

Weekly Newsletter 28th September



Kirkstall Valley Primary School

Argie Road, Leeds LS4 2QZ

www.kirkstallvalley.org.uk T: 0113 887 8982

Dear Kirkstall Valley Primary School Families,

How are you? I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well.

This half-term is absolutely flying by with this the last newsletter of September and I have to say it's been a brilliant one so far! Lots going on in school and some lovely warm September weather is also a bonus.

I've left a few items in the newsletter from last week as they're important and are worth repeating. Please take a moment to read through these points. Thanks ☺

Have a great week ahead and do come and have a chat when you see me around school!

Best wishes,

Phil Robertson - Headteacher



Diary Dates

Monday 28th September
Immunisations YN-Y6

Tuesday 6th October
Individual photos

Thursday 8th October
Under the Sea disco

Tuesday 13th October
Parents' Evening 1

Tuesday 20th October
Parents' Evening 2

Attendance:

YR – 95.9%

Year 1 – 93.4%

Year 2 – 96.8%

Year 3 – 97% 🏆

Year 4 – 93.8%

Year 5 – 93.3%

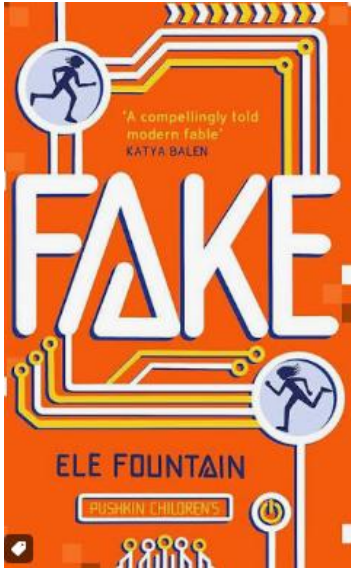
Year 6 – 96.2%

School = 95% - (Target = 95%)

Donate a book!

Our library is a wonderful place but it takes a lot of time and money to keep it looking so good. If ever you felt like donating a book, you can do so via our local partner, Truman Books in Farsley. The new wishlist link is up and running: <https://trumanbooks.co.uk/recommended-reads-for-kirkstall-valley>

Robertson Recommends: *Fake* by Ele Fountain



I have chosen *Fake* by Ele Fountain for this week's recommendation because it tackles a topic that feels increasingly pertinent for all of us: our relationship with technology, the dominance of screens, and how we tell the difference between what is real and what is manipulated online. As children grow up in an ever-more digital world, stories that encourage them to think critically about life behind a screen are more valuable than ever.

The story is set in a future where failing antibiotics have pushed society almost entirely online, and big tech companies control everyday life—from food to healthcare. Until the age of fourteen, children only ever meet their friends through screens. When our protagonist, Jess, finally turns fourteen, she is allowed to attend a real, physical school for the very first time. However, back at home, her younger sister Chloe is unwell, and her life-saving medication is becoming unaffordable. A talented coder and secret hacker, Jess turns to the digital world to help her family, only to uncover explosive truths about just how much their reality is being controlled.

It is a gripping, fast-paced read that is particularly well-suited for confident readers at the top end of Key Stage 2 (Year 5 and Year 6). Beyond being a brilliant page-turner, it is a fantastic book for sparking conversations at home about the value of nature, real-life friendships, and time away from our devices.

Jewellery in School

Please can we share a quick reminder regarding our school rules on jewellery. While children are very welcome to wear small stud earrings, items such as hoop earrings, bracelets, and necklaces must not be worn in school, as they can easily get caught and present a safety risk during playtimes and lessons. If a child does come to school wearing any of these items, a member of staff will kindly ask them to remove the jewellery (and support them to do so if needed). The item will be kept somewhere safe during the day and returned to them at home time.

PE Kits

We would really appreciate your support in making sure children come to school wearing the correct PE kit on their PE days. We know mornings can be busy and it's an easy thing to forget, but having the correct kit means children can take part comfortably and safely in their PE lessons.

