storytelling. During the morning, the pupils explored how to create gothic settings, build atmosphere and describe mysterious characters using powerful language. In the afternoon, they used these ideas to begin writing their own spooky tales, producing some wonderfully imaginative work. The children were captivated by Alex's expertise and imagination. They represented the school brilliantly and returned feeling inspired and excited to continue their writing. Well done to all those children who took part and many thanks to Mr Dransfield for organising this enriching opportunity.

'A sensational day of horror writing.' – Caleb

'Absolutely wonderful in every way.' – Lily

'A really fun and enjoyable writing day.' – Oneth

'It was a day I'll never forget.' – Rory

'An exceptional and creative day of writing.' – Zoe

A Decade of STARS

It is astonishing to think that 10 years has passed since the start of our before and after school club, S.T.A.R.S. It was our former school business manager, Mrs Turner, that started the ball rolling all those years ago and it has continued to go from strength to strength. A huge part of S.T.A.R.S. success has been the committed and caring staff who support the children and this is exemplified by Mrs Thorpe and Mrs Tunney who have been at the helm of S.T.A.R.S. since the beginning. Both have always ensured that the provision has remained true to our school values, providing a range of opportunities for the children, whilst delivering an excellent level of care. Thank you to all those parents who continue to make S.T.A.R.S. a sustainable success and to all those children over the last 10 years who have made it such a special place. Here's to the next 10 years!



Social Media

Thank you to all those who contributed to the short social media survey earlier this term. The outcome was unanimous with 91% of the 174 responses confirming that they do not visit the school's 'X'/Twitter page. This, twinned with the steady stream of negative press that the platform seems to attract, has confirmed that we will be ending our use of the platform before the end of the spring term. I am currently in conversation with Mrs Owen from our P.T.F.A about the possibility of merging the P.T.F.A Facebook page with a dedicated school page as this was the preferred social media site from the survey. I will keep parents informed as to any further developments.

Safer Internet Day

We spent a whole week speaking to the children about the importance of internet safety earlier this half term. In assembly, we explored the theme of internet Safety Day 'Smart Tech, Safe Choices – Exploring the Safe and Responsible Use of AI' with the children. We looked at how we use the internet, some of the risks involved and how our SMART rules can be used to ensure that we stay safe in all our online activity. We also joined the BBC's safer internet day live lesson.

Being safe online is a huge part of your child's personal development and a notable aspect of our 'Think like a Computational Thinker' curriculum. If you are concerned about your son or daughter's online activity, then please contact school. Look out for our online safety monthly newsletter which tackles all things associated with online safety and more information about staying safe online can be found on our school website:

<https://www.eskdale.notts.sch.uk/page/?title=Online+Safety+Newsletter&pid=37>



Y4 Synagogue

Year 4 had a visit from Nottingham Liberal Synagogue who visited Eskdale to enrich the children's R.E unit of work about Judaism. He explained some of the features of a synagogue and what you would expect to see inside. He talked through Passover and what food is included on the Seder plate and even showed them his own Seder plate. He finished by explaining why remaining Kosher is important in the Jewish faith and how this can be achieved. The children enjoyed asking him questions about how he followed the rules of Judaism. Many thanks to the Y4 team for arranging this enriching experience for the children.

Rockley Music Assembly

Eskdale has a long-standing relationship with Rockley Music, not only through drumming tuition for pupils but also as the provider for our Drumba equipment, which forms part of our P.E provision. It was great to welcome founder of Rockley Music,, Adam Rockley, back to Eskdale to deliver a fantastic mini-concert performance in assembly for pupils. Thank you, Adam!



Reminders!

Children return to school on **Tuesday 24th February.**

Water bottles-juice

A reminder that only water is permitted in school to drink and children should have a water bottle in school that can be refilled and that can be washed with frequency at home. Despite some reminders going out to specific year groups, it is still being reported to me that juice is still appearing in some classrooms. Below are just some of the reasons why we insist that only water in consumed in the classroom:

Sugar Content – Many fruit juices contain high levels of sugar, which can contribute to obesity, tooth decay, and energy spikes followed by 'crashes', affecting concentration and behaviour.

Encouraging Water Consumption – water is the healthiest hydration option, helping to establish good habits and improve focus throughout the day.

Spillage & Mess – Juice can be sticky and difficult to clean if spilled, leading to messes in classrooms.

Staining Issues – Many juices can stain clothes, books, and school equipment.

Allergy & Dietary Restrictions – Some pupils may have allergies to certain fruits or ingredients in juices, increasing the risk of accidental exposure. Thank you in advance for your support.

Have a happy and safe break.

Yours sincerely,
R Scruton
Head teacher