

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have had a busy and exciting start to the New Year and I cannot believe we are already at the end of the month! It is lovely to see the beginnings of some lighter days and warmer weather (every now and again!) and pupils are seeing early signs of Spring beginning to emerge during their weekly gardening and Forest Schools sessions, when they are out learning in our grounds and our woods. Even though it's chilly – they really enjoy outdoor learning! Here is a photo of Sycamore Class (Y5) enjoying a campfire and a hot drink after being out in the woods yesterday!



Attendance

This is so important! We all want our pupils and children to thrive at Longwill and to develop their skills to the very best of their ability. They need to be in school to make this happen. Therefore, attendance is something we take very seriously.

Every Wednesday, the school joins together to celebrate the class with the best weekly attendance (you will see photos of the winning class on our website).

This week Pines Class (Y4) won – they achieved 100% attendance!

Last year the schools attendance figure stood at 93.1%. I was very pleased with this figure as it is better than the national average for all special schools. And yet I feel we can still do better! We aim for 95% attendance this year.

At the moment, our figure is lower than I would like and that is why I wanted to share it with you, so that you can help us to improve! Currently, it is only 90.8%. I know this is a time when there are lots of bugs and colds about – but please help your child by sending them to school every day.

The chart below highlights the impact on missed learning of persistent absence:

| Attendance % during one year | Equals days absent | Which is approximately weeks absent | Which means this number of lessons missed |
|------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 95% | 9 days | 2 weeks | 50 lessons |
| 90% | 19 days | 4 weeks | 100 lessons |
| 85% | 29 days | 6 weeks | 150 lessons |
| 80% | 38 days | 8 weeks | 200 lessons |

If your child is absent, please inform school with the reason. School must have copies of all medical appointment letters for your child's record.

Safer Internet Day, 6 February 2018



Next week is the national schools E-Safety Week. In this ever increasingly digital and online world, we as parents and teachers have to work hard to keep up with technology and our children's use of it.

Next week we will be spending time in class learning about how to keep ourselves safe online. Parents often ask us for support with this and so I would encourage you all to take a look at our school website and our E-Safety page:

<http://www.longwill.bham.sch.uk/esafety>

NDCS Parents' Workshop, 14 February 2018

Longwill School is hosting a FREE workshop for parents and carers of deaf children on 14 February 10am-12:30pm.

Come along for the opportunity to meet up with other parents, to consider different hints and tips for managing challenging behaviour and how to encourage more positive behaviour.

If you would like to attend, please complete a booking form and return to school.

Please make the most of this opportunity and come along!



Conversion to Co-operative Trust status consultation

Thank you to everyone who replied to our consultation! I am pleased to say the response was very positive.

Our Governors will be meeting on Tuesday 6th February to take a decision on 'the next step'. I am pleased because I truly believe that this will be a good thing for our Deaf pupils. There are lots of positives that will come from working together with other schools – children will benefit from shared opportunities (e.g. joint school council events, sporting competitions between the schools); the school can make financial savings because all the schools can make bulk orders for things like paper, pens and even toilet rolls! With lots of schools ordering together we can drive down prices. And that leaves us more money to spend on the pupils. The other benefit of this model is that Longwill School will be able to keep its own identity and continue to run itself as an excellent regional provision for Deaf sign bilingual children. Staff, pupils and Governors will remain very much 'in control of our own destiny' and that is very important for us. I will keep you informed of where we go from here next week.

Bellfield Inclusion Opportunities

This got underway again this week. We have super links with our local mainstream schools, which are only five minutes' walk away from us. They are Bellfield Infant and Junior Schools. Our Reception class will spend a lesson with their friends at Bellfield Nursery every Thursday morning. Other classes in school are also meeting with their hearing peers on a fortnightly basis. We already work closely with these schools – in past years we have enjoyed regular inclusion sessions, shared signed choir events, sports days together and they have also joined us for our Rights Respecting Conferences. I am sure that your class teachers will be telling you more over the coming weeks. Also, keep your eyes out on the website for more news – look on your child's class area or the school blog page.



Longwill School for Deaf Children, Bell Hill, Northfield, Birmingham, B31 1LD

T: 0121 475 3923

E: enquiry@longwill.bham.sch.uk

M: 07786 201 170 (text only)

Website: www.longwill.bham.sch.uk

Parents' Signing Group

These run every Wednesday morning in term time from 10:15am-12:15pm and are held at Longwill.

Your children are all excellent communicators! That is why we provide free sign language classes for all parents and family members. We all need to improve our signing so that we can keep up with the children. These sessions are run by Randip and Michael who are Deaf and very experienced in teaching sign language to adults and children alike!

Mona Manku is also available during these sessions and can support parents on a range of other matters as well.

The signing group takes place in our school hall. There is a chance to have a chat with other parents over a coffee mid-morning. If improving your signing skills is a priority for you, then please make this a regular commitment. Please do come along on a Wednesday morning.



Home Learning

I hope the information on Home Learning, which was sent home last week proved useful. Please support your child by making sure they have a quiet place to do this work each week. Their spellings are set weekly and we would ask parents to help their children learn these. Also, we have plenty of online learning resources, which the children love! These educational games are often set as home learning activities and the children really enjoy improving their skills using such websites as 'Mathletics'. If you would like any help regarding 'online learning', then please just make contact with school and we can provide a course in school.

Diary Dates:

| | |
|--|--|
| Tuesday 6 February: | Safer Internet Day |
| Wednesday 7 February: | Sign2Sing 12noon, Years 1-6 performing (after the Signing Group) |
| Friday 9 February: | Non-uniform day and disco, £1 for Sign Health |
| Monday 12 February: | Classes Hazel & Pine visit to CBSO |
| Tuesday 13 February: | Longwill Dance Festival |
| Wednesday 14 February: | NDCS Parent Workshop 10am-12:30pm |
| Monday 19 February - Friday 23 February HALF TERM | |
| Thursday 1 March: | World Book Day |
| Tuesday 6 March: | Parents' Morning 10am-12pm |
| Wednesday 14 March: | BSL Eisteddfodd 10am-11:30am |
| Thursday 29 March: | Easter Parade and Egg Rolling 2pm |
| Friday 30 March - Friday 13 April EASTER HOLIDAYS | |
| Monday 28 May - Friday 1 June HALF TERM | |
| Tuesday 12 June: | Parents' Evening 4:30pm |
| Wednesday 4 July: | Whole school visit to Conkers |
| Wednesday 11 July: | Sports Day |
| Friday 13 July: | Foundation Graduation |
| Wednesday 18 July: | Leavers' Show 11am |
| Friday 20 July: | Last day of term |
| Monday 23 and Tuesday 24 July: | Training Days (no school for children) |

Remember: Wednesdays—Parents & Carers' Signing Group 10:15am-12:15pm
Fridays—Swimming for Years 1-6

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