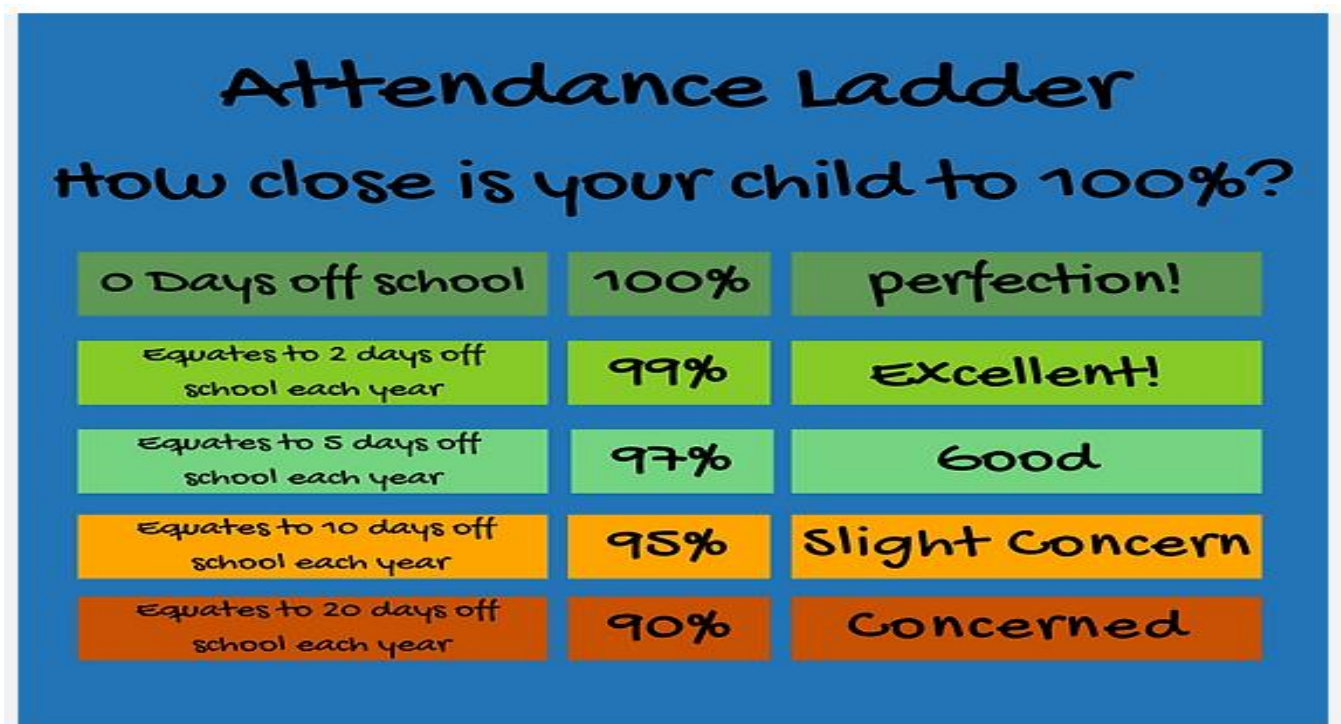


Dear Parents/Carers,

What a super week we have enjoyed here at school. Your children are really beginning to get to grips with their new year groups and I have been delighted by the standard of work and the enthusiasm they are demonstrating towards their learning. From sharing habitats in Year 2 (yes, I braved the bugs that the children had dutifully collected from our school grounds) to being wowed by the Year 4s in their English lessons this morning – every child should be feeling proud of their achievements!

**Attendance** - I am confident that you will not be surprised to read that good attendance for children is incredibly important. Good attendance at school is the single most important factor in ensuring that children and young people have the best opportunities in their adult lives. For all children, from time to time, there will be days missed at school for illness and unforeseen emergencies but together we must work to ensure absence is kept to a minimum and only occurs when it is unavoidable.



Last year, we recognised the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on families and Command were clear that families needed to be able to return home after many years of being unable to. As a result, many trips abroad were approved to facilitate families reuniting after many years of being unable to.

Now that the difficult period of lockdown has passed, we need to ensure that children's attendance at school is once again prioritised. It is very important that families consider very carefully the impact on their child's education when requesting leave during the school term. For all planned absences,

please ensure that you complete the school's 'Request for Term Time Leave – Exceptional Circumstances' form two weeks prior to the date of leave. **Exceptional circumstances are circumstances that are one off events which are unavoidable**, holidays are not considered to be an exceptional circumstance as holidays are not essential and can usually be taken during the school closure periods. We have deliberately tied our school closure periods to that of key Garrison stand down periods (for instance, we have an additional week at Christmas and scheduled our half term in October to coincide with the Dashain festival).

Examples from the UK Department for Education attendance guidance share the following examples to demonstrate what an exceptional circumstance may be: events such as the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, or a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

As a school, we are also very mindful that our remote location here in Brunei, and the community that we serve as a school, mean that there may well be additional reasons for leave requests. Please be reassured that we consider every request carefully under its own merit but we have to follow the guidance. This was confirmed when I met with the Education Welfare Officer for Brunei from Defence Children's Services yesterday. The Education Welfare Officer supports us, as a school, with any questions we have around attendance and engages with families should attendance be an area of concern. She, like us, is passionate about ensuring all service children receive a good level of education whilst they are posted overseas with their parents; to achieve this, it is really important that all our children are in school as many days as possible.

