



ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER - AUG/SEPT 2026

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to all at Orchard Community Primary School. On behalf of all of the staff, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to our new children and their families, especially those who have joined us in the Foundation Stage. We hope that your children will be very happy with us. We have made lots of exciting plans for the year ahead and very much look forward to sharing the Orchard Primary School journey with you all.

Warmest regards

Fiona Shields & the Orchard Team

WE'RE HERE TO HELP...

Changing classes can sometimes be a difficult time for children and whilst most pupils love the new challenges that come with being in the next year group up, a few may find those challenges a little daunting.

To help build resilience, try to give your child time to settle... talk to them about the positives and about strategies to deal with the things that are making them feel a little anxious. Our experience indicates that after a week or so, pupils have got used to their new class routines, have lost their inhibitions and have developed greater confidence so that their time at school becomes a very happy and settled one.

If you have any questions or concerns however, our staff will be happy to talk with you. You are welcome to pass a message onto the class teacher via the school office/ email or to a member of staff as you drop off/collect. If you have an issue that may take more time to resolve, we would ask that you contact the school office to make an appointment with either the class teacher, or myself.

THE FIRST WEEK BACK ...

This year, we are introducing an extended transition period during the first week of term. Our focus will be on helping children settle back into school, build positive relationships with their classmates and adults, and become familiar with classroom routines in a calm, welcoming and supportive environment. During this week, the curriculum will be adapted to allow children time to feel confident and comfortable before returning to their usual learning programme.

STAFFING UPDATE

We are delighted to welcome Miss Bryans to Orchard from 28th September. She will be working alongside Mrs Wood in Class 3 to ensure a smooth transition before Mrs Wood begins her maternity leave.

CONTACT NUMBERS, TEXT ALERTS & EMAILS

Please remember to inform the school office if you change your home/mobile telephone number or your email address, otherwise we may have difficulty getting hold of you should an emergency arise.

Similarly, please contact the school office if you wish school information to be sent to a new personal email account - it is vital that we keep the email addresses held on our files accurate and up to date in order for our electronic mailing system to work effectively for parents.

If you do not wish to receive information via email, you have the option to receive paperwork as a 'hard copy' through pupil post. Please inform the office staff if this is the case. Thank you.

SCHOOL OFFICE REQUEST

The school office is always very busy. We would therefore be exceptionally grateful if parents could assist us by returning paperwork or making bookings by the deadlines requested. It just helps things to run more smoothly our end. Thank you.

MEET THE TEACHER: KS1 & KS2 PARENTS

If you would like to meet your child's new class teacher and see your child's new classroom (Years 1-6), we will be offering the opportunity for families to informally drop into school on **Friday 28th August from 3.15pm until 3.45pm**. All families should please enter school via the main front entrance, where you are then invited to make your own way to classrooms. Access to classes 8 & 9 will be via the KS1 corridor and through the outdoor 'sail area'. Alternatively, you are very welcome just to message your child's new class teacher/s via Dojo to say hello!

ATTENDANCE - EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

As we begin a new academic year, we would like to thank all of our families for their continued support in ensuring children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Every day in school counts. Good attendance helps children build strong friendships, develop confidence, keep up with their learning and achieve their full potential. We understand that absence due to illness is sometimes unavoidable, but we expect all pupils to maintain an attendance rate of at least 95%. This means an average of less than 1 day off each month.

National guidelines make it clear that Headteachers are unable to grant leave of absence during term time, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Holidays taken during term time will not usually be authorised therefore, and may result in a penalty fine. As a Parent/Carer, you are asked to complete a 'Leave of Absence' form, found via a link on our website, if you wish to take your child out of school for any reason during term time. You do not need to fill in this form for medical appointments.

Please ensure your child arrives at school punctually each morning, ready to begin the day. A calm and positive start helps children settle quickly and make the most of every learning opportunity.

If you are experiencing any difficulties that may affect your child's attendance, we encourage you to speak to us. We are here to work in partnership with families to support every child in achieving excellent attendance.

REPORTING YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE

If your child is unable to attend school through illness, please telephone the school office before 8.45am on the first day of absence, and each subsequent day, so that the absence can be recorded as authorised.

We ask that, wherever possible, medical appointments are arranged outside of the school day. However, if this is not possible, then please inform the school office.

In order to ensure the safety of all of our children, the school is legally obliged to check with parents on the first day of an unexpected absence if no notification has been received. Therefore, if a child is not at school without explanation we will phone you to make further enquiries. Thank you for your support.

