



## Newsletter: February 2026

Dear Howardian Families,

The first half of the spring term is nearly over and I am sure that the children and staff are all looking forward to a well-deserved break following a very busy 6 weeks. It's lovely to finally see more daylight in the mornings and evenings.

Thank you all for your continued support in making sure that our pupils attend school regularly and on time, so that they can make the most of every learning opportunity. I hope you find the content of this newsletter informative and of interest.

Warmest Regards,

*Mrs Sian Burt (Headteacher)*

### Eisteddfod Preparation

As always, we will be marking St David's Day through holding our annual Eisteddfod. This is a traditional festival where we celebrate Welsh culture and the Welsh language through songs, poetry, music and art. This year, St David's Day is on a Sunday, so our Eisteddfod will take place on **Monday March 2nd**. **Children may**



**wear Welsh shirts and colours, or their house colours, to school on that day though this is not compulsory.**

During the week after half term, the children will be busy writing stories and poems, learning songs and using their creative skills to produce Art work with a Welsh theme. We also invite children to take part in a **half-term project**. This is not compulsory, but I am sure you will agree, it is a lovely opportunity to spend time with your children in order to support a learning task.

This year, we would like the children from Nursery to Year 2 to create a Welsh-themed 3-D model. These can be brought into school for judging from Tuesday February 24th. **They will be judged on Friday February 27th.**

For Years 3 -6, we would like the children to create a poster (either by hand or digitally) promoting the Welsh language and the advantages of learning and speaking Welsh in school. The most successful entries will be used to promote Welsh

across the school. Again, these will be judged on **Friday February 27th** so will need to be sent into school by then.

In addition, why not take advantage during half-term of the many Welsh cultural attractions in the city or nearby such as St Fagan's National Museum of History; Cardiff or Caerphilly Castle; Castell Coch; Tredegar House; Caerleon Roman Fortress and Baths; Cardiff Bay - full of maritime history; Big Pit National Coal Museum or the National Museum in Cardiff. Many of these venues have half-term events.

### Reception Grandparents Reading Session

It was absolutely lovely to welcome the grandparents of some of our Reception children, who volunteered to come into school to read traditional stories with the children as part of their 'Once Upon a Time' topic. These included 'Little Red Riding Hood,' 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff,' and 'Jack and the beanstalk.' Much fun was had by all - especially the grandparents!



### Year 3 pBuzz

This term, our Year 3 pupils have been learning how to play the pBuzz. This is a relatively new instrument, designed to give children their first taste of performing music. pBuzz helps children to develop the skills which are also used to play brass instruments. The Cardiff and Vale music service organise an annual event in the All Nations Centre where children are able to play in front of others. The purpose of this is to give all children the experience of playing a musical instrument with the view to enthusing them to take up playing an instrument and developing a passion for music.

On Tuesday February 10th, our Year 3 cohort attended this performance, representing Howardian. Their performances and their experience was fantastic and they really did us proud! Da iawn, blwyddyn 3!



### Children's Mental Health Week 9th - 13th February

We recognise that if our children are not mentally secure in terms of their mental health, then this will have a negative impact on their progress - socially, emotionally and academically. This year the theme for Children's Mental Health Week was "This is My Place" to foster a sense of belonging in children. The importance of this week was marked by different year groups as follows:

Year Group	Activities
Nursery	Children participated in a group activity: 'I feel happy when...' They will have a Pyjama day on Friday; hot chocolate and stories by the (virtual) fire
Reception	Children listened to the story, 'The Colour Monster' and identified different emotions and matched them to colours. They also talked

	about how to make themselves feel calm and introduced breathing techniques. They designed their own safe spaces and decorated bedrooms using an ipad game, with the focus on making the area calm.
Year 1	Children listened to the story, 'The Feelings Fair.' They drew pictures on Doodle-Buddy of what makes them happy and practised breathing techniques to help them calm down and relax.
Year 2	'My Place' art lesson: children painted things that make them feel safe or make them feel they belong
Year 3	Circle time activity where the children discussed how to be calm, followed by an art activity on the theme of 'belonging.'
Year 4	Children discussed what is meant by mental health and how wellbeing and mental health can be supported. Children presented their ideas using their own preferred methods, e.g. songs, poems, slideshows, posters.
Year 5	Children designed their own island based on the theme of 'belonging.' They then created a whole-class acrostic poem on what it means to have a sense of belonging.
Year 6	Children took part in a 'Creative Mindfulness' workshop, featuring simple Mindfulness techniques and tips to help pupils build resilience, calm and focus in times of stress

**Parents Evenings**

Thank you to our families who took the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher to discuss their progress during the recent parents' evenings. I hope that you found the meetings informative and constructive so that, as a result, you may be able to support your child's learning at home should you wish. Thank you also to the teachers for their continued dedication to ensure that our children have the best learning and experiences during their time at Howardian. Also thank you to Mrs Curran: it was no mean feat to arrange these meetings during our time of transition to our new Management Information System. Thanks also to you for your patience and understanding when the first launch did not quite go according to plan!



