



# St Bartholomew's CE Primary School

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019

WELCOME BACK!

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome back to the new school year, and an especially warm welcome to all of our new children joining us for the first time – we are looking forward to getting to know you.

All the staff have been working hard to prepare for the start of the new year and I am confident that this will be another brilliant year for all the children. This newsletter aims to remind you of routines with which you are familiar.

## Communication with Parents/Carers

Following this letter all communication will be sent to parents/carers by email and uploaded to the website. Only letters with reply slips will be sent home with your children. Text messages will also be sent when necessary. Please make sure that the school office have your up to date email address and mobile number.

## Staffing

Mrs Edwards will continue to oversee KS2 and Miss Cannon will continue to have overall responsibility for Foundation Stage and KS1. If parents/carers have a concern, the first person to speak to is the class teacher, as they know the children best. The next person will be the key stage leader (unless she is the class teacher) and then Mrs Thorogood if the concern is regarding a child with Special Educational Needs and then myself if it is felt that the concern has not been resolved. We welcome Mr Ball, who will be a sports apprentice based in Oak class. We also welcome Miss Holiday, who will be studying to be a teacher through the SCITT (School Initial Teacher Training route). We all look forward to working with them.

## Contact Numbers

Can all parents/carers ensure that they advise the office ASAP of any changes to their emergency contact details. It is imperative that we are able to contact parents/carers or another nominated adult in the event of any unforeseen incidents such as illness or accident. There have been occasions that we have been unable to contact a parent/carer and as you would expect this is distressing for any child who feels unwell.

## Start of the day

The school gates will open at 8.35am; children in Apple class are welcome to enter their class at this time. All other children should remain on the playground until 8.45am when the whistle is blown to signal the start of the school day. The school playground gates will be closed at 8.50am and any children arriving late will need to access the school via the main reception doors. Please ensure that your children arrive in good time to ensure an efficient and calm start to the day.

## End of the day

Pupils in Apple and Palm Class will be released from their classes at 3.10pm and Oak and Willow Class will be discharged from their classes at 3.15pm. Please can you ensure that you arrive in good time to collect your children from the playground. If for any reason you are going to be late collecting your children, the school may put them in 'Cool Kids Club' which would then recharge parents/carers for looking after the children.

## School Meals

Under the government's universal infant free school meals initiative all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal. Our meal provider, the Farm Kitchen, currently offers a wide and varied menu which provides four meal choices a day. Lunches need to be ordered through the Farm Kitchen's online ordering system. Parents of Reception and KS1 children should have received a letter detailing log on details for the system. If you have not received this letter please contact the school office who will be able to provide you with log on details.

All meal orders, either those which are being supplied under the universal infant free school meal scheme or those which are being ordered for KS2 children, do need to be ordered through the Farm Kitchen's website ([www.thefarmkitchen.com](http://www.thefarmkitchen.com)) by the Tuesday of the week before they are supplied.

## Allergies

We endeavour to ensure that we safeguard the healthcare needs of all children with allergies in school. To assist us further we would be very grateful if you could be conscious of the significant health risks these pupils experience and where possible avoid sending nut based products in packed lunches.

## Healthy Schools

Foundation Stage and KS1 children will continue to be provided with a healthy fruit snack each day. Key Stage 2 children are encouraged to bring a healthy snack to enjoy at break time; crisps and biscuits will need to be kept in lunch boxes to be eaten at lunch times only. In line with healthy school guidelines water bottles are encouraged in class for all children and should contain water not juice. Whilst children can access water at the school water fountain, access to water bottles in the class is preferable. These need to be taken home each day so they can be washed and refilled. Replacement water bottles can be obtained from the school office at a cost of 75p.

## Attendance

100% school attendance is the aim for every child as we know that attendance is directly related to educational attainment. The government are very keen to increase attendance in school so they have reduced the threshold at which absence is categorised as persistent. A child will be considered to have persistent absence if their attendance level falls below 90%. This level will be met if in a six week term a child is absent for 3 days or 6 sessions.

I would be very grateful if parents/carers could strive to book medical and dental appointments outside the school day. On occasion we know that children require leave from school for exceptional circumstances; where this situation occurs we request that parents/carers submit a written request for leave, stating the dates of absence and the reason.

## Sickness absence

If your child is unwell and unable to come to school please ensure that you let us know as soon as you can. The school office is staffed from 8.30am. It is essential that you have advised us before 9am.