PARKING AROUND THE SCHOOL SITE

We request that parents observe the Highway Code and show courtesy to our neighbours when parking outside school. We would kindly request therefore that parents do not park over driveways, or on blind corners. The safety of our pupils is paramount. Thank you for your understanding.

CHILD PROTECTION

At Orchard Primary School, we value working in partnership with our families and aim to communicate openly and regularly. However, the safety and wellbeing of our pupils is always our highest priority. If a child discloses information, or we have concerns that they may be at risk of harm or abuse, we have a legal duty to follow our safeguarding procedures. This may include making a referral to Children's Social Care in line with Local Authority guidance.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WHATS APP GROUPS

As we begin a new school year, I would like to remind all members of our school community of the importance of treating one another with kindness and respect, both in person and online. We ask that all families use social media responsibly and show consideration for other children, their families and members of staff.

If you have any concerns or feel that a situation requires further attention from the school, we kindly ask that you contact us directly to discuss the matter. Speaking with us in person, or by arranging a meeting, allows us to fully understand the situation, answer any questions and work together to find a positive resolution. It also helps to avoid misunderstandings or incomplete information being shared on social media.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding. By working together in a respectful and open way, we can ensure the best outcomes for all members of our school community.

SCHOOL UNIFORM & JEWELLERY

Thank you for your anticipated support in upholding our school uniform policy throughout the year. Wearing the correct school uniform helps to promote a sense of belonging, pride in our school and equality amongst our pupils.

We recognise that, for some children with identified sensory needs, adaptations to the uniform may be necessary to ensure they are comfortable and able to fully access school life. Where this is the case, we kindly ask that parents/carers discuss any required adaptations with the SENDCO so that appropriate arrangements can be agreed together.

If your child has pierced ears, we would request that only small stud type earrings are worn to school. If your child has newly pierced ears, so that they do not miss out on 2 hours of essential exercise per week, we will allow earrings to be covered with micro pore tape, provided by the parent. Bar a watch, other forms of jewellery should not be worn to school please. We would kindly ask that pupils do not wear Apple watches that allow access to the internet and a camera.

DIARY DATES - AUTUMN TERM

- Fri 28th August 3.15-3.45pm - Meet the Teacher
- Fri 4th September - Character Ed Day & Rock Kidz visitors PTA Summer Fair
- WB. 31/8 - Inspiration Days: KS1—Seaside; UKS2—Astronaut Training Day
- Mon 7th September - School Council President Hustings (Assembly)
- Mon 7th September - classes to vote for School Council Reps
- Fri 11th September Voting in classes for Y6 House Captains
- Monday 14th Sept - School Council Election President & VP
- Thurs 24th September - KS2 French Theme Day European Day of Languages
- Friday 25th September - Macmillan House Cake Sale
- Mon 28th September - SEND – Parent Coffee afternoon
- Thurs 1st October - PTA Movie Night
- Tues 6th + Weds 7th October—LKS2 Trip to National Stone Centre
- Thurs 8th October - Phonics: Parent Workshops
- Parents' Evenings - Mon 12th October (3.30-6.30) & Thurs 15th October (4.00-6.00)
- WB 12th October - Book Fair
- School closes Friday 16th October
- Mon 26th October - school opens
- Prospective Parents Open Day - Tuesday 27th; Wednesday 28th & Thurs 29th October all at 9.30am
- Friday 30th October - Halloween Dressing Up day
- Tues 3rd November - prospective EYFS Stay & Play 3.30-4.15pm
- Wed 4th November - KS2 Maths Workshop for Parents
- Wed 11th Nov - Remembrance 'Discovery' afternoon
- Anti-Bullying Week and Odd Socks Day - Monday, Nov 9th to Friday, Nov 13th. (Odd Socks – 9th)
- Friday 20th Nov - Children in Need
- Wed 2nd December - Y2 Scootability & Y6 Gearing You UP workshops
- Thurs 3rd December - PTA Festive Film Night
- Mon 7th December - Santa Dash
- Tues 8th December - KS1 Carol Concert
- Wed 9th December - EYFS Nativity
- Thurs 10th December - LKS2 Carol Concert
- Thurs 10th Dec ember - UKS2 Christmas Enterprise Scheme
- Friday 11th December - Visiting Theatre Group & Ice Cream Sale
- Mon 15th Dec Choir: Carols in the Community 5-6.30pm
- Tues 15th Dec - Christmas Jumper Day (Christmas Dinner)
- Christmas Parties (afternoons bar EYFS): Mon 14th KS1

FIRST AID

Children are very prone to bumps and knocks when playing outdoors. Whilst we will always offer treatment to children who urgently require it, to make First Aid manageable at break/lunchtimes, we use a triage system. Therefore, we may decide not to send a pupil in for First Aid if there is no visible sign of injury and the 'accident' was very minor e.g. ran into another child and banged the muscly part of their arm. Staff will monitor the injury however, to ensure that there is no further discomfort.

