

news

November 2019



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Your children are simply amazing!

It might be dark and dismal outside but that couldn't be further from how it feels in the school this term!

Your children are enthusiastic, bright, eager and just simply amazing!

It shows in our Star of the Week assemblies. The reasons for children being awarded Star just get better and better. I have the privilege of running Art Club this term and it is a real treat. I am loving every second. The level of vocabulary and knowledge is so impressive; very young children using

words such as vibrant to comment on paintings and using correct terminology: abstract to describe the style. It might be another long term but we have so much to look forward to.

You will see just how much has already taken place in school in only a week!

A SEASIDE TRADITION

Most of our current perceptions of the British, and especially the English and Welsh, seaside are all the stronger for having Victorian roots.



Year 5 went to explore these traditions and the evidence of the Victorians on a recent trip to Eastbourne.

The seaside resort was an eighteenth-century invention, as 'orthodox' medicine put a 'scientific' veneer on popular sea-bathing customs and marketed the result as an alternative to

'taking the cure' at a spa, while new romantic ways of perceiving shoreline made them attractive.

I'm quite sure the highlight was the stop for tea! The children discovered the rules and behaviour of Victorian Polite Society and learnt about this famous British Tradition!



A FOND FAREWELL

As you know we said a sad farewell to Mrs Gillbanks on the last day of term.

She wanted me to share a few final words with you all:

I just want to say a massive thank you to everyone for the most amazing gifts and good wishes I received on my last day. I was absolutely overwhelmed by your lovely messages and generosity. I can't wait to use my garden vouchers and visit all those National Trust places that have been on my to do list.

I have enjoyed working at Polegate school all these years and I will miss you all terribly.

Thank you again
Kerry Gillbanks



A LOVELY LETTER

I received a lovely email from a member of staff that joined one of our school trips about a pupil and I felt it deserved a feature in this newsletter.

Well done Freddie Hunt for making such a positive impression!

The children at our school "wow" me on a daily basis. Their resilience, hard work, determination, care for their peers and others radiates through the school every day but Freddy really did show true empathy on Friday.

He had collected a shell/ pebble early in the morning, which we had discussed was perfect for skimming. He was going to use this the next time he was at the beach with his family. He kept the shell safely tucked away all day and would check throughout that it was still there. On reaching the train station to come home there was a man creating street art. The gentleman was busking for money for whatever reason but Freddy made the assumption that he was in need or less privileged than himself and as he passed he placed the all important shell beside the man. Freddy then sped forward and rifled through his bag to find the unopened leftovers from his lunch and ran back to place them with the shell. He did this without any fuss or the need to tell others that he had done it.

The young man that came on a school trip with me radiated positivity and a thirst for learning; funny, kind and clever. He really did make me understand, in that one single act, the power of learning as I learned something amazing about him - he has an outstanding heart of gold!

DIARY DATES

Anti Bullying Week
Monday 11th Nov

School Open
Afternoon for 2020
Reception Children
Wednesday 20th Nov

School Open
Afternoon for 2020
reception children
Thursday 28th Nov

Last Day of Term
Thursday 19th Dec

INSET Day
Friday 20th December
Christmas Holidays

INSET Day
Monday 6th January

First day of Term 3
Tuesday 7th January



TWITTER

We have
1032
followers

You don't need to have a Twitter account to view the school posts.

These are available from the home page of our school website towards the bottom of the page. This is a really quick way for us to get messages out and we frequently post children's achievements for you to see.

YEAR 2 WERE LOOKING AT THINGS FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW!