The correct PE kit is black or blue shorts, leggings or jogging trousers with a plain white or blue T-shirt.

Where children continue to attend in incorrect PE kit, we may provide them with a clean spare school PE kit to change into for their PE lesson.

Thank you for helping us ensure that all children are ready and appropriately dressed to take part in PE.

Our Updated Allergy Policy: Keeping Everyone Safe

We have recently updated our school Allergy Policy, which is now available to read in full on the policies section of our school website. With several children across school having food allergies, we rely on the support of our entire school community to keep every child safe.

Please take a moment to review these essential reminders:

Strictly No Nuts: Kirkstall Valley is an allergy aware school. Please double-check the ingredients of all packed lunches and breaktime snacks. Items such as loose nuts, peanut butter, hazelnut spreads (like Nutella), cereal bars containing nuts, or certain baked goods must not be brought onto school grounds.

No Sharing Food: In class and on the playground, we constantly remind children that food must never be swapped, shared, or sampled between friends. Please help us reinforce this vital rule at home so everyone understands why sharing a snack can unintentionally put a classmate at risk.

Update Us on Any Changes: If your child receives a new allergy diagnosis, their dietary requirements change, or they are provided with a new or updated allergy action plan by their GP or healthcare professional, please notify the school office and their class teacher immediately and provide us with a copy of the action plan. This enables us to update our records, medical care plans and emergency procedures to help keep your child safe.

In-Date Medication: If your child requires prescribed allergy medication (such as an antihistamine or an adrenaline auto-injector / EpiPen), please ensure it is clearly labelled, fully in date, and handed directly to the office.

Birthday and Celebration Treats: If you wish to send in treats to mark a birthday or special occasion, please speak to your child's class teacher beforehand. Any food brought in must be factory-sealed and shop-bought with all ingredients and allergen advice clearly listed. Non-food treats, such as stickers or pencils, are always welcome alternatives.

Important Update: Free School Meals are Changing

Great news for our school community! The government is expanding Free School Meals from September 2026.

- What is changing? The previous household income cap is being removed for families on Universal Credit. Every household receiving Universal Credit will now qualify for free meals, regardless of their working hours or earnings.
- Why apply? Even if your child currently gets automatic free meals in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2, formally applying through the new criteria unlocks crucial extra funding for our school. This money directly pays for extra staff, resources, and clubs.
- What you need to do: **A letter has now been sent** explaining exactly what you need to do to apply under the new rules.

Payments

A reminder that we no longer use ParentPay. All payments should be made through the Arbor app. Any issues with this please let the office know.

Lost Property: Please Name Everything!

Please can we gently remind all parents and carers to write their child's name in every piece of clothing they bring to school, particularly jumpers, cardigans, and coats. As the children take off their layers throughout the busy school day, our lost property box fills up remarkably quickly. Without a name inside, it is an almost impossible job for our staff to reunite identical items of uniform with their rightful owners. A quick scribble with a permanent marker on the care label or a stick-on name tag makes all the difference and helps us keep your child's belongings safe!

Would you be interested in becoming a school governor?

We currently have vacancies on our school Governing Body and are looking for enthusiastic parents or community members to join our dedicated team. Being a school governor is a highly rewarding way to contribute to the success of Kirkstall Valley and help shape the strategic direction of our children's education.

What the role involves:

- **Strategic Planning:** Working alongside the leadership team to set the school's vision, ethos, and strategic priorities.
- **Support and Challenge:** Acting as a 'critical friend' to the school, ensuring accountability for the educational performance of the pupils and staff wellbeing.
- **Financial Oversight:** Overseeing the financial performance of the school to ensure our budget is spent effectively.
- **Time Commitment:** Preparing for and attending approximately two evening meetings per term, alongside occasional daytime school visits to see our initiatives in action.

You do not need a background in education to apply. We actively welcome diverse skill sets—whether your experience lies in project management, finance, human resources, or simply a passionate commitment to our local community. If you are interested in making a tangible difference, please contact the school office to arrange an informal chat over a cup of tea with myself or our Chair of Governors.

