



ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2019

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 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

HOME-SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

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.

Whilst much of the content on the website remains the same during the course of the academic year, there are regular 'Latest News' posts to keep you up to date with what's been happening in school. Class pages are updated half-termly with photographs, topic webs and Medium Term Planning. Class overviews are uploaded termly.

Also on the website are a number of '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.

A Yearly Overview in 'Events' provides a useful list of forthcoming dates for the whole year. All relevant policies can be found in the 'Key Information' section. A The school's Vision, Values and Aims can be viewed in the 'About Us' section.

Children in the EYFS and KS1 have a new Home-School Reading Record, which needs to be with them in school on a daily basis. This is in addition to our school communication system, Class Dojo (or Tapestry for EYFS pupils), where staff share any important school updates, post photos of special classroom activities, and respond to messages sent to them by parents. Please contact the school office if you are having trouble logging onto Class Dojo.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING 2019-20

A summary of the School Improvement Plan, specifically for parents, which outlines key areas of development for the next academic year, is available to view on the website.

CONTACT NUMBERS, TEXT ALERTS & EMAILS

Please remember to inform the school office if you change your home/mobile telephone number, 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.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you so much to those parents who completed the questionnaire last term. Governors will be communicating the results of the survey shortly, as well as indicating any new actions that will be taken in response to your comments.

DEADLINES ... A POLITE REQUEST

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

ATTENDANCE - EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

As you are aware, national guidelines make it clear that Headteachers are unable to grant leave of absence during term time, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Examples of what might be considered 'exceptional circumstances', as agreed by the school Governors are:

Where it is company policy for an employee to take leave at a specified time in the year and there is no opportunity for a family holiday out of term time i.e. the employer restricts holidays to a certain time period. This must be supported by documentary evidence from the employer.

Where a holiday is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue. Evidence must be provided by qualified professionals.

Accredited Exam – ballet/music (extra-curricular).

Gifted & Talented opportunity.

Bereavement or a serious family crisis.

Wedding – close family relative (two days maximum).

Religious Day.

Other exceptional circumstances to be considered on an individual basis, which are "unusual" or "rare".

If a planned absence is unavoidable, parents must notify the Headteacher.

We understand that absence due to illness is sometimes unavoidable, but we expect all pupils to maintain an attendance rate of at least 96%. This means an average of less than 1 day off each month. Persistent poor attendance (90% and below) or punctuality will be referred to the Local Authority.

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.

Our site has one vehicle access route and provides parking for a limited number of staff vehicles, and includes two disabled bays. For the continued safety of our children, there will be no vehicular access to the school site between the hours of 7.30am to 6.15pm for none-disabled car users. Parents dropping pupils off, or collecting from before/after-school club, or after-school events are asked to park on the road. Thank you.

START & END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

Thank you to everyone this week for a smooth and punctual start to the school day. School officially opens at 8.45am, (or 8.40am if it is raining) when staff come out onto the KS1 playground to collect their classes. Please ensure that pupils do not arrive on the playground earlier than 8.40am - if you need to drop your child off earlier than 8:40am, you are welcome to use our Breakfast Club which begins at 7:45am.

To encourage pupils to develop independence and responsibility for their own belongings, we would politely ask that parents 'hang back' to allow the children to walk into school by themselves, and prevent obstruction to classes going into school.

A reminder that quick messages can be passed onto a member of staff at the designated school door before or after school. You can also pass on messages via Mrs Daft or Mrs Farrar in the office. If the issue might take some time to solve, or is strictly confidential, we would ask that you ring the school office to make an appointment.

Parents needing to speak to staff are asked to report to the main office via the front entrance and not to attempt to gain access to the school by entering through the side doors. This is due to robust safeguarding/security procedures.

At the end of the day, the Grange Road gates will be opened for a 3.15pm pick up for all children. In the interests of safeguarding, please note that the school must be informed if a different adult is picking your child up from school at home time. If this does not happen your child will not be released until we have contacted you to clarify arrangements. Thank you.

LUNCHES

The school provides a healthy and varied lunch menu, catering for the requirements and tastes of all pupils. All Key Stage 1 children are eligible for a 'universal' free school meal. If your child is in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6 and is taking a school meal, lunch money must be paid in advance, via our 'School Money' system by Sunday. If, for any reason you are experiencing difficulties in paying for school dinners online, please speak to Mrs Daft or Mrs Farrar in the office.

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 Classes 1 and 2 receive free fruit at break-times as part of a national scheme.

