



# Friday Flyer

29 March 2024

## Headteacher Update

Happy Easter! We have hopped our way to the finish line so I hope you enjoy reading our final Friday Flyer, on Thursday, for the Spring Term.

What a fabulous way to end a short and ridiculously busy term at Belsay. As I look back over the last term it fills me with so much joy to see what a wonderful array of activities the children have at school, both academically and through the wider opportunities. I doubt there are any schools in the local area who can rival our offer over this last term!

This week has seen our children take part in some mini assessments but the key ingredient this week for most classes is that it is DT week. This is always a great time to walk around school as the children take delight in sharing their various stages of design, which ultimately culminates in their masterpiece.

The big event in school this week was our Year 5 & 6 Shakespeare Production of Romeo & Juliet, which took place at the Northern Stage in Newcastle. I was absolutely lost for words as I watched our children, many of whom have never taken part in drama, let alone been on a stage, stand in front of a huge audience and give it 100%. I am not even a parent or carer but the pride that I felt watching was just incredible - if I was not a big, tough, ex rugby player I may have cried! Ok I did shed a little tear but shhhh. I would like to thank Mr McLeod and Mr Atkinson for all their hard work pulling this together because without their enthusiasm this performance would not be possible.



As we reach our final day of term it has been a real Belsay treat to see the amazing creations of Egg designs and Easter Bonnets. Choosing a winner from the entries is going to prove to be a very difficult task. Thank you to our PTA who very kindly supplied the school with a large amount of Creme Eggs - a definite hit with the children!

Our final act of the Spring Term was to have a celebration assembly and our hot chocolate reward. Well done to everyone who was nominated this week and to each and every member of school who has received an Outstanding Award or Hot Chocolate this term.



Each week I take a picture which is not only on social media but is also stuck up on my office wall - seeing 22 weeks worth of Hot Chocolate pictures, which celebrate hard work and dedication, tells me everything I need to know about our amazing children at Belsay!

As we start our two week holiday, I hope you have a wonderful time, whatever your plans. Holidays are a time for family so make sure you have quality time together and remember you could always share some pictures via Class Dojo if you're missing us!

See you all on Monday 15th April at 8.45am.

**Craig Shaw**

*Value of the Month - Curiosity*

*Language of the Month - Italian*

### Dates for the diary...

Dates will be added to this document as the term progresses.

Spring Term 2024		
Monday 15th April	8.45am	School reopens after the Easter Holidays
Monday 22nd April		Dukeshouse Wood visit
Thursday 25th April	11-30am - 4.05pm	Dance festival
Thursday 2nd May	9.00am	Willow Class Reading Cafe
Monday 6th May	School closed	May bank holiday
Tuesday 7th May		Willow class vision screening
Monday 13th May	All week	Year 6 SATs
Monday 20th May	9.00am	Alder Class Reading Cafe
Friday 24th May	3.15pm	School closes for half term
Monday 10th June	9.00am	Maple Class Reading Cafe
All dates may be subject to change		

Remember you can track our key school events through our website by clicking on the News and Events tab and then School Calendar



## Parking...

Please may I politely ask that we don't park on the road at the entrance to Belsay Bridge. This is a private road and the residents have asked that we could please not park here.

Your support on this would be very much appreciated.

**NO  
PARKING**

## Keeping children safe online...

At The National College, our Wellbeing Strategy guides everyone and equips parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formally delivered by National College Safety, these guides cover address wider topics and themes. For further guides, links and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](https://nationalcollege.com).

### 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

- 1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE**

Children, blending or shaming can all prevent children from feeling secure enough to share their feelings, opinions and experiences. It's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.
- 2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS**

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something else by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up at their own pace.
- 3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS**

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "how are you feeling today?" "what was the best and worst part of your day?" "if you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "is there anything you want to talk about?"
- 4 LISTEN ACTIVELY**

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Acknowledge eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or "teenage angst" – or to assume that they're simply "get over" whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.
- 5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS**

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "how did you spend time with at break?" or "how did you all get on at lunchtime?"
- 6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES**

If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries. This reassures that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without oversteering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Occasionally checking in can sometimes be the best form of progress.
- 7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE**

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to communicate honestly with family about others and yourself, because if children hear adults talking overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.
- 8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS**

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, or use the child's own opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here. You could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a walk, or just a weekly walk.
- 9 PROVIDE RESOURCES**

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you yourself. Encourage them to talk to school professionals, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while reinforcing this rule and imposing the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Youthline.
- 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION**

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – recognising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a cultural around talking freely about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome with enough love and support.

