

WEEK 39 - Friday 23 July 2021

You can't run a school without _____

And the magic of Penshurst Primary School is that you could name anyone in that sentence and it would be true. This year, more than ever before, we have seen how vital every single person is when it comes to making a school work and every single one of them deserves huge thanks for their work.

Thanks to our cleaners who have kept us safe, working extra hours and doubly hard to ensure that rooms and spaces are sanitised, cleaning stations replenished and every single surface wiped to within an inch of its life!

Thanks to our caretakers for also keeping us safe, moving tables, chairs, barriers, and heaven and earth to repurpose our spaces into safe bubbles. Nothing is ever too much trouble. They look after us, so we can focus on looking after the children.

Thanks to our teachers for putting themselves on the front line. When many workers do their jobs behind perspex screens, our teachers have continued to work in classrooms with thirty plus children. And when pupils have been sent home, they've reinvented themselves into online teachers or, even more incredibly, taught online and face to face at the same time which is even more difficult than it sounds.

Thanks to our pastoral team who have dealt with every possible human emotion in the past sixteen months, from pupils, parents and colleagues. I am in awe of the way in which they do this work day in and day out, never letting anything or anybody affect their professional commitment to support the wellbeing of children. They are heroes, in my book.

Thanks to Claire Fewster and the back office staff who have made the operation work - communicating with parents, handling the Covid information in and out of school, dealing with Covid cases, real or imagined, producing packs of work at no notice for children to do at home. Whatever has been thrown at them, and everything has, they have risen to the challenge and just done it.

Thanks to our wider support staff, our teaching assistants and our safeguarding team who have played their part in supporting the pupils in lessons, working online and when they've been most vulnerable, anxious or confused.

Thanks also to the middle leaders. We start each year with a planned curriculum and their job is to make sure that it is taught well. But this year, that plan has had to change almost each half term as we have adjusted to the demands of teaching online and so on.

Thanks to our catering team for turning their operation upside down to provide a meal service despite reduced staff, stock shortages and trying to operate social distancing in a confined kitchen. And to our lunchtime supervisors for keeping order and helping children to enjoy a calm and pleasant lunch.

And finally, just because this is most personal to me, thank you to Sarah Greenley, our Operations Manager, to Jo Spencer, your Head of School and to Michelle Preston and Sally Hornby, your Senior Leadership Team. The work that they have done, often deep into the

night and over weekends, to keep the school open and as safe as it can be, to keep the staff going, is well, I have run out of superlatives. I am incredibly proud of them.

Throughout this pandemic, there have been lots of heroes. The NHS staff, obviously, but many others in transport, logistics and public servants everywhere; but no group has worked harder, more flexibly and more importantly than those in schools. I feel privileged to lead your school and proud of the incredible human beings that I work with every day.

Finally, thank you to you and your families. I know that this year has presented significant challenges for every household in the country and I am acutely aware of the difficulties presented by home schooling and sudden self-isolation. Despite this, your continuing support has kept us going and has ensured that we can all focus on the thing we have in common; an unbending commitment to ensuring that our young people develop into the people we wish them to be.

Thank you. And have a lovely summer.

Mr V Groak

Headteacher

WEEK 38 - Friday 16 July 2021

Well we have made it to the end of term...nearly! During transition week, can you please follow all of the procedures that are currently in place, including the one way systems and staggered entry and exit. This should help us direct you to new classrooms and ensure we have the time to help anyone who needs us.

On Tuesday 7 September, the School Streets scheme will begin at the Winthorpe side of school. Winthorpe and Seagran roads will be shut to the public between 8.15 - 9.15am and 2.45 - 3.45pm unless they have a permit (staff and residents). We are still looking for volunteers to maybe do an hour a week as a marshal, so it is not always school staff. Please contact the office if you can help. We can reciprocate by having your child in the breakfast club while you fulfil your duties!

This week we have had the press in school on two occasions, one to celebrate our platinum modeshift award and secondly to present us with our framed murals from the Humber Bridge competition in which we won both KS1 and 2 categories. Go Penshurst - look out for the articles in local newspapers.

