



Diary Dates:

3/1/18	Spring Term
8/1/18	Music Clubs Commence
8/1/18	Parents' Evening 5SM
11/1/18	Parents' Evening 5L
15/1/18	Parents' Evening 5ES
23/1/18	ESA Meeting
25/1/18	What makes Edwinstree Unique? Meeting for Parents at 5:30pm
29/1/18	7C & 7G - London Visit
25/1/18	8R & 8B Computer Museum Visit
26/1/18	8D & 8C Computer Museum Visit
2/2/18	7B & 7T - London Visit
5/2/18	Young Voices at the O2 Arena
7/2/18	Technology Tournament
w/b 5/3/18	Y6 Mock SATs
w/b 14/5/18	Y6 SATs

Happy New Year!

A big thank you to the significant number of parents who walked the students over to Aspenden and to the ESA and parents who provided hot chocolate and biscuits on our journey back. The students were well behaved and enjoyed the day, with Christmas dinner and some festive films and games. We could not provide the fun side to our visits without your support.

The school has been working exceptionally hard on improving our expectations and support for your child and we know from your feedback via Parents Evenings, 'one to one' communication and Parentview, that you are seeing rapid progress. I hope you forgive me for stating that for the school to return to 'Good' and then 'Outstanding' we need your help! This week a small but significant minority of parents made our job harder in the following areas:

Attendance

On our return to school this week, we saw a minority of parents fail to return their children on the first day of term. Thank you to all of those of you who emailed our attendance officer Mrs Heywood on:

attendance@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk to confirm illness and reasons. However, there were a greater number than usual of Parents who were unable to provide a reason for their child's absence and even more concerning why all siblings were off – not just one. We suspect bolt on holiday time!

Please can I stress all our data indicates that the key reason a small number of students are failing to make rapid progress is their poor attendance; we can't improve their learning if they are not in!

How can you help us? If you read this and know you are one of the minority who are:

- Taking holidays during term time.
- Giving in to a snivel or stomach ache, but have a sneaking suspicion that this is school avoidance.

- Giving students time off the next day, if they come home to report an argument with a friend, rather than notifying us of a problem

Please think twice before falling into the trap of the above. Absence is the key reason for students not making the progress they need. An absence of 90% equates to 1 in 10 days off in the year. We all want your child to attend a 'Good' and then 'Outstanding' school, but without a change to the practice outlined above, our attendance figures have the potential to limit our judgement.

Please be aware that we will be taking a stronger approach in terms of school absence and will be actively fining parents where absence is repeatedly unauthorised. This is not something we do lightly.

Uniform

A school that looks smart, thinks smart and creates a culture of smart! The school's reputation and respect for our students is rightly re-establishing itself in Buntingford, and the improvements to the uniform this term have really helped reflect the wonderfulness of our students. However, in the lead up to Christmas jeans, leggings and trainers or 'vans' appeared again. Thank you to parents who used a part of the holiday to order new uniform. I am fully aware that particularly with the older year groups, this can be difficult to battle with. However, we still have one or two students who are failing to meet the basic requirements. Please, for the sake of parents who take on the battle and get their children the correct uniform and equipment, can the few make this change too. Parents of students not wearing the correct school uniform will be contacted to confirm when this will be corrected. Details of school uniform can be found in your child's ROA or on our website.

Internet Safety

Once again, yesterday's news reported concerns about safety and peer pressure on the internet. This half term, Year 7 and Year 8 will continue to explore the topic of 'how to use the internet wisely'. We will post on the website the 'Think you Know it' Toolkit, which we are using to promote safety and care on the World Wide Web. Students are engaging with this topic significantly, and this helps them really think about their internet use. We will also be providing a prominent direct link to the 'Think you Know' website which provides parents and students with excellent advice about the net, the latest apps and a reporting service for anyone who has concerns that their child or friend is potentially being groomed online.

Unfortunately, this week a member of our school suffered from a fake 'ghost story' being distributed on social media, which was particularly upsetting, so please monitor your child's internet use carefully.

Behaviour

Behaviour Watch records for all students are reset at the start of each term. Students can excel with positive behaviour for learning in all areas of school.

Road Safety

Parents are reminded that students can wear brighter coloured coats during the winter to improve their visibility and safety on their journey to and from school. Coats must always be available for use at break and lunchtimes.

We must all take great care to park appropriately, legally and away from the school gate, to assist the safety of all our students. Please support us and encourage safe road crossing skills away from, and never between the coaches. Sainsbury's car park is free before school and after 3pm.

Health & Diet

A 100 metre 'Emerald loop' is in position on the school playground to assist all students who may wish to jog or walk their way together towards healthy success. Please can we encourage healthy snacks at break and lunchtimes? Students are welcome to utilise school catering as a treat, alongside their balanced diets. All students should bring a small, labelled bottle of water to refresh, during the day.

English Home-learning

Challenge home-learning will continue to be set weekly. This might include the learning of facts, skills, concepts, vocabulary and spellings. Students will be asked to write a note in their ROAs of what it is that they need to focus on.