**Meet Our Expert**

With 32 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and informal emotion-based therapist, Anna Robinson has a wealth of understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.

**#WakeUpWednesday**

**The National College**



Class	Attendance
Willow	100
Maple	97.52
Alder	98.32
Oak	94.76

Please refer to the graphic below which shows the significant impact of absence over time.

Attendance	Description
98 -100%	Excellent
95-97.9%	Good
92-94.9%	Caution (below national)
90- 91.9%	Cause for concern
89.9 or below	Persistent Absence Serious Concern

### **Did you know?**

Poor attendance suggests to colleges, universities and employers that these pupils are unreliable.

The NHS has recently published a really useful document to refer to when your child has a suspected illness and you are not sure if they could come to school. It can be found [here](#).





## The week in Willow Class

The final week of this term has been as busy as the last few. What a lot of progress has been made this half term. A big thank you to everyone who has supported their child with this as it really does make a difference.

We have loved DT week this week and we were very eager to make our own minibeast house. We have very carefully placed them in the wildlife area and we are looking forward to checking them after half term. We spent the week researching where minibeasts like to live, drew a plan of the minibeast house we wanted to make, made our minibeast house and then evaluated what worked well and what was difficult. The evaluation is a very important step to help us improve, however the children always enjoy the making part the most.

We have had a great week making lots of Easter crafts and cakes. We have really enjoyed going on the egg hunt, which took place inside due to the amount of rain we have had. I don't think anyone would like a soggy chocolate egg. It was lovely to see the children working together to make the cakes and they really impressed me with this. Every child was able to make their own Easter basket which was big enough to put their cake in. We had a great time doing this and I know the children enjoyed eating them too!



Please enjoy the half term break. Two weeks seems to be just enough time to spend some time with your family, but also just long enough for parents to miss school. Please share anything that you do over the holidays on Tapestry and we will make sure we share this together when we return to school after the holidays. The children love "being the teacher" and sharing the wonderful things they get up to at home. Please also keep reading. Lots of the children are very eager to achieve their next book worm and reading as often as you can will be helpful to this.

Thank you to everyone for the support you give every day. Both me and Mrs Moffat are very thankful to work with so many brilliant families. Have a lovely half term!

**Miss Houghton**



## This week in Maple Class

Maple Class met St Lawrence's Year 2 class for the first time on a class Zoom call on Monday afternoon. Each pupil introduced themselves to their new friends using sign supported English and showed a piece of artwork that they are proud of to their link partner. It was wonderful to see the children interact with one another and discover what is similar about their link class and what is different. We're very excited to continue our linking journey after the Easter holidays and look forward to eventually meeting our new friends in person at the Laing Art Gallery in the Summer.



### The Linking Network

Identity Diversity Community Equality



For DT week, we made delicious fruit salads on Wednesday afternoon. We learnt the difference between fruits and vegetables and where they grow before planning a recipe for the fruit salad.

We used peeling, chopping and slicing skills and combined our chosen ingredients together to make a healthy treat. We thought of lots of adjectives to describe our salads during our evaluation process- juicy, sour, tasty, sweet!



It has been a short but very busy half term filled with exciting events and lots of learning. Thank you for all your hard work Maple Class! Have a lovely Easter holiday!

**Miss Dixon and Miss McNickle**



## This week in Alder Class

What an amazing end to a brilliant, fun and very busy term. We have achieved so much over the last five weeks and as always I am beyond proud of the children's positivity, resilience and kindness. We have chased many fun challenges this half term whether that be at Ford Castle, during assessment week, our long day as part of Made In The North East Week or when it has been baking as part of DT week, everyone has shown just how amazing they are and also supported their friends along the way.

This week we finished off our assessments and I am so proud of how well everyone has done and I have been most impressed by how the children are starting to take their time with assessments to ensure accuracy instead of racing ahead. It is evident they are taking onboard feedback and are applying the skills to their work. I know everyone is very glad they are over but as I always remind them it is to make sure I can support them in the best way.