The 'Meet the teacher' events next week will all be on Zone 4 (next to Evie's garden) and will be an opportunity to meet your child's teacher if you have not already met. Mrs Adams and Mrs Smith will also be there to answer any general questions. We will be putting out socially distanced seating for different classes to make this as safe as possible. Remember school closes promptly at 1.30pm on Friday 23 July.

Just for your information, we have pencilled in a Sports Day for the first Friday back in school (COVID conditions permitting) as a big welcome back to school. Reception will have theirs on the following Friday to allow them to have a week in school. May this be the first of many events next year

As you know, Penshurst is passionate about reading as it is the door to the world in our eyes. Please take some time to do some reading this summer as it will really benefit the children to keep their reading fluency level high, enabling them to access the work in September with confidence. I recently found my eldest child curled up with 'Pride and Prejudice' in one hand and 'The Kite Runner' in the other. I asked her why she was reading such different novels (a contemporary and a classic) and she answered, "At Penshurst, you always said that reading would guarantee my future and that the best education you could give yourself was to read all different kinds of books whenever possible - I'm just doing what you said I should do but I have to read two at once as I have a busy life, mum!" I could not be more proud of the Penshurst staff for instilling this love of reading in my child and this is one of our main focuses for next year for all children who attend Penshurst. So in true Strictly style....
Keeeeeeeep Reading!

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 37 - Friday 9 July 2021

Two weeks left...where has the time gone? It has been an interesting week as we absorb the government guidance and plan the way forward. It is looking really positive for a return to normality in the Autumn term with far less disruption and the demise of 'bubbles'. For the next two weeks - up until the Summer - we will not be changing any procedures in school. We will, however, now be holding transition week in the final week of term so the children can meet and get used to their new teacher and year group. We believe this to be the safest option for all concerned and we want to ensure that the children still get this valuable experience after missing so much over the year. Therefore your child's last day with their current teacher will be Friday 16 July and we will have lots of fun that day in class including a class party. Food and drink will be provided.

Next week, you will receive a letter confirming your new teacher and classroom in preparation for Monday 19 July where the children will 'graduate' to their new year group for that final week. Please remember that Year 5 will go into three classes in Year 6 and Year 2 will split into two classes in Year 3. Please arrive via your normal entrance. Pupils going into Year 3 arriving via Penshurst Avenue need to be dropped off on the KS2 playground.

Year 6 will have a special week where we will mix as a year group. They will be taught by Mr Turnbull, Mr Hutchinson and some guest visitors! We will be doing some transition to high school activities, taking part in a football tournament, learning some new Science and DT skills, writing a guide to being a Penshurst pupil and generally having a brilliant last week.

As the weather has completely washed us out this week, and it doesn't look to improve, we have decided to hold a whole school Sports Day on the first Friday of the new term - Friday 10 September - for Years 1-6 (hopefully the weather will be kind!) so please put the date in your diary. Reception will be on the second Friday of term - Friday 17 September - to allow them time to settle into school. This will be a really good way to start the new academic year with all restrictions lifted, giving parents the opportunity to attend. Because most sessions have had to move inside this week, photo opportunities have been limited, I'm afraid.

A reminder that reports will be sent out electronically via SIMS Parent so please activate your account if you have not done so yet. Also, from next week we'll be making the Breakfast Club available to pay on ParentPay as well as in cash. Please note however that

from September payment can only be made via ParentPay or with cash using PayPoint at local stores, we will not take cash in school as payment for Breakfast Club.

I have received two letters of complaint from residents of Penshurst Mews (the new buildings/flats next to school). They have complained that their parking spaces are often blocked by parents parking there whilst dropping off and picking up children from school. Please can I ask again that you are mindful of this and do not park in private property.

