

Thursday 3rd September 2026



Welcome Back!



“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

— Winston Churchill

For a school context, I particularly like the feel of this quote... it gives me the feeling of: **“It always seems impossible until it’s done.”** It works beautifully for children because success isn't presented as being the cleverest or winning—it is about **believing something is possible and persevering.**

And on that note: Welcome back, everyone!

Martyn Wells Martyn Wells
Headteacher
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www.claypoleprimary.org



Believe & Achieve





From Mr Wells

Welcome Back!

Welcome back, everyone. I hope you have all had a lovely summer making memories and are rested & re-energised for a new academic year! And welcome to school our new families! Never will uniforms look so baggy and shoes be so shiny! It was lovely to welcome the children today and to begin to hear all about their summer holidays and what they're looking forward to this year. There is always something special about the start of a new school year – new beginnings, new opportunities and plenty of things to look forward to!

I am delighted to be back and very much looking forward to the year ahead. I managed to speak to several families before we broke up for the summer and I really appreciated the warm-wishes and kindness bestowed: thank you... and it was lovely to speak to many of you this morning too.

Our school is a community, and the partnership we have with our families is incredibly important to us. We are grateful for your continued support, encouragement and trust... and look forward to working closely with you this year.

We welcome back to the team Mrs Kempster who will be supporting Mrs Doney in the office while we make an appointment for a new admin assistant. We also welcome Miss Grove to the team: our new Sports Apprentice.

We welcome Tony Tucker as the new Chair of Governors; and our joint Vice Chair of Governors Julie Johnson & Sam Kirk. Taking on these roles is an important responsibility and we are grateful for the time, commitment and enthusiasm they will bring to the role. We are very much looking forward to working together in a supportive & collaborative capacity and developing a positive & constructive relationship; we wish them all every success in their new roles.

There will be, as always, plenty happening across the school – with opportunities for our children to learn, grow and make memories along the way.

Thank you for being such an important part of our school community and entrusting your child/ren with us on a daily basis. It is a privilege and we take our role seriously. Here's to a happy, successful - healthy - and exciting year ahead!

I'll leave you with the thoughts of A.J. Juliani: *"Our job is not to prepare students for something. Our job is to help students prepare themselves for anything."* I will write again soon.

Now.

Where was I...



What's Happening & When?

Key Dates

When

What

Thursday 3rd September Welcome Back To School!

Wednesday 23rd September Year 3/4 trip to The Deep

Thursday 24th September Flu Vaccinations

Friday 23rd October End of Term

Monday 2nd November Back To School

Friday 18th December Finish for Christmas.

Term Dates for 2026/27: <https://www.claypoleprimary.org/term-dates>

We'll be able to share more dates with you shortly once they've been confirmed.





Reminder: Absences & Fixed Penalty Notices

Attendance & Absences

As a reminder, the government increased the amount of money parents who are fined for taking their children out of school will need to pay - with County Councils expected to apply the measures comparably and consistently (*under the current rules it is the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents - which means the process can vary from council to council across the country*). Please be prepared for a far stricter approach/enforcement by our Local Authority.

Under the Education Act parents have a legal duty in England to make sure their child is getting an education when they reach compulsory school age. This is defined by law as the school term after they turn five to the last Friday in June in the school year in which they turn 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

From August all Local Authority schools were obliged to consider a fine when a pupil misses 10 or more school sessions for unauthorised reasons. A session counts as either a morning or an afternoon in school. Therefore 10 missed sessions are the equivalent to five whole days of school.

Unauthorised reasons can include (but no exhaustive):

- Holidays;
- Days off;
- Feeling tired;
- Bad weather;
- Parent unwell to bring child to school;
- Persistent absence due to child refusal;
- Birthday celebrations;
- Lack of information regarding absence (i.e. 'feeling unwell')

As the Headteacher, I can only grant a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. School will only grant term time holidays if there are exceptional circumstances, of which parents must provide 4 weeks' notice in writing, if the holiday is to be granted. If the term time holiday is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance, then the absence will not be authorised.



The current penalty is £80 per parent, which rises to £160 if not paid within 21 days.

Under the rules, education chiefs are also pledging to tackle repeat offenders and those who may choose to regularly allow their children to miss school in favour of paying the fine. If a parent is given a second fine for the same child within a three-year period, this fine will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for a discount if paid early. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution may be considered. If you're prosecuted and have to attend court because your child hasn't been going to school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

The Department for Education expects children to attend school every day that it is open - unless they are ill; and if your child is missing - without permission in advance from the headteacher - then families may risk a fine if the number of absent days breaches the threshold.

The Department for Education says there has been a 'worldwide rise' in absence and persistent absence from school since the pandemic, which broke the habits of coming to lessons each week combined with other barriers such as mental ill health.