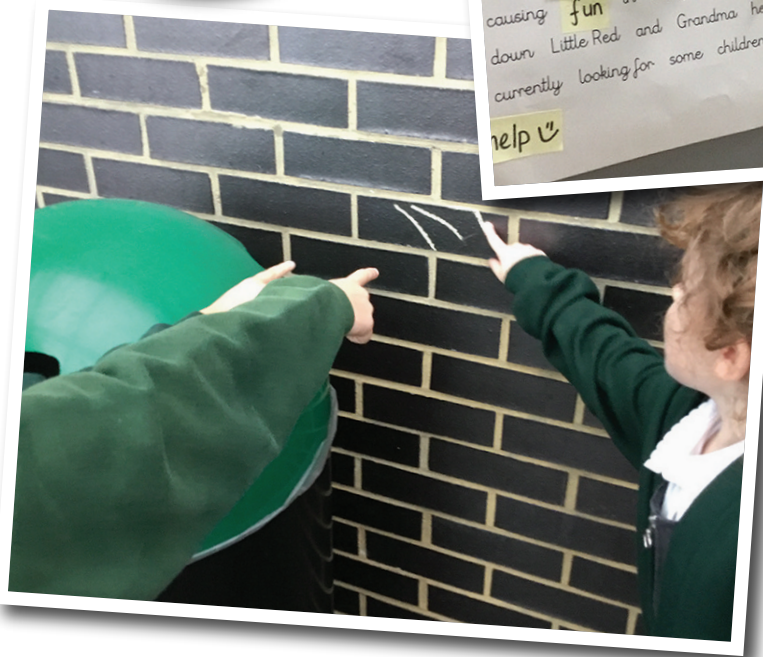
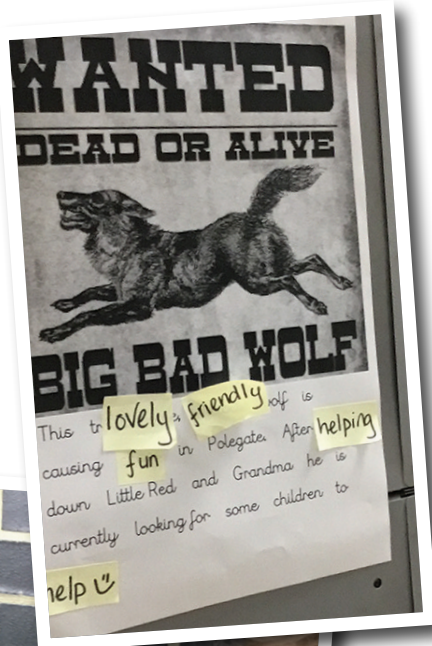
On Monday, the children in Year 2 returned from assembly to find that their classrooms had been trashed...who had been in there?

They hunted for clues and found scratch marks, fur and footprints as well as Wanted! posters around the school. While they were collecting evidence, they had a mysterious phone call, calling them to the hall. There they found the

Big Bag Wolf, waiting to tell his side of the story. The wolf claims that he didn't mean to blow down the homes of the three little pig, he was suffering from a bad cold and sneezed.

Also he is apparently a vegetarian and often helped Grandma with odd jobs around the house.

Year 2 are now examining all of the evidence to decide whether or not he really is big and bad.



PFA EVENTS CALENDAR

Friday 22nd Nov
Winter Extravaganza

Friday 31st January
Family Games Night

Wednesday 5th Feb
PFA Meeting

**Wednesday 18th &
Thursday 19th March**
**Mothers Day/Gifts for
Loved Ones**

Friday 27th March
School Disco

Tuesday 19th May
PFA Meeting

**Wednesday 17th &
Thursday 18th June**
**Fathers Day/Gifts for
Loved Ones**

Saturday 20th June
Summer Festival

Friday 10th July
Quiz Night (Adults Only)

Wednesday 22nd July
Leavers Pool Party

ATTENDANCE

We did receive a tweet in the last holiday asking our thoughts on a question. Is rewarding 100% attendance a good thing or does it penalise genuinely sick children?

I'm sorry I couldn't respond by tweet because I would have run out of characters! I do however want to respond with our stance on this.

I don't think any of us would disagree with the statement that school attendance matters. It is arguably one of the most important indicators of school success. You cannot learn what you are not there to learn. Pupils who attend school regularly improve their chances of being academically successful. This is seen nationally and in our own school.

Poor attendance creates significant learning gaps. Even if pupils complete the make-up work, they most likely will not learn and retain the information as well as if they had been there.

Improving school attendance can prove to be a difficult endeavour. Schools often have very little direct control in this area. Most of the responsibility falls on the pupil's parents especially at primary school.

Regular attendance plays a critical role in defining the culture of Polegate school and I always make this explicitly clear to parents before they even enrol their children at Polegate. We work on the basis of rewarding and being proactive rather than punishing children or parents.

We have developed attendance policies that are more preventive in nature than they are punitive. This begins with getting to the root of the attendance issues on an individualised level. We are always willing to sit down with parents and listen to their reasons for why their children are absent without being judgmental. This allows us to form a partnership with the parent wherein they can develop an individualised plan for improving attendance, a support system for follow through, and a connection to outside resources if necessary.