Finally, can I remind you that we are looking for volunteers to help with the School Streets initiative in September. It is an hour at the beginning or end of the school day and any offers would be appreciated.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 36 - Friday 2 July 2021

Although Y6 have completed their SATs, the rest of the school have their assessments to complete next week in order that we can write reports and use these to inform yourselves and next year's teachers what the children still need to work on. Reports will be sent via SIMS Parent in the last week of term but please inform us of any issues as this is the first time we have sent reports digitally (in line with the high school) and there may be technical issues as there often is with any new system. We will be trying to add further information about your child through the SIMS Parent channel in future so watch this space.

As I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, we will also be holding a Sports Week next week where the children can enjoy their own year group sports day and generally enjoy a week of healthy exercise and activities. All of the primaries in our Trust are celebrating this event in the same way with no visitors on site to ensure the safety of all, especially with the rising infections in the area. We have sent a Google Form out to you to register interest in your child being photographed during these events and photos posted on Google Classroom for you to access however if we do not receive enough permissions we will be unable to do this as we do not want to segregate pupils during this fun event. We hope next year to be able to hold all of our school events (Summer Fair, P Factor, End of Year show clubs) in a more normal fashion - here's hoping! We actually think we might live really on the edge and hold a proper Sports Day in September if we can, to make up for last year.

Having just secured the Healthy School Award, I would like to ensure that standards remain high at Penshurst. We work extremely hard to ensure we educate the children via our curriculum about issues such as mental health, healthy eating, keeping children safe online, healthy relationships and teaching them about keeping safe in the community. Only a very small part of the Healthy Schools Award is actually based on food! However, we all know that children work and perform better when they have a healthy diet. We do not allow sweets and fizzy drinks in packed lunches and that we only allow water in water bottles. We also provide fresh fruit every day for the children and encourage them to take advantage of this. Although I have no problem at all with children bringing in treats for their birthday, we will send the treat home for parents to decide whether they wish their child to have the treat.

Over the Summer we will be planning for September and will be communicating our plans with you over the Summer holidays. It remains to be seen whether we return to 'normal' or COVID procedures will still be in place but as soon as we receive guidance on this we will let you know. I know many of you have heard that quite a few primary schools have year groups isolating (and in some cases whole schools) and have communicated your concerns regarding this. All I can say is that we are following all of our COVID procedures that have been in place all year and so are minimising the risks as much as we can. Masks in school, one way systems, minimal transitions, hand sanitising, allowing only essential visitors to school and class bubbles all remain and will hopefully go some way towards keeping the children in school. It is paramount that we continue to be vigilant at school and I ask that you still socially distance on the way in and out of school ensuring you stick to one entrance and exit and following the one way system.

A reminder that FS1 closes on Thursday 22 July and is not open on the final Friday. The rest of the school closes at 1.30pm on Friday 23 July and children will be collected as normal from either side of school following the one way systems.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 35 - Friday 25 June 2021

Last week, we wrote to you to inform you of our decision to sign up to a road safety scheme called School Streets. This is a scheme run by the local authority which puts in place temporary traffic measures around schools with the aim of making the roads less congested and safer. The measures are monitored and, if successful, can be made permanent. At Peshurst, these measures will affect Winthorpe Road and Seagran Avenue at the start and end of the school day.

This scheme has been very effective in other areas of the county and a number of other schools will also be trialling the scheme in September too. The main aim is to keep children safe by reducing the amount of vehicles on the approach to the school entrance. It is hoped that families will change their travel patterns and also see the health benefits of walking, riding and scooting to school rather than jumping in a car.

There will be much more information coming from us and the local authority in the coming weeks so that everyone is prepared for the change which will be effective at the start of the new academic year.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or queries please don't hesitate to contact the school.

Mr V Groak

Headteacher

I would like to start by saying a huge 'Well done' to our Year 6 pupils for completing their SATs this week with no fuss whatsoever. They conducted themselves admirably throughout

the week and enjoyed the creative lessons that accompanied the tests. We will share results with pupils and parents towards the end of term when we have moderated with our partner primary schools in the Trust.

To follow on with the Year 6 theme, we will be holding a leaving party/BBQ on Thursday 15 July after school which the PFA have kindly offered to host and we will hold the infamous school shirt signing at this point. Leavers assemblies will be held on the same day in two sessions at 9.00am and 10.15am and a Google form will be sent out to parents to book. There will be one space per child as the maximum number of parents we can host outside is 30 (socially distanced).