**Clubs** - We have been overwhelmed by the children's positive response to this term's clubs. Our clubs will begin next week. Letters will be sent home on Friday confirming which club each child can attend. We are endeavouring to be able to offer the first choice for each child, and where this is not possible, ensure that they have their second choice.

**Messages** - Because of their teaching commitment, teachers may not be able to access messages received via Dojo or Seesaw during the school day. Please can I request that parents call our school office (Tel +673 3224111 Extn: 3214 / 3893 / 3894 or email [Hornbill.office@modschools.org](mailto:Hornbill.office@modschools.org) to share any urgent messages that need to be seen prior to the end of the school day. Thank you!

**Supporting Early Reading** – The following link will take parents to a super resource available for free which allows you to hear the correct pronunciation of the phonics sound for individual letters (phonemes) and groups of letters (graphemes) modelled:

<https://learn.readwithphonics.com/school/phonics-games/phonics-soundwall>

We hope it will be a useful resource to parents who may be helping their child with early reading. Modelling the correct phoneme and grapheme pronunciation, building on your child's work in the classroom, will be a very supportive tool for young children. For parents of children in Reception to Year 2, please speak to your child's teacher to learn more about the phonic stage that your child is currently working at.

**Times Tables Rock Stars Competition** – Further to the earlier message from Mrs Donald, we are holding a class competition for Years 2 to 6, looking at their work on TTRS. This will be held next week (Week Commencing Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023) We will be encouraging the children to complete different activities on Times Tables Rock Stars as regularly as they can. For every correct

answer scored in *any* game they will receive 1 point towards their class' team score. At the end of the week, there will be prizes given to the highest scoring class; the highest scoring child and the highest scoring teacher (yes, even our teaching team need to practice their multiplication tables regularly!)

The competition is open from 07.00hrs on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October until Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 17.00. To promote digital wellness, the competition stops at 8 p.m. on the competition days, apart from the final day when it closes at 5 p.m. Results will be revealed on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Indoor Athletics Tournament** - Our school recently hosted an Indoor Athletic Tournament, attended by Year 6 and 7 children from ISB Seria, Panaga and of course, Hornbill School. Our Year 6 children were fantastic and really did make us proud in their efforts. The children worked in mixed school teams and it was great to witness effective teamwork, co-operation and competitive spirit.



**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October – Y6 Parents ISB Presentation** 08.00hrs – Staff from ISB will be attending Hornbill School Hall to share information with Year 6 parents considering the next stage of their child's education.

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October – Year 4-6 Cross Country at Panaga**. Mr Donald has arranged for a team of pupils from Years 4 to 6 to participate in this exciting event alongside other local schools. We wish them every success and look forward to hearing all about it!

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023 – Dashain Festival Picnic** – We will be celebrating the festival of Dashain (a little early as a result of our half term) with our community by holding a picnic on our school field.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October – Y6 Parents JIS Presentation** 14.00 – 15.00 hrs – Staff from JIS will be attending Hornbill School Hall to share information with Year 6 parents considering the next stage of their child's education.

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October** - Mr Donald has also organised another competition with local schools to participate in an **Athletics tournament at BJSL**. Teams of children from each participating school in Years 4 – 6 will be invited to attend.

**Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November – JIS Football Fun Day** - This is a five a side competition open to children from Years 3 - 6. A letter is being sent home today with more information and the opportunity for children to register their interest.

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October – INSET Day** - This date is for staff training. Children do not attend.

**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October – Half term Holiday**



**Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October – School Hallowe'en Mufti Day** – This will be a fundraising event for Hornbill Helping Hands. Children are invited to attend school in their own clothing. They are welcome to wear anything that they would like to (but we ask that you are mindful of their safety in this hot and humid climate) for a donation towards Hornbill Helping Hands.

Funds raised at this event will provide us with a float for our Christmas fundraising event.

**Fund Raising** – Following the Hallowe'en Mufti Day, we will be focussing our fund-raising efforts with Hornbill Helping Hands to develop our playground environment. As many of you will be aware, our playground equipment does not cope well in the humid conditions and regularly needs to be replaced. We have an amazing fort (which the children love) made from recycled plastic and it appears to be indestructible! We would love to raise money to purchase more equipment like the fort to help our children, so this will be our big fund-raising project moving forward. We will work with our School Council to identify precisely which piece of equipment the children wish to buy and will share news about this presently.

**Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> of November: Parents Evenings** - These meetings will be schedules between 14.15hrs to 16.45hrs for all parents to meet with their child or children's teacher to discuss their progress this term. Appointment letters will be sent home presently.

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November: Remembrance Service** – Again, I will send further information about arrangements for this service closer to the time, but please reserve the date!

#### **External Events:**

##### **BFB Garrison Hallowe'en party**

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> October

Time: 15.00-19.00

Venue Garrison Junior Ranks Club, Medicina Lines.

Tickets cost \$5 and are available at REME WKSP, Admin Office (Medicina Lines) and AWS

Please don't hesitate to share any other events in the local community that we can share with our families in my next newsletter, we would be happy to support!

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Neal'.

**Mrs C. Neal, Headteacher**