We have involved the Think Tank in consultation, there have been a number of changes over the years. It will probably change again but at the moment I believe we have reached a position which is balanced and fair because we offer such a range of attendance rewards which makes it achievable for all.

- Genuinely sick children are not punished because we do not count hospital appointments as an absence when we are calculating attendance. We recognise that these are unavoidable and parents have very little say in when these are.
- When we enter children in the prize draw at the end of the year we include all children over our school target of 97% and again include children that are genuinely sick with long term conditions that have required hospital treatment.
- We have individual and whole class rewards each term so I believe this creates a balance in which all children are likely to be rewarded.

This approach is not easy. It has taken a lot of time and resources. However, I see it as an investment that we should be willing to make based on how important we know attendance to be. Our goal should be to get every child to school so that the highly effective teachers we have in place can do their jobs.

I am so grateful to the partnership we have with you as parents. You support our policy and this is reflected in our exceptionally high attendance figures!

You can see below just how much better than national out attendance is!

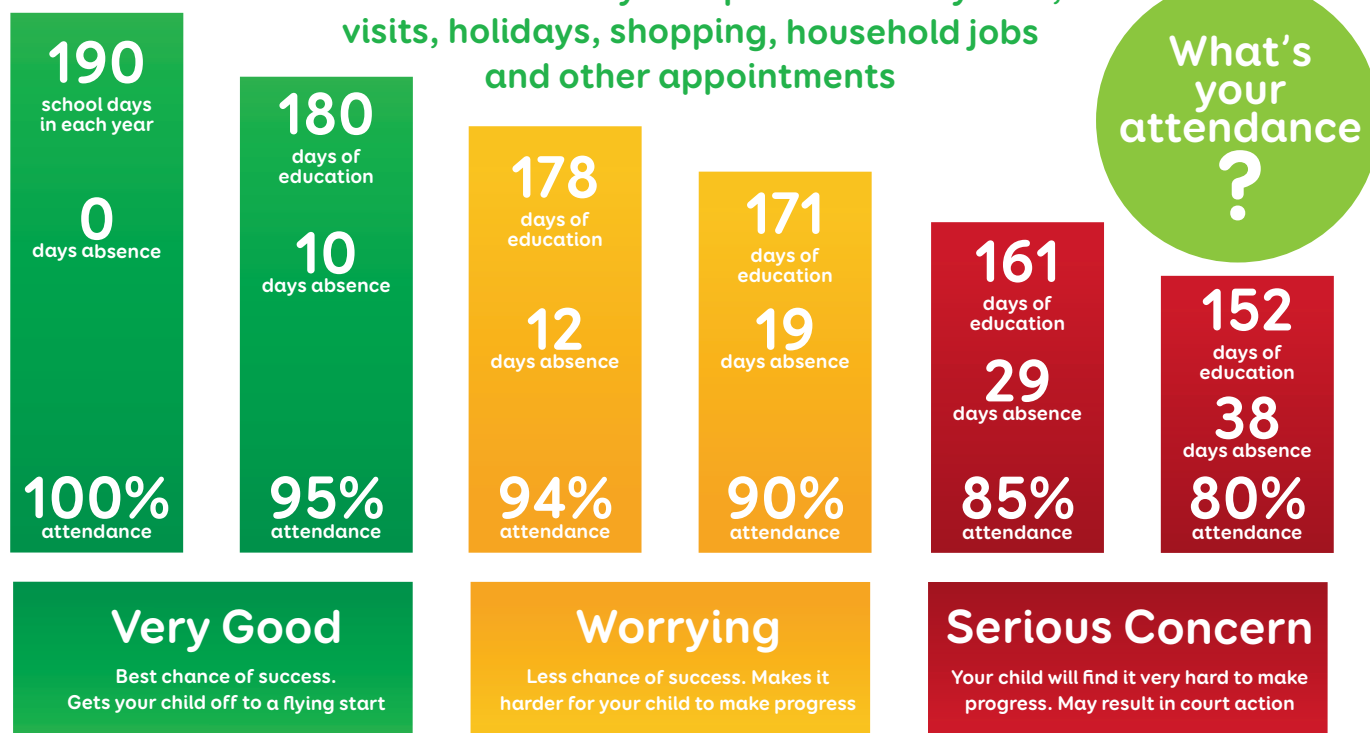
	Polegate School	England state-funded schools
Overall absence	3.1%	4.2%
Persistent absence	4%	8.7%

Persistent absence is the percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of the mornings or afternoons they could attend, meaning that if a pupil's overall rate of absence is 10% or higher across the full academic year they will be classified as persistently absent.