We have been fortunate to be able to have a couple of visitors to school in the past few weeks ensuring we comply with COVID protocols at all times. These have included a detective from Manchester police, our local PCSO, a planetarium and a farm visit. It has been lovely to slowly and cautiously allow these few visitors to school and it has really enhanced the schemes of learning that we have been doing.

Of course, we are not home free yet and the new variant of the COVID virus is in our area; as a school we have been asked to be extra vigilant with the new symptoms which include headache, runny nose and sore throat. Therefore it is entirely possible that we may need to send your child home for a test if they present with any of these symptoms alongside the other symptoms of high temperature/hot to touch, persistent cough and loss of taste or smell. Please do not bring children to school if they have any of these symptoms listed and take them for a PCR test. If the test is negative, the child can return to school.

A final reminder...please remember to activate your SIMS Parent account via desktop PC or download the 'app' as annual reports will be set via SIMS Parent during the last week of term. The targets set on the reports are for the children to work on over the holidays and new teachers to pick up on in September. The SIMS Parent is used for all communication about attendance, behaviour and attainment at the high school and we are feeding into this method of communication by using SIMS Parent for reports and attendance as well. Contact the school office if you need the SIMS Parent help sheet to be sent out again or require further information.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 34 - Friday 18 June 2021

Resilience; Respect; Aspiration; Responsibility; Integrity; Kindness.

I have been really impressed with the application of our school values this week. When I was recording the Pupil of the Week assemblies I was really proud of how many children had been picked for great kindness and showing resilience. These are two really important values in our school and it is just lovely to see and hear about children helping their friends through tough times, supporting them in their work or just hearing them say nice things about each other.

After the year we have had, resilience is certainly something that has had to come to the fore with both pupils and staff in school. I am consistently impressed with how the children are

applying themselves to their work and how they are striving to just get better and better. Staff are also on a mission to fill every minute with learning and I have been very proud to see the standard of writing that is evident in the school this week.

We will be remaining in class bubbles, following the recent government announcement, until the end of term and we will hopefully get to the end of term with all bubbles intact! We are planning for Sports week in school, arranging transition and finalising arrangements for Year 6 leavers events over the next two weeks and will send you a grid with all the dates that you need in one place. Speaking of Year 6...please wish them luck with their SATs next week. SATs breakfast is on from 8.00am each morning outside on Zone 4 with an optional non uniform day on Friday.

As you know, masks are now optional outside and I just remind you to maintain social distance and keep to one way systems entering and exiting school. Due to the remaining regulations we have not been able to do our walk for Brakes charity (supporting road safety) around the streets but we have managed to do it on our grounds and been lucky enough to have Look North come and film us, talking to staff and children: very exciting! There were a number of pupils who were unable to take part due to non-permission and if you have changed your mind regarding this, please contact the office so your children can take part in recordings and filming in the future.

You will also have received a letter, drafted by the council, regarding the safer streets initiative which we will be a part of in September. The idea is that Winthorpe and Seagran Road will be closed off for an hour at the beginning of the school day and an hour at the end and it will not affect the Penshurst Road side of School initially. We are very early on with the implementation of the scheme and will be working closely with the council and the police to make it as smooth a transition as we can. Schools in Goole who have taken on this scheme have reported much success and a real investment from parents and the community.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 33 - Friday 11 June 2021

It has been a glorious week at Penshurst with lots of learning and playing outside - a real Summer feel. Please remember to bring hats and apply all day sun cream to your children although there are shaded areas available as well.

