The Griffin Federation
Nurture to Flourish

18th September 2026

Newsletter

Attendance

Weekly attendance for each school:
Holbeach St Marks – 98%
Gedney Drove End – 91%
Westmere –95%

Attendance

The Department for Education updated school attendance guidelines, effective from 19th August 2024, stressing the importance of regular attendance for academic and social development. Parents must report absences by 8:30am daily and provide proof for medical appointments during school hours. Term-time holidays are no longer allowed and will be marked as unauthorised unless exceptional circumstances apply. Unauthorised absences, including late arrivals or unapproved holidays, will lead to penalty notices after 10 sessions (5 days) of absence within a 10-week period. Parents could face fines or legal action if absences persist. If you are struggling with attendance in any way, please come and talk to us as we can often offer some kind of support.

Each week, we will publish attendance figures for the week and one child from each class will get the attendance award and become an attendance hero. One class from each school will get the class certificate for the week. Our weekly target is 95%.

Diary Dates

Monday 19th October – Parents' Evening HSM
Tuesday 20th October – Parents' Evening GDE
Wednesday 21st October – Parents' Evening Westmere
Wednesday 21st October – Harvest HSM / GDE
Thursday 22nd October – Parents' Evening Westmere
Friday 23rd October – Harvest Westmere
Friday 23rd October – End of Term 1
Monday 2nd November – Start of Term 2
Tuesday 8th December – Christingle GDE/HSM
Wednesday 9th December – Christinlge KS2 WMR (children only)
Thursday 10th December – Nativity GDE 2pm
Tuesday 15th December – Nativity Westmere (1.30pm Year 1&2, 2.15pm Reception)
Wednesday 16th December – Nativity HSM 2pm
Friday 18th December – End of Term 2

Headlice

Please check your child regularly for headlice and treat if you find any. Here is the NHS advice on treating headlice.

How to get rid of head lice
Treat head lice as soon as you spot them. You can treat head lice without seeing a GP.
Check everyone you live with, or have close contact with, and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day.
There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You do not need to wash your laundry on a hot wash.

Wet combing
Lice and nits can be removed by wet combing. You can buy a special fine-toothed comb (detection comb) online or from pharmacies to remove head lice and nits. There may be instructions on the pack, but usually you:

- wash hair with ordinary shampoo
- apply lots of conditioner (any conditioner will do)
- comb the whole head of hair, using the detection comb, from the roots to the ends

It usually takes about 10 minutes to comb short hair, and 20 to 30 minutes for long, frizzy or curly hair. When you've finished combing the hair, comb through all the hair again for a second time. Do wet combing on days 1, 5, 9 and 13 to catch any newly hatched head lice. Check again that everyone's hair is free of lice on day 17.

Medicated lotions and sprays
If wet combing has not worked or is not suitable, you could try a medicated lotion or spray. These kill head lice in all types of hair, and you can buy them from pharmacies, supermarkets or online. Head lice should die within a day. Some lotions and sprays come with a comb to remove dead lice and eggs. Some treatments need to be repeated after a week to kill any newly hatched lice. Check the pack to see if they're okay for you or your child to use, and how to use them. If lotions or sprays do not work, speak to a pharmacist about other treatments.

From Amanda – Family Support Worker

I wanted to share some useful support and resources that may be helpful to you and your family. Whether you are looking for information, someone to talk to, practical advice, or support around your child's emotional wellbeing, there are services available to help. Remember, you don't have to manage everything on your own. If you have questions, are unsure where to find support, or simply need someone to talk things through with, please get in touch. I am here to listen, support and help you find the right resources for your family. Take care, Amanda - Family Support Worker. Please see attached flyer.

Footwear, jewellery, false nails, nail varnish, makeup and toys

We would like to give you a reminder about some of our policies which we have already had to speak to several parents about. Children should wear dark coloured school shoes or smart summer sandals. We do not allow heels or casual shoes such as mules, Crocs or coloured trainers. Children may only wear studs or sleeper earrings and a watch (no smart watches). They should not wear necklaces or bracelets of any kind. We do not allow makeup to be worn in school. Some children recently have had false nails – these should not be worn, especially as long ones can cause injury to the person wearing them if they are caught, or to someone else if they are scratched. We also do not allow nail varnish to be worn. Children should not bring toys or resources (including fidgets) into school as these can get lost or broken and can cause arguments and upset. We know sometimes children try to sneak these things into school, so we ask that you please speak to your child and check they don't have any of these things – Thank you!