EVERY DAY COUNTS

A whole year has 365 days.
A school year has only 190 days
This leaves 175 days to spend on family time,
visits, holidays, shopping, household jobs
and other appointments



How about 10 minutes late a day? Surely that won't affect my child?

1 or 2 days a week doesn't seem much but...

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years at school that is...
1 day a fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1.5 years
1 day a week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years
2 days a week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days a week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

ALL ABOUT MATHS!

Is it true that some children are born with a talent for mathematics and some simply are not?

How often have we heard parents say, 'Well I wasn't very good at maths.'

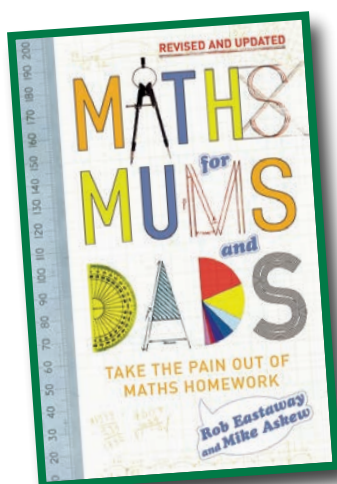
Well no! Research shows there is no such thing as a maths gene. Everyone can be a successful mathematician.

When people say that they don't have the maths gene it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This might seem obvious to some, but it goes against the traditional view that if you are good at math, it is a skill that you are simply born with.

All children have the potential – with good teaching and encouragement – to learn maths. None should be written off as being naturally no good at it.

There is a great deal that you can do. The biggest predictor of children's success at school is their parents and the educational ethos that is transmitted in the home. Pointing out the maths in everyday life and above all never saying they're rubbish at it. A highly recommended book for parents to look at is Rob Eastaway and Mike Askew's Maths for Mums and Dads.



A huge study into maths found that you become good at exactly what you practice. The study showed The fact that you are good at precisely what you practice is probably due to the fact that different kinds of practice activate different neural connections. This is why we introduced the practice maths pages in the Home School journal. These are currently less used than the reading pages which have



now become really well established across the whole school.

We hope the maths pages will become as important. You could practice times tables, or your child's maths passport target in this space. Anything that provides your child with regular practice of different maths. The supermarkets are full of lessons on multiplication- ratio- money- weight!



Which is better value? How do you know? Prove it.

The results can also be transferred to other areas. The football player who practices hitting the goal from 25 yards with a perfectly placed shot will become good at exactly this. But they are not necessarily good at tackling or

reading the game.

A recent OECD report found that under half of the UK participants reached the necessary standard in basic financial maths!

No one would accept it if a person said they can't do English, as a country we need to have the same attitude in relation to maths.

TIMES TABLE TUTOR

As a school we have recently subscribed to the website Times Table Tutor.

This is to compliment the use of TTRockstars, which we already use to help children practise their times table knowledge. We know that some children really don't like the pressure of the timer and we wanted to offer an alternative to support children with their early understanding of times tables. We thought this did that perfectly and feedback from children has been really positive.

Times Table Tutor is designed to help children learn their times tables, working at the child's speed. It is multi-sensory and uses spaced repetition. Children practise their tables in order and out of order in many different ways.

Times Table Tutor is based on Singapore Maths/Maths Mastery, teaching times tables in 3 stages: concrete, pictorial and abstract. This is the approach we already use to teach maths at Polegate School.

As you may already be aware, there is now a national Multiplication Tables Check that all pupils will take in Year 4. Times Table Tutor has mock tests, with the same timing as the formal test, which allow children to practice as many times as they need.

Times Table Tutor is designed to be used daily and has a limit of 10 minutes per day, after which, it will end your child's session and ask them to come back tomorrow.

THANK YOU

This lovely comment was posted about us! I think it says a lot about the staff at Polegate that they gave this impression on the very last day of a very long term!

Helen Hackett @HyperHelga · 6h

Noticed this at a school last week, but I didn't need to see it on a poster, I could feel the positivity & it was great. Too many workplaces focus on ticking boxes for evidence, forgetting ethos & attitudes are noticed & felt, regardless of what you can show on paper.