Reading Journals were introduced in some year groups last term. Reading Journals are A4 booklets which have been devised to support students studying set texts at home. We would like to take this successful concept further. Therefore, we will be setting weekly home-learning which centres on completing the Reading Journal. Home reading will be shared in 'Book Talk' sessions where students will have the opportunity to discuss what they have read. We are trialling a feedback system using stickers, which will inform students if they are on track and what next steps they could take. Students will write weekly expectations in their ROAs.

"What makes Edwinstree Middle School unique?"

As a school we have spent time discussing with staff and students what makes Edwinstree a special place to work and to learn, linked with our Christian ethos and the values that we feel are important as a school. On Thursday 25th January we would like to introduce this to parents, discussing how the Church of England and its values are becoming embedded in all aspects of school life. The meeting will start at 5:30pm and will take the form of a presentation and discussion time. If you would like to come, please contact the school office or email admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk

Music Department

Instrument lessons start again next week. Students should ensure they check the noticeboard in the music corridor to see what time their lesson is. It is the student's responsibility to turn up on time - it isn't up to the teacher to collect them.

All music clubs start this week. We are always looking for new members, particularly the school choir. This takes place after school on Thursdays from 3:30pm to 4:15pm in the music room. If your child enjoys singing I strongly encourage them to come and join us!

Year 6 Saturday Preparation for SAT sessions

A number of students will be invited to attend Saturday booster sessions starting on Saturday 13/1/18 for 8 weeks, to support the build up to SATs. All sessions are delivered by Year 6 teachers and group sizes are no more than ten. Students do not need to wear school uniform, but will need to bring a drink and snack of their choice for each session. We ran these sessions last year and although students were initially concerned, parents, students and the school found them exceptionally successful in closing the learning gap for students struggling to master a part of the English or Math curriculum. These sessions also reduced the stress in the build up to the SATs and helped parents who were not confident in how to support their child, as the school took the strain in the Saturday sessions. Last year, students who attended, rapidly increased their progress over the term and finished more confident learners. They really appreciated the additional time and support – honestly. If your child is invited, please return the slip confirming their attendance as soon as possible, these sessions are sought after, if your child does not attend there are many other parents asking for this support. After the 8 week sessions, another cohort of students will be selected for the pre-Easter classes and a further set for the build up to May.

Key Stage 3 - Year & Y7 and Y8

A huge thank you for the dedication shown in ensuring students have space, time and commitment to home learning. Please make sure that your child returns to recording their homework in their planners and that you agree a time to complete it with them. We have attached again the timetable for homework for Key Stage 3. Core subjects English and Maths have two pieces, one being a challenge homework, all other subjects provide one homework piece every two weeks. All students should be reading for 20 minutes, 5 times a week and please take the opportunity to question them on their reading.

Students also have English and Maths 'passports' to help them to write well and calculate correctly. They are a fantastic support for parents, helping us to navigate the grammar and punctuation rules and providing key questions to ask them after reading. They all have one, so make sure they are using them when completing homework. It really makes a difference, and stops you feeling baffled by the changes to their curriculum.

Our website will be updated in the next two weeks to include a subject by subject account of what students will be learning this term and at half term you will be given the opportunity to view your child's set of books and their learning progress.

Our faith supports each individual to flourish and challenges us to live life in all its fullness

School Meals

School meal prediction letters will be sent home today, however if your child wishes to change their meal pattern please notify the school office.

School Meal Charges 03/01/18 to 09/02/18

School meal every day - 28 days @ £2.45 = £68.60

Wednesday and Friday only

2 days @ £2.45 = £29.40

Friday only – 6 days @ £2.45 = £14.70

What did you think of the reports?

Did the progress indicator help your understanding of how your child is achieving? Would you be willing to support the school by sharing your ideas on how we can improve further? We will be organising a discussion group meeting with our Assistant Head this half term to gain feedback, date to be confirmed.

Our Website and Facebook page

We are weekly updating our website and Facebook page with key news, in addition to the weekly newsletter. If you have further suggestions on how we can improve, please email, us we are listening.

Educational Visits for Year 7 and Year 8 in January

Letters have been sent home highlighting visits to the Centre for Computing History Museum for Year 8 and the Museum of London and the Olympic Park regeneration project in London for Year 7. Please ensure payments are with the school at the agreed times. If you are willing to support the school by accompanying us as a parent volunteer for the day please let my PA know by emailing on: admin@edwinstree.herts.sch.uk your help reduces the amount of teaching supply each visit generates for the remainder of the school.

Young Filmmakers Club

The Young Filmmakers Club are returning for a second term at Edwinstree. The first term has been very successful and during term 2, we have planned some new exciting projects to work on. The club will be held every Wednesday for 10 weeks from 3:20pm – 4:20pm. Booking is now open via our [website www.youngfilmmakersclub.co.uk](http://www.youngfilmmakersclub.co.uk). places are limited to 15, however we need 12 for the club to run. If you would like your child to start in the spring term, please contact Gillian with any queries northherts@youngfilmmakersclub.co.uk or on **07341305131**

Jo Gant
Headteacher

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