Reading Afternoons

We would like to invite parents to their child's class for a reading afternoon, on the following dates:

	Class	**Date & Time**
Westmere	France	Thursday 1st October 2:15-3:15pm
	Italy	Wednesday 30th September 2:15-3:15pm
	Australia	Tuesday 29th September 2:30-3:15pm
	Brazil	Thursday 1st October 2:15-3:15pm
	Mexico	Thursday 1st October 2:15-3:15pm
	USA	Wednesday 30th September 2:15-3:15pm
	Spain	Wednesday 30th September 2:15-3:15pm
	Canada	Thursday 1st October 2:30 – 3:15pm
GDE	Finland, Sweden & Norway	Tuesday 29th September - **Reading Breakfast** - 8.40am - 9.20am
HSM	Cuba, Barbados & St Lucia	Friday 2nd October 2.15 – 3.15pm

OPAL Parents' Meeting - Westmere

We would like to invite you into school to find out more about OPAL play. Please come along and join us on Thursday 24th September at 2pm.

Parking

At Westmere, we ask that you respect our neighbours on Anne Road and not park over their driveways. Please drive with care on this road as there are so many children either on their way to school or on their way home. For the safety of the children, do not park on the zigzags or yellow lines at the top gate on Bridge Road. Vehicles parking here make it harder for children to use the zebra crossing as oncoming traffic cannot always be seen well enough. We have had a few near-misses in the past.

At Holbeach St Marks, we ask that you are mindful of our neighbours in the bungalows across from school, and not park in their private car park. Please use spaces on the road or at the village hall. You should also not park on the zigzags.

At Gedney Drove End, again please be respectful of our neighbours, taking care not to block driveways.

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St Lucia, Norway & Sweden Trip to Burghley House

As part of their Tudor topic, St Lucia class from Holbeach St Marks and Norway and Sweden classes from Gedney Drove End will be visiting Burghley House in Stamford on Wednesday 30th September. The coach will pick up Gedney Drove End at 8.50am and Holbeach St Marks at 9.10am, we expect to be back by the end of the school day. Children should bring a packed lunch and a drinks bottle, if your child is entitled to Free School Meals you can order a packed lunch from our meal provider. Children should wear normal school uniform. The cost of this trip to school is £17.25 per child; we are asking for a voluntary contribution of £10 per child. Please either return the signed permission slip or email your permission to the office.

Breaktime Snack

We are encouraging healthy snacks in school. Children in reception, year 1 and year 2 receive fruit each day under a government scheme. Children in other year groups may bring one of the following to eat at breaktime;

A piece of fruit or vegetable (cucumber, pepper etc.)
A plain biscuit (rich tea, digestive, malted milk etc.)
Dried fruit (raisins, sultanas, apricots, mango etc.)
A yoghurt (tube or pouch only)
Plain breadsticks
A cereal bar (must not contain chocolate)

If possible, please pack the snack be in a separate container and not in your child's lunchbox.

Secondary School Applications

If you have a child in year 6, you should have received an email from us last week with details of how to apply for a secondary school, the closing date is 31st October. If your child is taking the 11+ test you should wait for the results before making an application.

Here are details of the open evenings we have been made aware of.

School	Date	Time
University Academy Holbeach	23rd September	6pm - 8pm

Value of the Week

Each week we have a value of the week where we focus on one of our federation values. We discuss what this value is and how we can live this out in our everyday lives. At the end of the week, certificates are awarded to children who have who have shown evidence of that value during the week. Our values are Wisdom and Knowledge, Koinonia (working together), Respect, Perseverance.

Our Value next week is: **Respect**

Fundamental British Values

- Democracy - A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone has an equal say, and the government is accountable to the people.
- The Rule of Law - The principle that all individuals are subject to the same laws, ensuring a safe, orderly, and fair society
- Individual Liberty - The freedom to make personal choices, pursue goals, and express oneself freely within the bounds of the law.
- Mutual Respect and Tolerance - Understanding that people have different faiths, beliefs, and values, and respecting those differences without imposing one's own views.
- As part of our curriculum, we teach about British Values and how these are lived out in life and around our school. Each week, we will focus on one of the values. Our next British value is **The Rule of Law**

Kind regards,
Sally Massey
Assistant Executive Headteacher

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St Lucia, Norway & Sweden Trip to Burghley House

I give / do not give permission for my child(ren) …….. to attend the visit to Burghley House on 30th September.

I do / do not enclose a contribution of £10 □

Signed …….. Date ……