If we do not know why a child has not arrived we will ring to establish the reason for your child's absence. If we are unable to make contact with you and therefore have no information to explain a child's absence we will be required to visit your home to ensure your child is safe. If we cannot establish their safety at this point, we will contact the Police to initiate a safe and well check.

These safeguarding systems are aimed to ensure that every child who sets off to school arrives there safely. As you can imagine, carrying out home visits does present a huge burden to us and we would be very grateful if you could help us avoid such a situation by ensuring that you ring the school to advise of absence on each day that they are absent.

## Parking and Traffic

To reduce the risk to the children and other pedestrians arriving and leaving the school please remember that cars should not park on the yellow hazard lines at any time, even for dropping off quickly. Please do not drop children off in the entrance to the school drive. If you are parking adjacent to the school (next to the hedge or the fencing next to the park) please remember to reverse into the spaces. We ask all parents/carers and children to remain vigilant to their safety and the safety of others when arriving and leaving school. With a lack of pavements it is essential that cars go dead slow and children are closely supervised. In addition, please avoid parking opposite the school by the fence, next to the field, as visibility is poor for cars and pedestrians coming around the corner on that side.

## Return of Slips and Payments

Your child will have been issued with a named clear plastic wallet which is to be used to return all completed reply slips and payments into school. Your child should pass this wallet to their class teacher at the beginning of the day. The contents will then be processed and the wallet will be returned to you. This system reduces the risk of slips or monies being lost.

## Uniform

Items of school uniform are available to purchase from the school office along with book bags, PE bags, sun hats and beanies. Please complete a uniform form and return it to the school office where it will be processed as soon as possible and items given to your child to bring home.

## PTFA

The PTFA contribute an incredible amount to the school both through their fundraising events and in school support. Having such an active PTFA ensures that our school maintains a very strong community feel and I would encourage any parent who can spare the time to get involved. Please remember being part of the PTFA does not require you to attend every meeting and every event, any time you can spare is greatly appreciated.

## Learning

Your child's class teacher will be providing you with a class newsletter at the beginning of each term advising you of the learning they are planning for the class including the termly topic. We hope that you find this information useful; if you would like any additional information about the topic or how you can help your child with their learning please contact your child's class teacher who will be delighted to assist you.

## Reading

Reading is an essential skill that underpins learning across the curriculum and its positive impact on children's progress cannot be understated. Reading provides for language development (so children's speaking and writing improves), it offers children the opportunity to learn about things beyond personal experience and it provides the key to independent learning – a lifelong skill. Therefore developing enjoyment and engagement in reading continues to be a priority for the school.

Reading is an area of learning that parent/carers can provide active support. Teachers will soon be sending home reading books for you to share with your children. Please endeavour to read with your child at least three times a week (as a minimum), remembering to record this in their reading diary. The support you give your child's reading development will change as your child's reading ability grows, but the opportunity to read aloud and discuss books is an essential aspect of securing reading comprehension and confidence even when they are in year 6. If you would like to know how you can further support your child's reading at home please contact your child's class teacher. As well as hearing your child read we would also recommend that you read books to your child too. Reading books to them which are beyond their current independent reading ability is also a great way to build understanding and extend their vocabulary – as well as just being really enjoyable too!

Children very much enjoy the opportunity to read to adults and are very proud when they are invited to read to a visitor in school. We are keen to hear from anyone who is able to spare an hour or so each week to hear children read. Please contact your child's class teacher or the school office to let us know if you would like to be involved in helping us to support the children.

## Cursive Handwriting

We will continue to use cursive handwriting throughout the school. In cursive handwriting all letters start on the line with a lead-in stroke and this handwriting style is taught from Reception right through the school and we have seen improvements in handwriting fluency and standards of presentation throughout the school since its introduction.

The rules of the Cursive Style help:

- to minimise confusion for the child as every letter starts on the line with an entry stroke and leads out with an exit stroke (confusion with 'b' and 'd' is reduced/eliminated)
- with the flow of Cursive Writing as letters naturally flow into each other; it is impossible to write separate letters without joining
- form spacing between words as the child develops whole word awareness
- develop a child's visual memory (which assists with spelling patterns)
- all children's writing skills regardless of academic ability
- to develop skills of punctuation and grammar

Please encourage your children to use cursive handwriting at home. As with everything, a little practise on a regular basis will ensure that the skills are quickly secured and mastered.

On behalf of all the staff and children, we are excited about working in partnership with you to ensure that we have the highest standards. As part of this process, I will be writing to you again in the next couple of weeks outlining what the school's priorities are for this coming year, giving a summary of our school development plan.

Best wishes,

Mr James Shawley  
Head Teacher