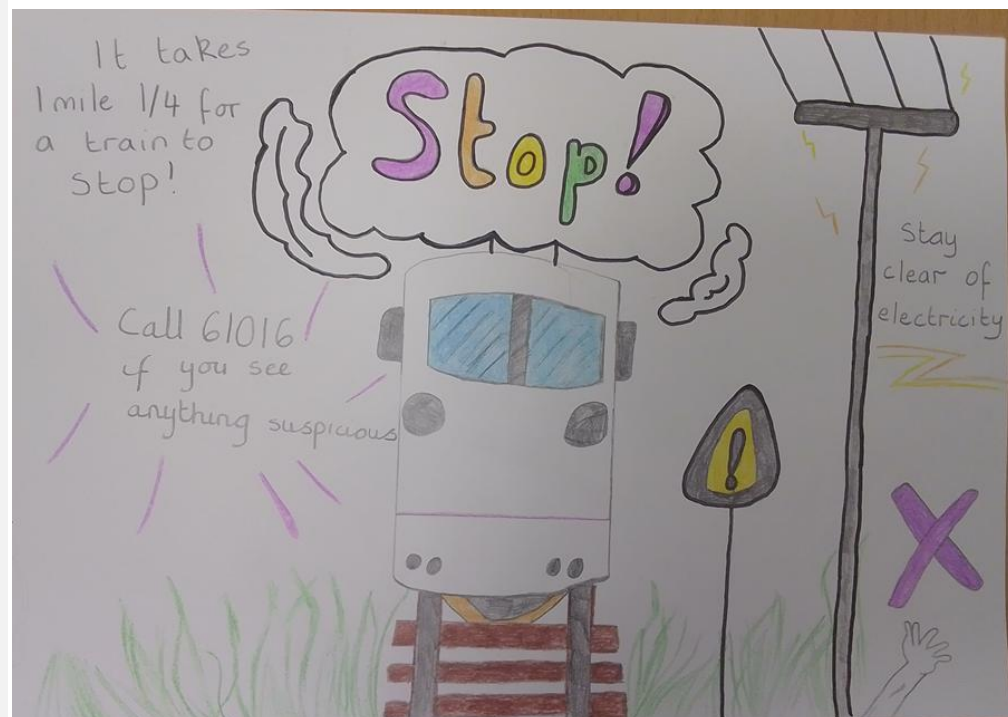
Breakfast Club: Keeping Everyone Safe

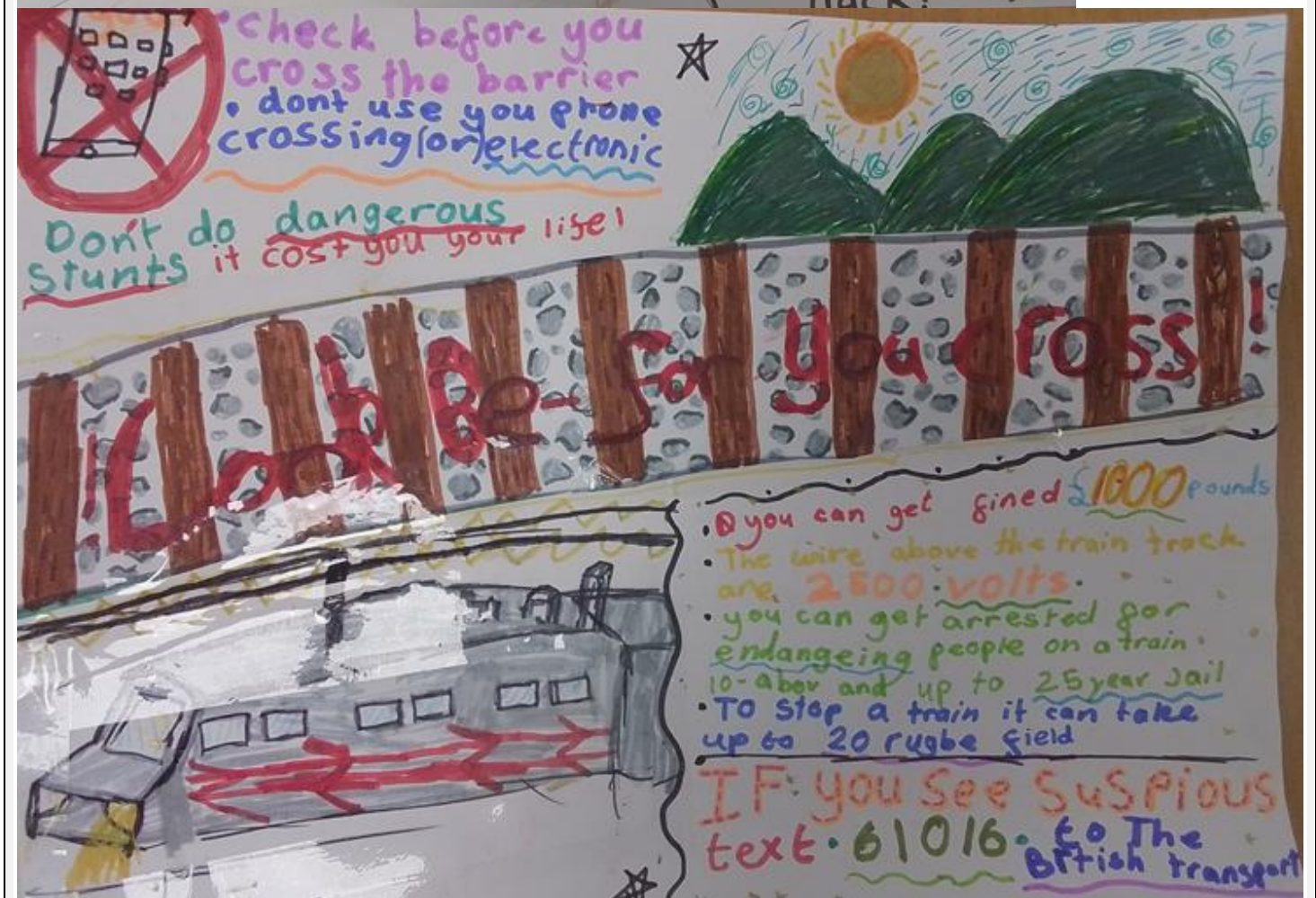
As our breakfast club continues to be incredibly popular, I need to share a very important safeguarding reminder regarding morning drop-offs. Please could I kindly ask that all parents and carers physically accompany their children into the school building and hand them over directly to a member of the breakfast club team. We absolutely cannot have children walking into the school grounds or building by themselves in the morning. Our number one priority is ensuring that every single child is entirely **Safe** and accounted for from the very moment they arrive on site. Taking those few extra seconds to hand them over in person guarantees they are securely registered and ready for a great start to their day. Thank you so much for your complete cooperation and understanding with this vital procedure!