HEALTHY EATING

To further promote the healthy eating message, we would kindly request that pupils in KS2 only bring in fruit or vegetables to eat at break-times. Sugary snacks, chocolate, crisps and other packeted items such as breakfast bars are not allowed at break-times. Pupils in EYFS and KS1 receive free fruit at break-times as part of a national scheme.

MOBILE PHONES

We appreciate that it may be helpful for older pupils to bring a mobile phone into school, for instance, if they walk to school unaccompanied or they are being collected by a different carer.

To ensure that the use of a mobile phone never becomes a distraction, or a safeguarding risk, pupils and parents are asked to sign and return a copy of the school's mobile phone agreement, which outlines how the use of mobile phones will be managed within our school. If you have not completed a form previously, please email the school office to request a paper copy.

REMINDER - MEDICATION & GUIDANCE

We endeavour to do our best to help families who may be concerned about their children struggling with illness during the school day, but, unfortunately, unless medication has a prescription label we cannot give this to your child as per advice in the Medication Guidance for Schools.

If your child has a specific medical care issue or requires prescribed medication during school hours, you are asked to call into the office to complete a medical care plan/medication consent form.

If your child's medication has changed over the Summer holiday please contact the school office so that details can be updated.

Can we also remind families that we do have children on site with serious nut allergies and we very kindly ask that no food stuffs that contain any nuts e.g. hazelnut chocolate spread or peanut butter are brought onto the school premises.

INHALERS & EPI-PENS

If your child uses an inhaler, an Asthma Health Plan, which will be sent home for parents to complete and return to school, must be filled in. Similarly, for epi-pen users, a medication form should have been completed. **Your child's inhaler/epi-pen should be clearly named and left in school at all times in case of an attack. Please check that these items are in date before sending inhalers back into school.**

BEHAVIOUR

At Orchard Primary School we believe that all individuals within our school have a right to a safe, sociable and non-threatening environment in which to work and play.

In order to support high standards for outstanding behaviour, all pupils are expected to follow the 'Respect' rule. *Respect for yourself. Respect for others. Respect for property. Respect for learning.* Our school definition of respect is: 'having due regard for someone's feelings, wishes or rights'.

We very much appreciate your assistance in encouraging your child/children to show respect to other pupils as well as the adults working in school and to support the school's approach to discipline and use of reasonable sanctions.

In short, these sanctions consist of: up to two verbal reminders before a child's name is recorded in 'The Think About It' book; a consequence for any further low level disruption to lessons such as loss of some or all of break-time. For persistent or serious breaches of behaviour, further sanctions are applied, with pupils completing repair work with a Senior Leader.

Parents will be contacted at an early opportunity if there are concerns about a child's behaviour so that we can work together to support pupils struggling to demonstrate acceptable behaviour and a positive attitude within school. It makes such a difference in securing high standards of pupil conduct and a sense of order in school.

Our full Behaviour Policy is available to view via the school's website.

HOMEWORK

Taking pride in completing homework says a lot about a learner's attitude. We recognise however, that all children need leisure time and hope that our policy reflects a balance so children can extend and consolidate their learning with parental support while still allowing 'down time.' See the school's new 'Home-School Partnership Booklet' for more information.

We use 'Homework Menus' in all classes which enable pupils to choose from a selection of tasks. All pupils will also be given a homework book, where the menus as well as any sheets or photographs, can be stuck in.

REMINDER: RUCSACS

in EYFS and Y1-4 should only bring in **book bags** please otherwise pegs get crowded resulting in coats falling off onto the floor which becomes a trip hazard. Thank you for your co-operation.

COMMUNICATION WITH SCHOOL

To streamline communication, the following matters should always go via the main office please (staffed from 7.30am-4pm):

- Absence (including medical appointments)
- Sickness
- School dinner enquiries
- Complaints
- Urgent messages (e.g. collection of children)
- General messages to the class teacher/other staff
- School visits & residentials
- Queries regarding after-school sporting events
- Enquiries regarding swimming sessions
- Enquiries regarding Wraparound Care (Breakfast/ After-School Club)

You can report to the office via email, telephone, face to face, text and answer machine message.