### **Open-Door Policy**

Please remember that you do not have to wait for a parents evening to speak with staff about any concerns. We have an open-door policy. We ask that, in the first instance, you contact the class teacher in order to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss any concerns. In the unlikely event that they are not able to resolve any problems, then you may make an appointment with either Mr Brind (Deputy Head) or Miss Griffiths (Assistant Head teacher). If you are still not satisfied, then you are able to contact myself. For reference, our Complaints Policy is available on our school website. Paper copies can be made available on request.

### **Race Equality First Workshops**

On Tuesday February 10th, Race Equality First came into school to deliver anti-racism workshops to our Year 3 and Year 6 classes. This is part of our ongoing commitment to eradicate racism from our school community and to educate our children to understand that racism is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in society.



### **New School Website**

Our new school website will be launched very soon after half term. A huge thank you to Miss Griffiths who has coordinated this mammoth project and to the staff who have supported her.



### **Year 3 Swimming Lessons**



I would like to commend our fantastic Year 3 cohort for the resilience and enthusiasm that they showed towards their recent swimming lessons (January 26th - February 6th). All children made progress both with their swimming and their confidence. I am very proud of them. I would also like to thank the Year 3 staff

for organising these lessons, and the parents and carers who accompanied them. Swimming is such an important skill.

*Seven people under 20 died in accidental water-related fatalities in Wales in 2023 – the highest number since comparable data became available from the National Water Safety Forum’s Water Incident Database (WAID) in 2015.*

*In total, there were 28 deaths in Wales from accidental water-related fatalities in 2023 across inland and coastal locations, compared with 22 the previous year.*

*The accidental deaths form part of the 55 total water-related fatalities in Wales for 2023, an increase of seven from the previous year and the first overall increase in Wales in five years.*

*Across the UK there were 236 accidental water-related fatalities last year – an increase of 10 from the previous year.*

These are alarming statistics. Unfortunately, due to the rising cost of transport and swimming lessons, many schools across Cardiff have been forced to stop swimming lessons as school budgets cannot sustain them. However, thanks to the support of our PTA and the voluntary contributions from parents we are able to maintain these invaluable lessons.

### **PTA**

Another huge thank you to our PTA for organising the recent Movie Nights which seem to have been enjoyed by all the children who attended. If you are able to take an active role

**Join the PTA!**



within the PTA, please contact the school and we can pass on your details to the relevant personnel. The PTA funds are increasingly important to support our school budget. Many activities and events may not be sustainable without their support (e.g annual pantomime trips, Year 3 swimming lessons). Please support PTA events if you can.

### **Punctuality**

Please be mindful that the school day and learning begins **promptly at 9am** and the school gates are locked at this time. This first half hour of the day is when the teaching of reading and important literacy skills takes place. Children who are late to school miss out on this incredibly important part of the curriculum. When children are late, not only does this impact their learning but it can also affect their emotional wellbeing, as children who are late often feel that they have missed out on learning opportunities and this can be very unsettling and upsetting for them. In addition, pupil lateness has an impact on the admin staff as they have to lead the younger pupils down to class which disrupts their workload. **If your children do arrive late, please ensure that you escort them onto site and sign them in - for Health & Safety reasons.** Thank you for your support with this.

### **Safe and Considerate Driving and Parking**

Thank you to all our families who are supporting our ongoing mission to make journeys to and from school as safe and as stress-free as possible. Not parking on the yellow lines and zig-zags and parking further away from the school is a huge help towards this, as is parking with consideration for the residents.

### **Is your child entitled to Free School Meals (eFSM)?**

Whilst all primary-school aged pupils are universally entitled to free school meals (uFSM), there are a number of benefits for pupils who apply to receive eFSM status. eFSM pupils receive a discount on their educational and residential trips, group music lessons (provided by the Cardiff and Vale music service) are subsidised by the school, and a free playtime snack is provided to foundation phase children. Pupils who receive eFSM will also be entitled to a uniform grant and other offers from Welsh Government and the council. The school also obtains extra funding for every pupil

who is registered as eFSM. This is used to employ staff to run interventions and provide various types of support for the pupils.

Once you submit an application, you will be notified in writing of the outcome. If you are eligible for free school meals, we will be notified so that we can update our records. Please click the link below to apply for eFSM.