DIARY DATES - AUTUMN TERM

Thursday 29th August - School opens to pupils
Tuesday 3rd September - Meet the teacher 3.15-3.45pm
Monday 9th September - Meet the SENDCO meeting 2.00-3.15pm
Thursday 26th September - Macmillan Coffee Morning and none uniform day
Friday 27th September - Harvest Festival at the Methodist Church 10.00am
Monday 7th October - Bring your Grandparents to school (drop in anytime between 1.15-2.45pm - to acknowledge National Grandparents Day)
Monday 7th October - Parents' Evening (3.30-6.30pm)
Tuesday 8th October - School Photographs
Thursday 10th October - Parents' Evening (5.00-7.00pm)
Thursday 10th October - School closes to pupils
Monday 21st October - School opens to pupils
30th October - 1st Nov - Y5 Whitehall Residential
Friday 15th November - Children in Need fundraising day
Friday 6th December - EYFS Nativity (afternoon)
Tuesday 10th, Wednesday 11th & Thursday 12th December - KS1 Christmas Performances
Monday 16th December (date TBC) - Christmas Service at St Edward's Church 10.00am
Friday 20th December - School closes

Y6 SATS 2020

KS2 SATS will take place from Monday 11th May to Thursday 14th May We would request full attendance; no leave of absence will be authorised during this time.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Parents/Carers/Grandparents are invited to attend a special Harvest Celebration Assembly at the Methodist Church on Friday 27th September at 10.00 a.m.

THURSDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER (TO AVOID CLASH WITH THE NATIONAL EVENT) - MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING 9.00am-11.00am

All parents and local community members are invited to attend a coffee morning to be held at the school on Thursday 26th September from 9.00 – 11.00am in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.

We would very much appreciate receiving donations of cakes, which will then be sold to both visitors and pupils to raise money for this invaluable organisation. If you are unable to attend the event, but would like to make a monetary contribution, then please feel free to do so via the school office.

To raise additional funds, as well as bringing in cake money, pupils are also invited to donate 50p to wear none uniform for the day.

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.

Try to give your child time to settle... talk to them about strategies to deal with the things that are perhaps making them feel a little anxious. Our experience indicates that after a couple of weeks, pupils have got used to their new class routines, have lost their inhibitions and have developed greater confidence and resilience 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 quick message onto a member of staff as you drop off/collect at the side doors. If you would like to speak privately to a member of staff, please pop into school via the main front door.

If you have an issue that may take more time to resolve, we would ask that you ring the school office to make an appointment with either the class teacher, or myself, as staff need to be in class from 8.45 to supervise pupils.

PUPIL PREMIUM FUNDING

All schools receive 'Pupil Premium' funding from the government for pupils who could potentially be classed as disadvantaged. However, funding is only allocated to the school if an application is made by a parent and approved. Your child may be eligible for free school meals if:-

- You receive income support benefit; or if
- You receive income based job seekers allowance; or
- You receive child tax credits with an annual income of less than £16,190; or if
- You receive state pension credit

You cannot claim free school meals if you are in receipt of working family tax credits.

If you think you are eligible, **please** register. The application form is available to download from:

https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2015/6/26/free_school_meals_application_form.pdf

If you would like further information or assistance with making an application, in confidence, please contact the school office.

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.

We wish to promote and maintain a purposeful and orderly atmosphere around school which is conducive to effective teaching and learning so that all our pupils:

- Can learn without that learning being disrupted by others.
- Develop a positive attitude to learning and produce work of the highest possible standard.
- Work within a clear framework of rewards and sanctions and show through their actions that they know what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- Take pride in themselves and their school.

In order to support high standards for outstanding behaviour, all pupils are expected to follow the Golden Rules (shown below):

1. We are polite, well-mannered and helpful – we don't offend others with our actions, bad language or swearing.
2. We are gentle – we don't hurt others and keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
3. We work hard – we don't waste our or others' time.
4. We listen – we don't interrupt, answer back or ignore instructions.
5. We are honest – we don't cover up the truth.
6. We look after property – we don't waste or damage things.

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

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.

OPS RADIO

A reminder that all shows can be heard through My Live School (www.myliveschool.org) or from our website. You can follow the radio team on Twitter (@OPS Radio).

CHILD PROTECTION

At Orchard Primary School we try to keep in close contact with everyone by communicating regularly. As our important partners, we feel the need to share things with you which relate to your children.

However, should a situation arise whereby a child discloses information to us, or we suspect that the child may be subject to neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse, our duty lies with protecting the child. By law, we are instructed to inform Social Services about our concern, and to follow procedures set down by the Local Authority.

HOMEWORK

Taking pride in completing homework says a lot about a learner's attitude. We want all of our pupils to develop a studious approach to learning outside of school and it is therefore the school's expectation that tasks sent for home work will at least be attempted.

From September, we will be introducing new 'Homework Menus' in all classes which will 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.

Pupils who do not complete homework on a regular basis (i.e. they do not hand in work for 2 weeks running or more) will be invited to KS2 Homework Club.

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.

MOBILE PHONES

If parents feel that it is absolutely essential that their child brings a mobile phone into school then it must be handed into the office first thing in the morning and collected at home-time. School cannot be held responsible for the loss of mobile phones if brought into school and not handed in.