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

We are very keen that as parents/carers, you are kept well-informed about events happening in school. This month's newsletter contains a lot of information about basic processes, procedures and reminders which we hope you will find useful therefore.

Classroom Information

- Termly Class Overview
- Class Dojo (or Tapestry for EYFS pupils), where staff share any important school updates/notices and post photos of special classroom activities. Please contact the school office if you are having trouble logging onto Class Dojo.

Website

- Class pages are updated half-termly with photographs, topic webs, knowledge organisers, homework menus and medium term planning.
- Class overviews are uploaded termly.
- How you can help' booklets on the 'Working With Parents' page, recommended reads and the DFE's Activity Passport.
- In the Curriculum section, there is a comprehensive list of useful educational APPs for the I-pad.
- All relevant policies can be found in the 'Key Information' section.
- The school's Vision, Values and Aims can be viewed in the 'About Us' section.

STRATEGIC CORE PLAN PRIORITIES 2026-27

See attached overview. This provides a summary of our key priorities for the year ahead.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS & VISITORS

We are exceptionally proud of the positive relationships we have established between home and school, and very much appreciate how parents, carers and others visiting our school are supportive of the work we do, even when we make the occasional 'human error'!

However, there may be exceptionally rare instances when a negative attitude towards the school is expressed, which could result in aggression, verbal or even physical abuse towards members of school staff. This is extremely distressing and causes great anguish for the personnel involved.

We would therefore respectfully ask parents and visitors to conduct themselves in an equitable way towards members of school staff, who work tirelessly and selflessly to do their very best for your children.

CONCERNS & COMPLAINTS

At Orchard Primary School, we are committed to dealing with any concerns or complaints fairly, openly and as quickly as possible. We value positive partnerships with our families and encourage concerns to be raised promptly so that they can be resolved before they become more significant.

If you have a concern about your child's education or any aspect of school life, please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance. Most concerns can be resolved quickly through discussion, and our staff are always keen to work with families to ensure every child is happy, safe and making good progress.

If the matter is not resolved, or if it is of a more serious nature, please contact the Headteacher, who will investigate the concern thoroughly and work with you to reach a resolution.

If you remain dissatisfied after following these steps, you may write to the Chair of Governors, Mr Fran Brown, via the school office or in accordance with the school's Complaints Policy. If your complaint relates to the conduct of the Headteacher, it should be addressed directly to the Chair of Governors.

Our full Complaints Policy is available on the school website or from the school office.

LOST PROPERTY

Please could you ensure that all belongings are labelled with your child's name as this makes it very quick and easy for staff to return misplaced items. Lost property will be kept in the disabled toilet area in the entrance foyer. Due to the amount of clothing we collect, items will be cleared out at the end of each term.

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

Orchard Primary School is fortunate in having a supportive Parent Group that is very much an integral part of the school community. It organises a variety of social, educational and fund-raising events throughout the year, for both children and parents, and generates income which is spent on the provision of facilities, equipment and special activities to benefit the pupils of the school. Even if you are unable to commit yourselves regularly, a one off offer of help at an event, or a cake donation, is always appreciated. All parents are welcome to join the PTA.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

X: @OrchardPSLeics

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Orchard-Community-Primary-School/1171108449568243>

Instagram - orchardprimary1234

READING AT HOME

Reading regularly at home is one of the most effective ways to support your child's progress and develop a lifelong love of reading.

We kindly ask that all parents and carers listen to their child read at least three times a week, with four times a week being our ideal target where possible. Even just 10–15 minutes of reading together can make a significant difference to your child's confidence, fluency and comprehension.

For families in EYFS and KS1, please remember to complete your child's reading diary each time you read together. This helps teachers monitor reading at home, celebrate your child's efforts, and ensure they receive the appropriate support and encouragement in school.

Thank you for your continued support in helping your child become a confident and enthusiastic reader.

PRACTISING TIMES TABLES AT HOME

Regular practice at home is one of the best ways to help children develop confidence and fluency with their times tables. Just 5–10 minutes a few times each week can make a significant difference to your child's recall and mathematical understanding.

We encourage all children to practise their times tables regularly using Times Tables Rockstars, and the methods/resources shared by their class teacher. Knowing these number facts by heart supports many areas of maths and helps children approach their learning with greater confidence.