We love being part of your child's life and want them in school with us every day. It's an honour & a privilege to watch them grow... and it happens in a blink of an eye. We meticulously plan our curriculum so that it builds on prior learning & threads together various subjects to help children deepen their knowledge and appreciate how learning interweaves. Consistent attendance ensures the best chance at achieving the outstanding progress your child deserves.

Medicines In School

You will have received a separate notice about the school's use of 'Medical Tracker' for accident report forms. School can administer **prescribed medication** if parents have completed the correct permissions form. Please speak to the office about this.

If your child has a cold or is feeling a little unwell, we encourage parents to bring them to school – dosing them up with some Calpol & sending them in with the medicine. Teachers are very vigilant and the school will contact parents if your child's symptoms worsen or we feel they become too unwell to remain in school. Our admin team are able to support parents with any queries regarding absences due to illness.



Contacting Staff

Contacts

All messages (including correspondences intended for staff) are to come via the school office via adminoffice@claypoleprimary.org or 01636 626268 which will then be forwarded to the right person.

Safeguarding and Safety Directory

Useful Contacts

ChildLine: 0800 1111

Lincolnshire Prevent Team: 020 7340 7264

NSPCC whistle blowing helpline: 08088 005000

Domestic Violence: 0808 2000 247

Samaritans: 01522 528282

Family Services Directory: 0800 195 1635

[Lincolnshire] Social Services: 01522 782111

[Nottingham] Social Services: 0300 1310 300

Anxiety UK: 08444 775 774



'Healthy Minds Lincolnshire' is a children and young people's emotional wellbeing service - for further information please visit their website www.lpft.nhs.uk/young-people
If you are wishing to contact 'Healthy Minds' regarding suitability for referral into the service of a child or young person in your care, please contact the Here4You line on: 0800 234 6342.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CONSPIRACY THEORIES

Conspiracy theories are false or misleading beliefs that explain events as secret plots, often involving powerful groups. While once fringe, they are now more accessible through digital media, online influencers and because of algorithmic recommendations. The DfE guidance document, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) explicitly recognises conspiracy theories as potential content risks. This guide will help parents and educators understand the risks, spot the signs, and build children's resilience to conspiracy theories.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

UNDERMINING TRUST

Conspiracy theories can lead children and young people to distrust democratic institutions and British Values, teachers, and even their own families and loved ones. This erosion of trust makes young people more vulnerable to extremist narratives by isolating them from reliable sources of information.

ONLINE ALGORITHM TRAPS

Social media platforms can often recommend sensationalist content. Once a child engages with one conspiracy-themed video or post, algorithms push more of the same, thereby creating an echo chamber that can intensify their beliefs.

MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT

Exposure to frightening conspiracy content, such as global plots, viruses, or government control, can fuel feelings of anxiety, paranoia, or hopelessness. For some young people, it can trigger prolonged distress or obsessive thinking.

GATEWAY TO EXTREMISM

Conspiracy theories can often overlap with extremist ideologies. Narratives that blame specific groups, such as politicians, scientists, or particular ethnic groups, can groom children in ways that foster hate, bigotry, and radicalisation.

CONFLICT WITH PEERS

Belief in conspiracy theories can lead to isolation or conflict at school. Children may struggle with peer relationships if they express these beliefs or become distrustful of others who disagree; sometimes, confrontation can even result in a strengthening of the belief in the conspiracy theory.

ERODED CRITICAL THINKING

Young people influenced by conspiracies may reject evidence-based learning. This risks undermining their academic progress and weakening their ability to think critically, assess risks, or engage in healthy debate.

Advice for Parents & Educators

I WANT TO BELIEVE

CREATE SAFE CONVERSATIONS

Don't mock or dismiss any questions that children and young people ask about conspiracy theories. Instead, create open, judgement-free spaces to talk. This strengthens trust and makes it more likely they will confide in you.

PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

Teach young people how to assess information critically. Encourage them to ask appropriate questions, such as: Who is telling me this? What evidence is there? What do other trusted sources say? Use real examples from current media to explain your answers and reasoning.

MONITOR DIGITAL BEHAVIOUR

Be aware of the content children are accessing, especially on platforms such as TikTok, YouTube, or Reddit. Use parental controls, but more importantly, maintain ongoing dialogue about online experiences and influencers.

REINFORCE RELIABLE SOURCES

Point children toward trustworthy and reliable sources of news and information in a variety of formats tailored to the young person's age. Build habits of verifying facts using reliable sources, and teach them how to spot misleading content.

Meet Our Expert

Brendan O'Keeffe is a headteacher and digital education consultant with over a decade of experience in education. As Director of Digital Strategy across multiple schools and an advisor to The National College, he specialises in digital safety, PREVENT, and pastoral care.



The National College®

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/conspiracy-theories>



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Claypole

Church of England

Primary School

