GAINFORD C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2026

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Rooted in love, flowing together, flourishing for life

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Monday 2nd November** – INSET Day School closed to pupils
- **Tuesday 3rd November** - Pupils return to school / Start of Autumn Term 2
- **Sunday 8th November** – Remembrance Service @ 10.30am Gainford Village Green
- **Friday 13th November** – Children in Need
- **Friday 13th November** – World Kindness Day
- **Monday 16th November** – Odd Socks Day
- **Monday 16th- Friday 20th November** – National Anti-Bullying Week
- **Monday 7th December** – Pantomime Visit
- **Tuesday 8th December** – EYFS/KS1 Nativity Performance @ 9.30am (Gainford Theatre)
- **Wednesday 9th December** – EYFS (Swale Class) Jet & Ben / People Who Help Us Visit (pm)
- **Thursday 10th December –** Christmas Jumper Day
- **Thursday 10th December** – EYFS/KS1 Nativity Performance @ 9.30am (Gainford Theatre)
- **Thursday 10th December** – KS1 (Tyne Class) Jet & Ben / Stranger Awareness Visit (pm)
- **Tuesday 15th December** – Christingle Service@ St Mary's Church @ 9.15am
- **Tuesday 15th December –** Christmas Dinner Day
- **Wednesday 16th December** – Y5/Y6 Rugby Tournament @ Barnard Castle School (pm)
- **Thursday 17th December** – KS2 (Wear & Tees Class) PCSOs Internet Safety Visit (pm)
- **Friday 18th December** – Christmas Parties (pm) / Last Day of Term / No After School Club

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN GAINFORD

A Service of Remembrance will be held on **Sunday 8th November** at **10.30 am** on the village green in Gainford.

ALL ARE WELCOME

There will be refreshments afterwards.

CHILDREN IN NEED

We're excited to be supporting **Children in Need** again this year! On **Friday 13th November**, pupils are invited to come to school dressed in their **pyjamas** or **Pudsey-themed clothing** for a **£1 suggested donation**.

A Children in Need JustGiving link will be shared near the time.

Please **do not** send cash into school.

Thank you for your support in helping us make a difference!

WORLD KINDNESS DAY

Pupils will be celebrating World Kindness Day in school on **Friday 13th November.**

This is a lovely opportunity to remind our children how small acts of kindness can make a big difference. We will be encouraging pupils to show kindness, care and respect towards others and to think about how their words and actions can help everyone feel valued and included.

ANTI-BULLYING WEEK

National Anti-Bullying Week will take place on **Monday 16th - Friday 20th November.**

Our pupils will be exploring this year's theme, **'Break the Silence'**, learning about the importance of kindness, speaking up if something is worrying them and knowing who they can turn to for support.

We will encourage everyone to look out for one another and help make sure all children feel safe, valued and included.

For the launch of this national campaign children were invited to wear **Odd Socks** for the day on **Monday 16th November.**

Odd Sock Day is an annual event that marks the start of Anti-Bullying Week, encouraging people to wear mismatched socks to celebrate individuality and promote kindness

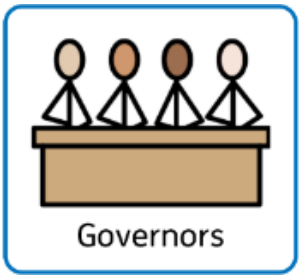
https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/anti-bullying-week-2026/anti-bullying-week-2026

ACADEMY COUNCILLOR VACANCY

We currently have a vacancy for an Academy Councillor and are looking for an enthusiastic individual who would like to support and challenge the school as part of our local governance team.

We would be particularly interested in hearing from anyone with any Early Years experience, although we welcome expressions of interest from people with a range of skills and backgrounds.

If you would like to find out more about the role, please contact Mrs Whitaker or the school office.



FOGS SECRETARY VACANCY

Could you help?

We are looking for a parent volunteer to take on the role of **FOGS Secretary**.

The Secretary plays an important part in helping FOGS run smoothly, but it's not an onerous role. It mainly involves helping to organise meetings, taking simple notes and minutes and supporting communication between the committee and school.

You wouldn't be expected to do it all on your own!

There will be a full handover from the existing committee and you'll have plenty of support from other committee members as you settle into the role.

FOGS does so much to support our school and provide lovely opportunities and experiences for all our children and we would really love to hear from anyone who could spare a little time to help.

If you're interested or would simply like to find out a little more, please email **gainfordfogs@gmail.com** or speak to Beth in the school office.

Please let us know as soon as possible, if you think you could help. Thank you!

PE DAYS

- **Swale Class** (Pre-school & Reception) **Thursday**
- **Tyne Class** (Y1 & 2) **Monday & Friday**
- **Wear Class** (Y3 & Y4) **Thursday & Friday**
- **Tees Class** (Y5 & Y6) **Thursday & Friday**

Also, for PE lessons, we kindly ask that children either wear trainers to school or have a pair of trainers and socks (especially if they usually wear tights) packed in their PE bags – thank you.

ADVANCED NOTICE - CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

We wanted to ensure we give you plenty of advance notice that school will break up for the Christmas holidays on **Friday 18th December**.