The main highlight of this week has been spending our afternoons completing our DT work. We started the week by researching Fairtrade products to ensure we could make our banana cakes Fairtrade and started to think about the cost difference when buying Fairtrade products compared to non-Fairtrade. We then went on to plan our recipe including writing the method, the ingredients and also predicting what we may need more support with and what we think we will enjoy the most. Wednesday was definitely the highlight as we were able to make our banana cupcakes and try them. The overall feedback was that they were 'delicious' and many are eager to take the recipe home. The final step was to evaluate our own work as well as evaluate our friends' work.





Well done on being such an amazing Alder Class! Make sure you have a very fun but well deserved rest over Easter and I am excited to introduce all our new topics and create some more amazing memories with you all.

**Miss Cruse**





## This week in Oak Class

Although every week at Belsay is special, this one has been absolutely magical.

Where else can we start, but yesterday? Our Romeo & Juliet performance at the Coram Shakespeare School Festival at the magnificent Northern Stage in Newcastle. A long day, a VERY long day indeed but a day in which we have made so many memories that will last a lifetime. From the moment that we got on the bus at 8am, to the moment we sent our young performers home at 10pm, they were absolutely outstanding in terms of behaviour, attitude and performance.

Our performers were complimented for their professionalism and focus during our technical rehearsals (which are tricky things to get your head around as an adult, let alone as a Y5/6 pupil!) and showed great patience and curiosity as they managed a number of transitions between the theatre and the brilliant Great North Museum at the Hancock. The museum was another great experience in itself and the children showed a great deal of respect for this fantastic site and explored the fantastic exhibits with curiosity and independence.

From their return to the Northern Stage in the evening, if I'm honest, it's all still a bit of a blur! But what a wonderful blur. What a performance it was. What a day it was. And what an honour it is to have these children in our school.

Let's do it all again soon! Have an awesome Easter and thank you all so, so much for every ounce of support you have given us in this fun filled half term.

#TeamBelsay #WeAreBelsay



**Mr. McLeod**

Belsay School



## Easter Activity Camp

To book head to [www.SportsCampsNE.co.uk](http://www.SportsCampsNE.co.uk)

If you are Eligible for free school meals they have 40 free places available, to enquire about this please contact Chris on 07741488604.



### ACTION PACKED ACTIVITY CAMPS



We provide action packed, full filled activity camps for children during the half term holidays

### RECEPTION - YEAR 6 CHILDREN

### Activities

- Football
- Basketball
- Dance
- Treasure Hunt
- Dodgeball
- Capture the Flag
- Talent Shows
- Cricket
- Movies
- Parachute
- Free Play
- Disco
- Police Visit
- Fire brigade

£18.00 per day  
£70.00 full week

### EASTER HALF TERM WEEK 2 PONTELAND COMMUNITY SCH 8TH - 11TH APRIL

Our dedicated, fully DBS checked and professional staff will ensure every child has an amazing time



For information on camps, or to book, go to website:  
[WWW.SPORTSCAMPSNE.CO.UK](http://WWW.SPORTSCAMPSNE.CO.UK)



# Easter Holiday Activities

Fun sports, activities and games for  
young people with SEND, aged 8 - 19  
years. Siblings are welcome!

Suggested donation of £1 pp



## Week 1: 2nd-5th April

### Wednesday 3rd

10am-12nn at Nelson Village  
Community Centre, Cramlington,  
NE23 1HG



### Friday 5th

10am-12nn at The Venue, Community  
Centre, Stanley, DH9 6AH



## Week 2: 8th-12th April

### Monday 8th

1.45pm-3.45pm at  
The Pavilion, Peterlee, SR8 1ER

### Tuesday 9th

10am-12nn at Tyneside Badminton  
Centre, Newcastle, NE5 2TA



### Wednesday 10th

10am-12nn at Nelson Village  
Community Centre, Cramlington,  
NE23 1HG

### Thursday 11th

10am-12nn at  
Jubilee Fields Community  
Centre, Shildon, DL4 2AL

Book now:

[info@smilethroughsport.com](mailto:info@smilethroughsport.com)

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