LOST PROPERTY

Items of lost property are stored in the disabled toilet area for KS2 or the foyer next to the front playground for KS1. Parents are welcome to look for any of their child's property after 'checking in' at the main office.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS & VISITORS

The staff and governing body of Orchard Primary School encourages close links with parents and the community. It believes that pupils benefit when the relationship between home and school is a positive one.

The vast majority of parents, carers and others visiting our school are keen to work with us and are supportive of the school, even when we make the occasional 'human error'!

However, there may be 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.

Types of behaviour that are unacceptable include:

Speaking aggressively or shouting at members of the school staff, either in person or over the telephone

Physically intimidating a member of staff

Threats of physical violence

Swearing/abusive language

Aggressive physical contact e.g. pushing, hitting, slapping

Spitting

Breaching the school's social media policy

Breaching the school's security procedures

Unacceptable behaviour may result in the local authority and the police being informed.

FACEBOOK/SOCIAL MEDIA

At the very start of the year, please may I remind all of our families to observe respect for other children and their families whilst participating in social media.

Unfortunately, there are comments made and images shared in the public domain, from time to time, that can bring a school and families into disrepute.

I would kindly ask that should you have a situation that you feel needs additional action from the school, that you discuss this with us, in person, rather than present a viewpoint on social media that may well not be reflective of the full facts.

Many thanks in anticipation of your understanding with this request.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

We are always keen to encourage parents to help with activities in school. If you are able to hear individual readers, would like to run a club or could spend half an hour each week to tidy the library or garden areas, please contact your child's class teacher or Mrs Shields. We really do appreciate any time you can spare.

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. Details about their first meeting will be sent out shortly.

SCHOOL UNIFORM & JEWELLERY

Thank you for your anticipated support in upholding our uniform policy throughout the year. Our thinking is, if we look smart, we think smart!

We would also like to remind parents that PE kit consists of a white t-shirt and blue or black shorts/skort, and both indoor pumps and additional outdoor sports footwear for KS2 pupils.

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. Due to strict swimming pool policy, earrings must be removed for swimming lessons.

Other forms of jewellery should not be worn or brought to school. A watch may be worn but the school will not be responsible for its loss. Make-up is not permitted.

Any concerns about lack of PE kit, or about pupils who regularly break uniform policy, will be raised with the child's parents, especially in the case of incorrect footwear - it has been known for pupils to change their shoes for trainers on the way to school without parents knowing!

Can you please check that your child's belongings are labelled with their name so any lost items can be returned quickly.

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 can no longer give this to your child due to changes 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.

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.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS ILL

Please telephone the school by 9.00am on the first morning of absence and each subsequent day.

If your child has a medical appointment in the morning after which they will be returning to school, please telephone before 9.00am so that your child can be entered on the dinner register.

Please note that for sickness or diarrhoea the current guidelines laid down by the Health Protection Agency state that children should not return to school for 48 hours after the final episode.

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.

SCHOOL CLUBS

After-school sports clubs for Years 1-6 can now be booked via School Money.

All after-school club attendance is checked through registration. In the interests of safeguarding, please could you inform us if your child will not be attending a club on any particular evening so that we know their whereabouts. Please remind your child about staying for a club.

Additionally, Wayne Morant and staff will be running a number of lunchtime clubs - no booking necessary.

ADVANCE NOTICE: PARENTS' EVENINGS

Monday 7th October - Parents' Evening (3.30-6.30pm)

Thursday 10th October - Parents' Evening (5.00-7.00pm)

Mid-September, a special parents' evening invitation will be coming home via pupil post so please check your child's book bag!

The Book Fair will be running during this week, with parents able to purchase books at parent' evenings.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

We believe that our school provides the highest standard of education for all our children, and that the Headteacher and other staff work very hard to build positive relationships with all parents.

Our school aims to be fair, open and honest when dealing with any complaint. We try to deal with misunderstandings, problems and complaints as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of all concerned.

If a parent is concerned about anything to do with the education that we are providing at our school, they should, in the first instance, discuss the matter with their child's class teacher. Most matters of concern can be dealt with in this way. All teachers work very hard to ensure that each child is happy at school, and is making good progress; they always want to know if there is a problem, so that they can take action before the problem seriously affects the child's progress.

Where a parent feels that a situation has not been resolved through contact with the class teacher, or that their concern is of a sufficiently serious nature, they should then contact the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers any such complaint very seriously and investigates each case thoroughly. It is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage.

If the school cannot resolve any complaint itself, those concerned should contact the Chair of Governors, Mrs Sue Shearman in writing. The letter can be addressed to the Chair of Governors at the school, and handed in to the school office, or sent to 'Administration, Committees and Secretariat' Education Department, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RF.

Should a parent have a complaint about the conduct of the Headteacher, s/he should contact the Chair of Governors.

A copy of the school's complaint policy is available on request/on the website.