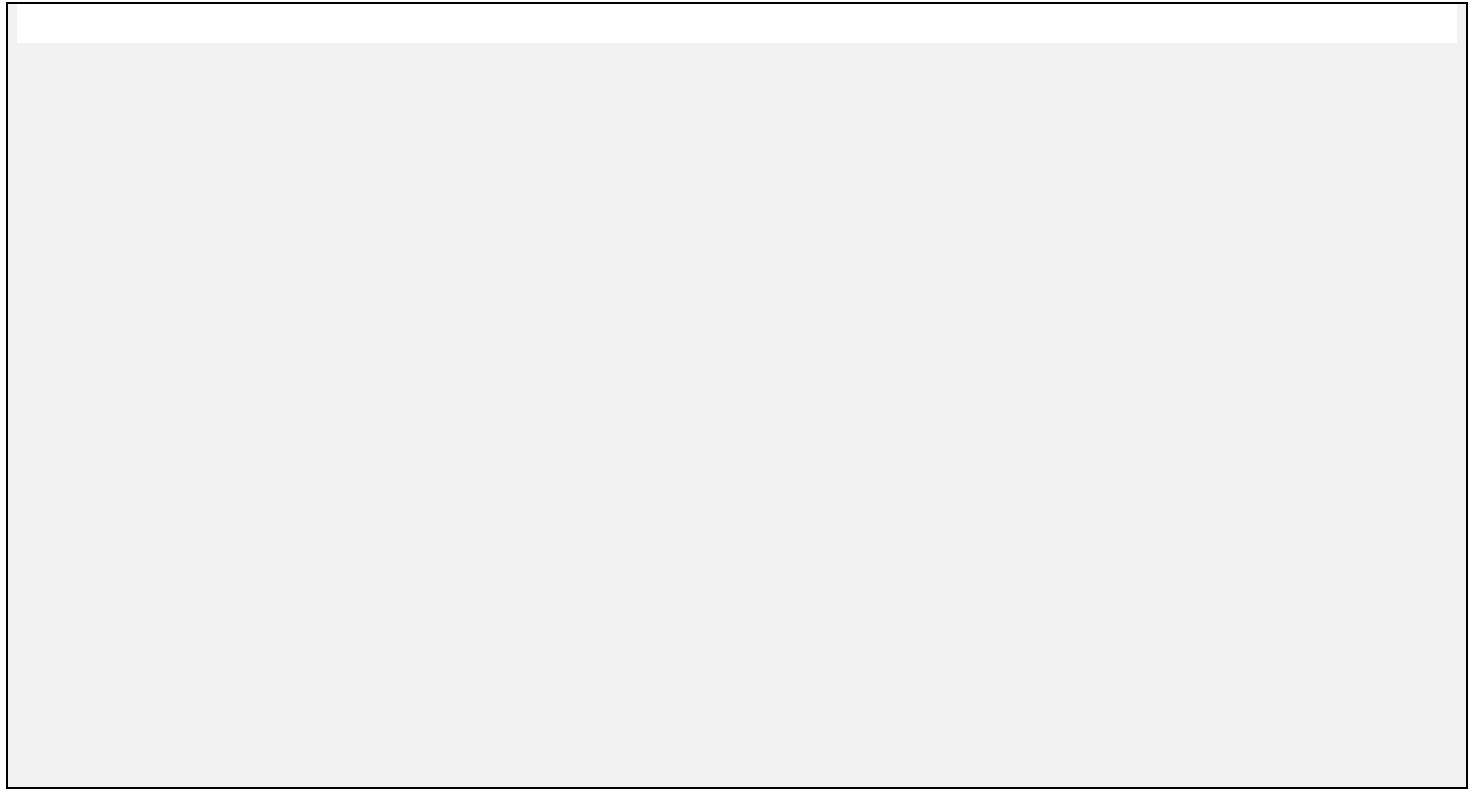
To add to this, please also ensure you do not walk through the car park in the morning and instead use the footpath. The car park is a very busy place at this time and is not suitable for pedestrian access.



Year 6 had a visit from the Leeds Rhinos Foundation to take part in a workshop all around rail safety. We learnt about how to use level crossings safely; understanding the dangers around the tracks; staying safe on the train platform and the consequences of poor choices; the dangers of crossing the train tracks and passing trains; and who the British transport Police are and how to contact them. The children then designed a poster to enter in a Leeds-wide competition, with the winning poster being displayed at a local train station. Have a look at some of Year 6's brilliant designs!







Brass Lessons: Re-register for this Academic Year



A quick reminder for parents of children who have previously taken brass lessons in school: please ensure you have re-signed them up for the current academic year. All registrations for these lessons need to be completed via the Arbor app. If you have any trouble accessing this, or if your child is interested in starting lessons for the first time, please let the school office know.

