



**Mowbray Primary School**  
**Stakeford Lane**  
**Guide Post**  
**Choppington**  
**Northumberland**  
**NE62 5HQ**

**Headteacher: Mr Andrew Miller**

AM/LH

26 November 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Over the ten years of being headteacher at Mowbray, I have always been overwhelmed by the support the school receives from parents/carers and families. We do not take this for granted and value it as one of the core elements that makes Mowbray into Mowbray.

At the heart of everything we do are your children. Our curriculum, educational visits, activities and opportunities, our support and wellbeing services all focus on meeting the needs of every child that comes through Mowbray's doors. However, this is currently being challenged.

The past 12 months have been the most challenging the school has faced while I have been here. School funding across the country is frequently in the press as well as many other issues school are facing such as supporting children with Special Educational Needs, school buildings and recruitment of staff to name a few. All of these pressures are a massive challenge to how well we can deliver what we do and how well we can support your children.

Funding has gone beyond being "tight" and we have been faced with many tough decisions to ensure we maintain the core of what we do.

It would be very easy to cut provision right back. It would be easy to say "no" to some of the critical support we offer families and children. We have diversified to benefit school and the wider community with Toddler Groups and our partnership with 1<sup>st</sup> Step Preschool. Behind all of this is the staff at Mowbray. Staff who are currently working at times beyond capacity and close to breaking point. It's no secret we are short staffed and are unable to recruit the numbers of staff we need. All teachers are working long hours during the week and most or all of the weekends at the expense of their own families and mental health. Support staff are working multiple jobs – many will not take extra pay for these as they realise the impact that would have but they also realise the impact if they don't. When things do not go right, which, like everywhere, they sometimes don't; then we feel it.

I'm made proud by how the staff come together to keep offering more each day. In the last few weeks we have been very short of staff. Teachers, assistants and Governors have helped clean and vacuum the school before children come in. Staff are voluntarily working through the whole day with no breaks so that things are not missed for the children.

☎ 01670 823198

✉ [Admin@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:Admin@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk)  
📞 [www.mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk](http://www.mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk)



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We know things don't always go right. When this does happen I am appealing for understanding and for concerns to be discussed with staff. While I completely understand frustrations sometimes might boil over; being abusive towards the staff is not acceptable. We've had staff leaving in tears having been shouted at, sworn at and threatened. Staff being told that they don't care about children, that they are rubbish and should be sacked does have a significant toll on the mental health of the staff. Although this is from a minority, it is not acceptable.

An already overstretched staff team keeps coming back again and again; the reason is your children.

If you have any time available and if you would like to help school during this difficult time, please get in touch. We need more support for the staff to focus on the children. We would like anyone with some time to give to register with us for paid "supply" or "bank" work when we need it particularly for roles as cleaners or lunchtime supervisors – roles that are impossible to cover if someone is absent and currently are just absorbed by staff in school.

We would also really value any volunteers with time to spare on a regular basis who can help in class; particularly by listening to young readers.

If you would like more information on registering as bank support staff, please contact Business Manager Sara Atkinson on [sara.atkinson@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:sara.atkinson@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk)

If you would be prepared to volunteer to support the children at Mowbray, contact Deputy Headteacher Sarah Beattie on [sarah.beattie@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk](mailto:sarah.beattie@mowbrayprimary.northumberland.sch.uk)

Yours sincerely

*A. Miller*

**Mr A Miller**  
**Headteacher**

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