On the topic of Summer, we would normally be holding our big events this term such as the Summer Fair, End of Year show and Sports Day. Unfortunately the Fair and Show had already been cancelled but we have made the decision to cancel the normal full day Sports Day as well. In collaboration with the other primary schools in the Trust we have decided to hold a sports week in school from Monday 5 July and hold year group Sports days within school without visitors. We all agreed that as we are all still in class bubbles it felt unwise to open up the school so wide and potentially undo all of our good work; the priority for all of us is to keep Penshurst open right up to the Summer holidays for all pupils and hopefully be able to get to our transition week and allow pupils to work with new teachers in the last week including three days at the high school for our Year 6 pupils. I know many of you will be disappointed but we will endeavour to ensure the pupils have the sports day experience despite the lack of visitors.

Year 6 will still hold a leavers assembly which we hope you can either attend or join an online link - time will tell. We have also organised a Leavers BBQ on the Thursday before they leave after school to celebrate their final few days at primary school and we will of course hold the obligatory shirt signing session on the final day.

A couple of parents have asked about next year's classes and we will confirm these in the penultimate week of term. Please be aware as ever that classes may be mixed or split depending on the needs within the year group and the accommodation that our building afford. Typically Year 1, 2 and 6 are split into three classes and Years 3, 4, 5 are kept in two classes although these may be mixed.

It was lovely to be able to smile at everyone this week for the first time (minus masks outside) and it has been great to allow the children to mix with friends at lunch time. Every other COVID procedure remains firmly in place and we will keep you updated if anything changes.

Hopefully the weekend will remain sunny for you all-enjoy.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 32 - Friday 28 May 2021

Keeping children and young people safe in school is the most important responsibility that we hold as adults working in schools. Parents do care about exam results but mostly you want to know that your child is safe and that they will be taken care of during the day. You want to believe that your child is happy and is enjoying school, that they are making friends, sometimes new ones, and gaining an understanding of the differences between themselves and others and learning to live amongst, and celebrate those differences. Importantly, you want to know that if something happens to your child, we will know about it and take care of them, and keep you informed along the way. You also want to know that we will find the talent in your child and find a way to nurture it. These, and much more besides, are the expectations that we place on ourselves every day.

In order to do that, we constantly review the way that we work and, being part of a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) offers us even more ways to review that work than if we were just a stand-alone Academy. This week, we welcomed some fellow leaders from our Trust to our school to undertake a Safeguarding Review. Over a day and a half at the High School and at Penshurst, they spoke to pupils, students and staff to ask about how we keep our learners safe; they observed our procedures at first-hand, reviewed documentation and discussed our systems with leaders. They watched student movement around the site in the morning, at lunch, at the end of the day and between lessons and they spoke to visitors, parents and contractors. The report that they have provided us with, I am pleased to say, found no concerns and indeed offers many positives and, in a number of areas, highlights some exceptional practice. As it should, it also suggests some ways that we can develop even further; these suggestions are based on the evidence that the team have found from studying other schools in our Trust. Likewise, some of the practice seen at Hessle and at Penshurst will also now be shared with other schools, to the benefit of all of our learners. This kind of collaboration across Academies is a really important benefit of the MAT structure and we are seeing gains from this on a regular basis.

Finally, we arrive at the end of yet another half term. I am delighted that we have managed to avoid any significant disruption caused by Covid since Easter. School is beginning to return to something more normal although we continue to keep the majority of our protective measures in place, such as bubbles and year group zones. We await the Government announcement about the next stage of the roadmap and will, as ever, communicate our response fully as soon as possible.

In the meantime, enjoy what promises to be a warm period whilst the children are on half-term and we look forward to welcoming them back to school on Monday 7 June.

Take care and stay safe

Mr V Groak

Headteacher

We have made it to half term intact with all bubbles remaining in school-fantastic! It really has been brilliant to have the children in school and return to some semblance of normality, structure and routine. Fingers crossed that we have seen the back of multiple isolations, however I must point out that schools in our locality are still sending bubbles home so we must remain vigilant in terms of masks inside, following one way systems, allowing only essential visitors to school, forward facing desks, hand sanitising and minimising transitions across the school.

After the half term break we are happy to allow wearing masks outside to be optional for both staff and parents. In addition, we will be allowing year group bubbles to play outside together and staff will have more freedom to move across their year group to take interventions. Learning inside will still take place in class bubbles to minimise the risk of a whole year group being sent home in the event of an identified positive case.