Cycling



I managed to complete my final big event of the annual sportive calendar on Saturday—a rather hilly 105-mile ride! Fortunately, the conditions couldn't have been better; it was a glorious day with dry roads, plenty of sunshine, and light winds. It was a fantastic ride overall across the North York Moors from York to Scarborough and back - even if I did have to hobble slightly towards the finish line after an old injury decided to flare up! Despite that, I managed to get round in a reasonable time of 6 hours and 45 minutes. With the main season wrapped up, I am now looking forward to starting my winter

training block, where I can reduce the volume a bit and build in some better injury prevention strategies (which are very much needed at my age!)

Greek Learning: Gaining confidence



I thoroughly enjoyed my first full week of formal Greek lessons, which focused on introducing myself and talking about my family. Having a regular routine and the built-in accountability of a Thursday group session meant that I focused much better than I did when studying on my own. I actually felt like things properly started to 'click' this week—which, as we always tell the children in class, is a brilliant feeling! This week, our topic moves on to being at a restaurant and ordering food and drink. Needless to say, food is always a fantastic motivator for me, so I suspect this will be my favourite module yet!

♪ Assembly Music: The Chain



Another addition to The Chain on Friday. We have now had six pieces of music, all linked to the previous track. So far we have had:

Jolene by Dolly Parton > Cecilia by Simon and Garfunkel > We Will Rock You by Queen > Mercury by Gustav Holst > Star Wars by John Williams > Try Everything by Shakira > Raspberry Beret by Prince > Top Hat, White Tie and Tails by Fred Astaire.

Can you work out the links?! The children are doing great with it!