Winter Extravaganza

**Friday 22nd November
5pm-8pm**

**Including fireworks,
Stix drummers,
fairground rides, stalls
and much more...
Plus a very special
guest!**

**Adult Ticket £6
Child Ticket £4
Family Ticket £18**

**Tickets only available
online at:**

**[www.pta-events.co.uk/
polegateschoolpfa](http://www.pta-events.co.uk/polegateschoolpfa)**

SOCIAL MEDIA & Mental Health

What trusted adults need to know

Social Media is often scrutinised as having a negative impact on children's mental health. Whilst currently there is not enough evidence or research to say whether this is true or not, there are certain 'modern pressures' connected with social media which trusted adults need to be aware of. Children and young people are constantly connected and whilst this comes with some benefits, it also comes with a feeling that you are constantly visible. This guide is designed to encourage trusted adults to think about their children's mental health and their social media activities, providing them with some useful tips on improving and supporting mental health among young people.

Five potential signs & symptoms of mental health difficulties

1. Have you noticed a change in your child's personality? They may not be acting or feeling like themselves.
2. Any recent uncharacteristic anxiety, anger, or moodiness?
3. Is your child experiencing social withdrawal and isolation?
4. Is there a sudden lack of self-care or risky behaviours?
5. Does your child have a sense of hopelessness or feel overwhelmed?

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

Meet our expert

This guide has been written by Anna Bateman. Anna is passionate about placing prevention at the heart of every school, integrating mental wellbeing within the curriculum, school culture and systems. She is also a member of the advisory group for the Department of Education, advising them on their mental health green paper.



1. EDUCATE YOURSELF

Educate yourself about social media sites your child is using so you can really understand what they are experiencing and how this may be making them feel.

2. DISCUSS REAL-LIFE CONNECTIONS

Talk about the importance of face-to-face time with friends and family, and what enjoyment this can bring. Encourage your child to focus on their relationships with people who make them feel good about themselves.

3. SUGGEST REGULAR BREAKS FROM SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage your child to take regular breaks from checking their social media platforms. You could suggest that they turn off their app notifications during certain times of the day so they can focus on other things.

4. ENCOURAGE OTHER HOBBIES OR INTERESTS

Spending time away from their phone and devices will offer them an opportunity to discover other interests and activities they may enjoy. This could be sports, playing a musical instrument or creative interests such as arts and crafts.

5. OFFER YOUR SUPPORT

Inappropriate and harmful content can be accessed on the internet which may impact your child's mental health. Explain to your child that not everything online is real and ensure they know that you are there to support and advise them about any worries or anxieties they may have.

HELPFUL APPS:

- Hub of Hope
- Mindshift
- Smiling Mind

OTHER SERVICES:

- Childline (0800 1111)
- Bullying UK (0808 8002222)
- Young Minds (0808 802 5544)

Sources: <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/social-media-young-people-and-mental-health>, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/articles/measuringnationalwellbeing/2015-10-20>, <https://www.rpsk.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploads/62be270e-55f4719-d6682e7a74c2a.pdf>, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/cutting-edge-leadership/201505/5-warning-signs-mental-health-risk>

www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Twitter - @natonlinesafety

Facebook - /NationalOnlineSafety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 15.05.2019

CHANGE OF INFORMATION RELATING TO YOUR CHILD

We just wanted to let you know that due to the new GDPR regulations we will not be sending out data collection sheets any more. We do still need to know if there are any changes to information relating to your child.

Changes we need to know about are:

- Medical details (any new allergies, asthma etc)
- Change of address, telephone numbers or email address

Keep us informed

It will be up to you to keep us informed and you can do this by emailing the school office [office@polegate.e-](mailto:office@polegate.e-sussex.sch.uk)

sussex.sch.uk

with any changes or by completing the form which you can find on the download section on our website

www.polegateschool.uk

Crisp packet recycling

Please take your empty crisp packets to the school office



WE NOW RECYCLE BATTERIES

We have small recycling battery boxes in the office.



Diary Dates

Friday 20th
December
INSET DAY

Archive



You can read all the previous newsletters on our website.

Twitter

Be the first to
hear the news.
Follow us on Twitter.
We now have
1032 followers!



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Feedback

We'd love to hear your feedback and any new ideas you have. Please send us your thoughts via the contact us page on the school website:

www.polegateschool.co.uk

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