



**Friday 19th July 2024**

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you all had a good week, the last full week of this Academic Year. .

I am writing with my usual weekly letter of news and information. I can be contacted at [exehead@aspire-kent.org.uk](mailto:exehead@aspire-kent.org.uk) between 8am - 5pm Monday to Friday for queries and questions. Also Lauren my PA can be contacted at [lriby@aspire-kent.org.uk](mailto:lriby@aspire-kent.org.uk). Any requests for meetings or appointments can be made through Lauren - thank you.

### **Contact During the Summer Break-**

Please note that although I will check my emails at points during the Holidays, I will not be responding regularly. I will endeavour to reply to any emails that are urgent or respond to any concerns that are raised as and when possible.

### **Last day-**

Please note that the **last day for children in School is Tuesday 23rd July.**

We look forward to welcoming everyone back into School on **Wednesday 4th September.**

### **Aspire Olympics-**

Please be reminded that all four schools will be participating in the Aspire Olympics all day on Monday 22nd July. Therefore, unless previously arranged or discussed all children should be dropped off and picked up as per the details in the letter.

### **A fun activity for all-**

Heart of Kent Hospice is proud to announce that **from 29 June to 30 August** over 100 uniquely decorated Shaun the Sheep sculptures will appear in and



around Maidstone.

You can **Download the FREE Shaun Heart of Kent App** and follow the trail to unlock each sculpture, revealing a special reward! Will you complete the trail and unlock them all?

### **Activities in Libraries throughout Kent-**

As well as the Summer Reading Challenge taking place over the Summer Holidays across all libraries across Kent (additional information can be found at <https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/marvellous-makers-books-landing>), there are several libraries in Maidstone that are holding various events and activities throughout the holidays.

Please see the attached leaflet for more information and the dates of these activities that you may wish to participate in.

### **BBC Bitesize Activities-**

The BBC Bitesize website has a wealth of online learning activities for your children to participate in throughout the Holidays. These cover various topics and subjects for all year groups and include videos, games and many more learning opportunities.

Visit- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/primary#england>

### **Attendance Reminder-**

I would also like to remind you of the changes to the National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence. These new Government regulations will come into effect from the 19th of August 2024 and therefore will be the regulations for all Schools from September 2024.

What are the changes?

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period;
2. The first time this threshold is met, a penalty notice will be issued. The amount of the fine will be £80 (currently £60) per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 (currently £120) if paid within 28 days of being issued. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court
3. If within three years, the threshold is met for a second time, the fine will automatically be triggered at the higher rate of £160 per parent, per child. There will be no option to pay the lower rate of £80;
4. If the threshold is met for a third time in a 3-year rolling period, a Penalty Notice will not be issued. Instead, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) where fines of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be ordered.

Further information on how the new rules may affect you can be found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

### **Free School Meal Vouchers-**

For those eligible for FSM, please keep an eye out in your inboxes for supermarket vouchers for use over the Summer Holidays.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS!**

I would like to congratulate Bertie (Year 6 at Kingswood School) on being invited for a second trial for the Maidstone District Under 12 Football Team 2024-2025.

This is an incredible achievement and I am sure we all wish Bertie the best of luck at his trail!

Please send any achievements you would like to share. It is wonderful to celebrate the successes outside of school as well as all they achieve within school!

### **Thank you**

Finally I would like to thank all parents and carers for your continued support this year and to all the children for consistently making effort and making continuing progress in their learning.

Have a wonderful Summer break and we all look forward to seeing everyone in September for another successful year for ASPIRE Schools.

Kind regards,

Emma Hickling  
Executive Headteacher