These are not decisions we take lightly however we are aware that children can mix outside school and so we feel that the outside mixing at lunch and break is low risk and that it fits in with the national guidelines. Also, we would really like the children to enjoy their Summer term (the final one for Year 6) playing with all of their friends. We will of course review all procedures weekly to ensure they are still keeping us all safe and make you aware of any changes in this weekly blog.

Finally, I would like to say thank you for your support over this half term in following procedures and I hope that you and your family have a restful and enjoyable half term.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 31 - Friday 21 May 2021

A mixed week on the weather front but that hasn't deterred the children from wanting to make the most of the outside whenever possible - it appears that children really don't mind

getting wet (not sure all of the adults on duty feel the same!) We have had some intensive work on the allotments and it is already exciting to see some vegetables peeking through.

Mrs Smith is in charge of the allotment project and is launching a competition for families to design a logo for what will be our farm shop based in the community cafe. We hope to be able to have the logo printed on produce bags. I would also like to say thank you to Mrs Whitham, one of our cleaners in school, who has been advising and giving up her free time to help. We are really lucky to have such a dedicated staff team. The children will be coming home next week with a template to complete over half term if they want to enter.

In addition to her work with the allotments Mrs Smith has also won two awards for the school; the Platinum Modeshift Award and the Healthy School Award - what a busy lady she is! We are the first school in the East Riding to be awarded platinum grades so we are super proud.

Alongside the allotments, we have 'bee-friendly' areas, flower beds and bug hotels all being created on site. We have been nurturing Evie's Garden and making sure it is well kept and a special place for children and staff to reflect. We are also bringing the outside in with caterpillars and tadpoles inhabiting various classrooms to accompany themes such as 'Down at the Bottom of the Garden'.

Thank you to those of you who have sent in photos of your children's activities outside school which will go on display to celebrate our pupils' achievements. Please continue to send any photos in or bring in medals etc and we will take photos.

Just a reminder that school photographs are the final day of this term and a letter has been sent this week.

Finally, please ensure you bring locks for bikes to ensure their safety.

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School

WEEK 30 - Friday 14 May 2021

We are having a real focus on handwriting this half term and it has been lovely to see the children working so hard to improve their writing. This is something we would really like to see the children practice at home as well. To be awarded expected and greater depth in the Year 2 and 6 exams, the children really need to have beautifully formed handwriting. Mrs Petch and Miss Hatfield will be emailing out some WAGOLLS (what a good one looks like) so you can see the standard for your child's year group which may help you to help them at home.

The allotment project has begun in earnest and we would like to say thank you to Kelly Wilson who has arranged for her workplace to donate £1000 to the PFA to help fund this project. This means we have been able to purchase more equipment than we initially thought and move a little quicker. Eventually we plan to sell our produce in the Penshurst farm shop so look out for an upcoming competition to design the logo for the shop. This will obviously take a while to get running but we hope it will become a part of the extra curricular clubs from September.

I do just have to mention COVID in this blog once to update you on when we anticipate any relaxations being able to take place in school. We intend to remain cautious at school and will review the current arrangements in school just before half term. We do hope that we will at least be able to lift the wearing of masks outside after half term and will be making a decision about class bubbles, lunchtimes and staff movement around school at this point .

In the near future we are planning to have payment for Breakfast Club on Parentpay as we do lunches which will make us a totally cashless school. Please ensure if you use the Breakfast Club service, your details are up to date to log in to the system. Contact the office if you are unsure of your details or login. We are also hoping to have class photos and Year 6 leavers photos on the last day of this half term.

In other news, another success in football for Penshurst pupils with 3 boys in Year 5 (Flynn, Trent and Asa) being selected for the East Riding schools team. Well done boys. Please fill in the Google Form in the following link letting us know what clubs your child participates in outside school so we can celebrate this in school and tailor our clubs from September to suit them.

<https://forms.gle/Lx3nB1NqDwJJX9w87>

Have a lovely weekend

Mrs J Spencer

Head of School