<https://www.cardiffcouncilforms.co.uk/article/1684/>

Mrs Curran (Senior Admin Assistant) is able to provide support with your application if needed.

### Staffing

- Congratulations to Miss Davies and her family who welcomed their baby girl, Esme, into the world last month. Mother and Baby are doing very well.

### Food Bags

We have a good stock of food which is available to support families should you wish to receive food bags. All requests will be dealt with sensitively and discretely. Please contact the office or myself directly to arrange collection.

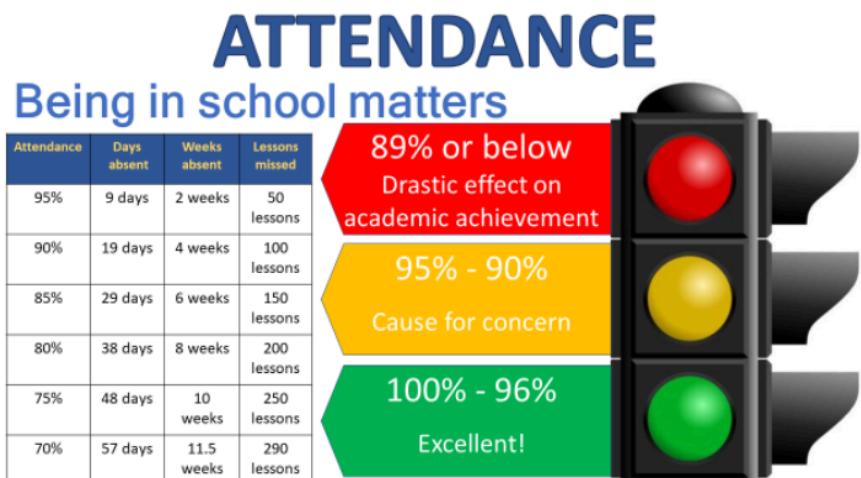
### School lunches

A huge thank you to our families who pre-order lunches on a weekend ready for the week ahead. This is an incredible help to Mrs Marshall, our cook, as she is able to order and prepare stock accordingly. Please could you all ensure that your child/ren's lunches are ordered at least a day in advance. For those pupils who have not ordered a lunch, some find this upsetting and they are not always able to have the choice that they want due to the availability of meals that are left against what has already been ordered.

Thank you for your cooperation with this.

### Attendance

At Howardian, we are committed to promoting



positive attitudes to learning and school in general. Good attendance supports this ethos. Pupils who have low attendance at school are at risk of a negative impact on their social, emotional and academic development and progress.

In order for our pupils to make the most of every learning opportunity, they need to attend as regularly as possible (aside from illness or appointments that cannot be taken outside of school hours) and arrive at school on time. School starts at 9am and learning starts at 9am, mostly with the class's daily Guided Group Reading sessions.

Please support your child's development by:

- getting them to school on time.
- booking holidays during the school holidays.
- taking appointments outside of school hours as much as possible.
- informing us on your child's first day of absence, giving the reason for that absence.
- Get in touch if you need any support.

We do understand that life happens and we are sympathetic to any family or personal circumstances that might affect your child's attendance. We are really happy to engage with you in such situations.

### **Dates for your Diary**

We strive to include all key dates on the school calendar. Schools are very busy places and dates may be subject to change, or events might be communicated at relatively short notice, but we will endeavour to communicate such changes as soon as we can.



If you have not yet subscribed to the school calendar, please do so at your earliest convenience so that you do not miss key events.

**Monday February 16th - Friday February 20th:** Half Term week

Key events for the second half of the spring term are:

**Monday February 23rd:** INSET day, school closed to pupils

**Monday March 2nd:** school Eisteddfod (children may wear Welsh shirts & colours or house colours)

**Wednesday March 4th:** deadline for KS2 pupils (Years 3 - 6) to order and pay for the book by the author, Paul Leyshon, who will be in school on **Thursday March 5th.**

**Friday March 6th:** Howardian will celebrate World Book Day. An email has been sent to you with details of this.

**Friday March 13th:** Storey Arms meeting for parents of current Year 5 pupils (9-9:30am)

**Friday March 20th:** Comic Relief (Red Nose Day). Details to follow, but children will be able to wear non-uniform to school if they wish.

**Tuesday March 24th:** Year 4/5 show at The Gate

**Friday March 27th:** Spring bonnet parade (Nursery to Year 2 pupils)

**Monday March 30th - Friday April 10th:** Easter Holidays

**INSET days 2025-2026** - Staff professional training: school closed to pupils

**Spring Term:** Monday 23rd February

**Summer Term:** Thursday 7th May and Monday 20th July

**I hope that you have a very happy Half Term and that you are able to spend some quality time with your families and friends.**

