



St Bartholomew's CE Primary School

Thursday 3rd September 2015

WELCOME BACK!

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the new school year, and an especially warm welcome to all of the 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, as well as letting you know about the new things we will be doing this year.

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 will be 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 class at 3.10pm and Oak and Willow class will be discharged from their class at 3.15pm. Please can you ensure that you arrive in good time to collect your children from the playground.

School Meals

Under the government's universal 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 offer a wide and varied menu which provides three meal choices a day. Lunches need to be ordered through the Farm Kitchen's online ordering system. Parents of reception and key stage 1 pupils should have received a letter detailing log on details for the system. If you have not received this letter please contact the Farm Kitchen who will be able to issue 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 key stage 2 pupils, do need to be ordered through the Farm Kitchen's website 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.

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Healthy Schools

Key Stage 1 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 £1.50.

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. We do have very good levels of attendance in school, but this new threshold would significantly increase the number of children who would be classified as having persistent absence.

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 you to establish the reason for your child's absence. If we are unable to contact 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, carryout 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.

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 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. Thank you for everyone's help in this regard.

Return of Slips and Payments

Each child will arrive home this evening with a plastic zip wallet. This is to be used to return all slips and payments into school. When returning slips or payments place them in the wallet. Your child should then pass the 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 from the school office as well as book bags, PE bags and sun hats. The school office is a very busy place at the beginning of the day, so in order to alleviate any unnecessary congestion drop in uniform sales will be offered on Friday mornings. Of course if this is not convenient we will accommodate your needs but would be grateful if you could ring the office in advance so that they can organise it for your collection and purchase.

The PTFA present a regular used uniform sale. Please watch out for further information regarding this, and of course if you have any good quality used uniform we would be grateful to receive it to recycle and reuse it.

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.

Maths No Problem

The New National Curriculum aims to secure increased levels of maths comprehension and 'mastery' of maths. To help us achieve the best outcomes we can for the children we are introducing the 'Maths No Problem' scheme of work to the school. The scheme is based on the Singapore approach to teaching maths which has gained significant international acclaim for its positive impact on the learning of maths.

The scheme will be rolled out initially to Years 1-3 this year and then year on year until the scheme is used in all classes (yr 4 2016, yr5 2017, yr6 2018). Year 4-6 will continue to receive the current high quality maths teaching based upon the expectations of the national curriculum.

Please google Singapore maths or Maths No Problem to find out more. We are planning to deliver an information sharing event so parents can learn more about the new approach. Please watch out for more information in this regard.

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 their 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 life long skill. Therefore developing enjoyment and engagement in reading remains one of the school's key priorities.

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

As we commence the year all children will initially write with a pencil, with older pupils moving on to pen when the standard of their presentation supports the award of a 'pen licence'

To help you support your child to develop a cursive handwriting style please see below examples of the letters the children learn as part of the cursive writing scheme.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x
y z

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.