Focus on

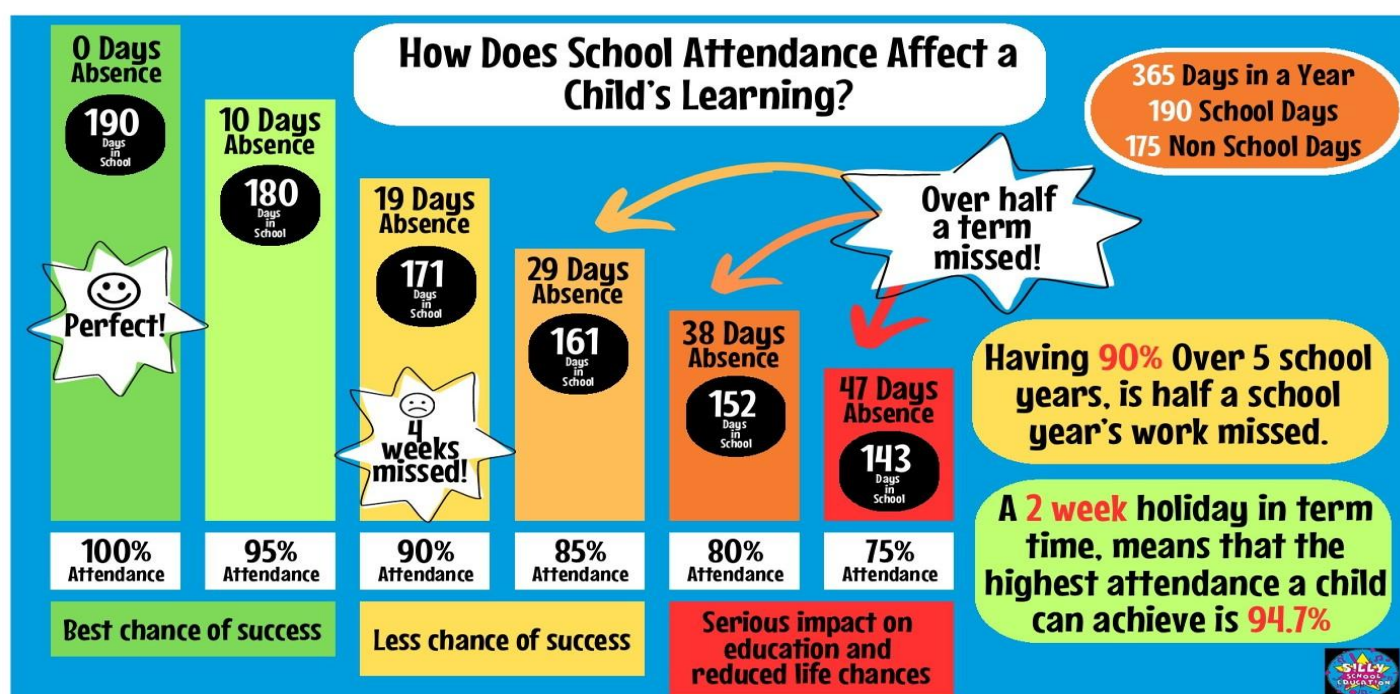
Mindmate Leaders



MindMate Leaders play an important role in promoting positive wellbeing across our school. They help to share ideas for managing emotions and staying calm, including simple regulation strategies that can be used in their everyday life, at home and at school. MindMate Leaders also support and contribute to assemblies and whole-school wellbeing activities, helping to encourage kindness, positive relationships and looking after our mental health. Through their role, they are helping to make sure that wellbeing is something we all talk about, understand and prioritise, so that everyone can be their best self.

The Importance of Every School Day

Every single day in school counts towards your child's learning, social development, and those crucial "click" moments we want them to experience. Because consistent attendance is so vital to their overall progress, I must remind all families that **I am not permitted** to authorise any family holidays taken during term time. With 190 statutory school days in the year, this leaves 175 days for holidays, appointments, and family time outside of school hours. Any holidays taken during the academic term will be recorded as unauthorised absences. We greatly appreciate your ongoing support in ensuring your child is in school, on time, every day, ready to make the most of their education.





We know that education is one of the worst institutions for using technical jargon and acronyms. In this section over the next term, I'll try and explain a few!

Phoneme and Grapheme: If you have a child in Early Years or Key Stage 1, you will hear these phonics terms constantly! A phoneme is the smallest unit of *sound* in a word (for example, the sound 'sh' or 'c'), whereas a grapheme is the *written letter* or group of letters that represents that sound on the page. In short: a phoneme is what you hear and say, and a grapheme is what you see and write.

Scaffolding: Just like scaffolding on a building provides temporary support while construction is taking place, 'scaffolding' in the classroom refers to the temporary tools or support we give children to help them master a new concept. This might be a word bank, a set of sentence starters, or a step-by-step checklist. As a child grows in confidence, we gradually remove the scaffolding until they can complete the task completely independently.

Every day, every single person:



Safe



Ready



Respectful



Courage



Compassion



Commitment



Kirkstall Valley Primary School

Argle Road
LEEDS
LS4 2QZ

Tel: 0113 8878982

Fax: 0113 2306186

Email: info@kirkstallvalley.org.uk

Head Teacher: Mr Phil Robertson
Chair of Governors: Mrs Colleen Jackson

School calendar academic year 2026-2027

Holiday	Schools close			Schools open		
Summer break				Wednesday 2 September 2026		
Autumn mid-term	Friday	23 October	2026	Tuesday	3 November	2026
Christmas break	Friday	18 December	2026	Tuesday	5 January	2027
Spring mid-term	Friday	12 February	2027	Monday	22 February	2027
Easter break	Friday	2 April	2027	Monday	19 April	2027
May Bank Holiday	Friday	30 April	2027	Tuesday	4 May	2027
Summer mid-term	Thursday	27 May	2027	Monday	7 June	2027
Summer break	Thursday	22 July	2027			

Bank Holidays include

Christmas	25 & 28	December	2026
New Year's Day	1	January	2027
Good Friday	26	March	2027
Easter Monday	29	March	2027
May Day	3	May	2027
Spring Bank	31	May	2027
August	30	August	2027

Teacher Training Days - School Closed

Tuesday	1 September	2026
Monday	2 November	2026
Monday	4 January	2027
Friday	28 May	2027
Friday	25 June	2027



School uniform:



You can buy a new school jumper or a school cardigan at the office.



Or you can buy pre-used uniform that other families have given to school.



Pre-used uniform



A small book bag: £5.00



A large book bag: £7.00



Children come to school in PE clothes on days they have PE