Please note that there will be **no after-school club available on this day**, so please make alternative arrangements if needed.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

HEALTHY SNACKS REMINDER

To help keep everyone safe and healthy and as we have several children in school with allergies, we kindly ask that snacks are limited to:

Fresh fruit or vegetables
Breadsticks (no sesame)
Plain crackers
Rice cakes

Unfortunately, we cannot allow **cereal bars, biscuits, chocolate, nuts, crisps or similar snacks.**

RECEPTION CLASS PLACES 2027

If you have a child who turns five between 1st September 2027 and 31st August 2028 you can now apply for a school place.

Visit www.durham.gov.uk/primaryschoolplaces where you can access a useful guide to help with your application. Online applications are encouraged but paper application forms are available on request from Durham County Council.

Applications close at midnight on 15th January 2027.

For more information, please contact School Places and Admissions Team on **03000 265896**.

EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

Please can you let the office know if you have recently updated any of your contact details **especially mobile phone numbers and email addresses** as it is essential that we have two contact numbers per child –
thank you!

LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

Just a reminder that the law states that a Head Teacher is unable to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

We ask that parents complete a leave of absence form which is available on our school website or from the school office.

Please be aware that unauthorised absences on your child's attendance records could result in you receiving a penalty notice from the local authority**. 5 days / 10 sessions unauthorised absence in a 10 week rolling period must now be referred for enforcement action**.

Within a 3-year period:
The first penalty notice is **£160** if paid within 28 days, reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice is **£160** to be paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice **cannot** be issued. **Legal action** may result (for example, prosecution).

Fines are issued per parent / per child, not per family.

Further information, including our **school holiday dates**, can be found on our website:
https://www.gainfordcofeprimary.co.uk/web/school_holidays/
https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2208/Holidays-in-term-time

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY 2026-2027

Just a reminder that our **Attendance and Absence Policy 2026-2027** is available on our school website.
https://www.gainfordcofeprimary.co.uk/web/school_policies
I would be grateful if you could ensure you read this document carefully and are fully aware of the legal requirements around attendance - thank you.

ATTENDANCE

Our whole school target is 96%.
A huge well done to all of our classes, who have exceeded this target.
What a fantastic achievement!

- **Swale Class (EYFS): 97.68%**
- **Tyne Class (Y1 &Y2): 99.7%**
- **Wear Class (Y3 & Y4): 97.3%**
- **Tees Class: (Y5 & Y6) 98.7%**

Our whole-school attendance is currently **98%**, which is absolutely amazing!

Thank you to all of our pupils and families for your continued support in ensuring children attend school regularly and are ready to learn.

Keep up the fantastic work everyone! ⭐ 👏 🎉

ONLINE SAFETY – KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

The internet offers children lots of wonderful opportunities to learn, play and explore. As our children grow and become more confident using technology, we know that keeping them safe online is something we work on together, both at school and at home.

There are lots of simple ways we can support children to have positive experiences online. Talking together about the games they enjoy, the videos they watch and the people they interact with can help children feel comfortable sharing their experiences. Exploring parental controls, checking age ratings and agreeing family rules around screen time can also help children use technology safely and confidently.

It is equally important to remind children that they can always talk to a trusted adult if something they see or experience online makes them feel worried or uncomfortable. Helping children understand how to be kind and respectful online and how to keep personal information private, will also support them as they navigate the digital world.

If you would like further advice or ideas to support your family, the following websites offer helpful, practical guidance:

- **NSPCC – Online Safety Advice for Parents**
- **Internet Matters – Online Safety for Families**
- **Childnet – Online Safety Advice**

SAFEGUARDING

At Gainford C of E Primary School, we are passionate about and committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and we expect all staff and visitors to share this commitment. Any concerns about children are passed through the members of staff who are trained as Designated Child Protection Leads. In our school, these are myself (Mrs Whitaker) and Miss Smith. We also have two link Safeguarding Academy Councillors - Mr Deakin and Mrs Hawlor.

Mrs Whitaker

Miss Smith

Mr Deakin

Mrs Hawlor

We have robust policies in place to ensure the well-being of our children. These policies underpin our practice and values shared by every single member of staff in our school. Copies are available from the school office or via our website https://www.gainfordcofeprimary.co.uk/web/safeguarding/ & https://www.gainfordcofeprimary.co.uk/web/school_policies/

Please note that if you are ever worried or concerned about a child's safety, please do not hesitate to speak to the Designated Safeguarding Leads straight away.

Term Dates 2026-2027

Holiday	Closing date	Date re-opens
Autumn half-term 2026	Friday 23rd October 2026	**Tuesday 3rd November 2026**
Christmas 2026	**Friday 18th December 2026**	Tuesday 5th January 2027
Spring half-term 2027	Friday 12th February 2027	Tuesday 23rd February 2027
Easter 2027	Thursday 25th March 2027	Monday 12th April 2027
May Day 2027	Friday 30th April 2027	Tuesday 4th May 2027
Summer half-term 2027	Thursday 28th May 2027	Tuesday 8th June 2027
Summer 2027	Wednesday 21st July 2027	TBC

Teacher Training Days 2026-2027

- ~~Tuesday 1st September~~
- **Monday 2nd November**
- **Monday 5th January**
- **Monday 22nd February**
- **Monday 7th June**

Many thanks for your continued support.
Mrs. K. Whitaker & The Gainford Team x