



ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER - AUG/SEPT 2025

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 Dojo or to myself 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.

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.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

X: @OrchardPSLeics

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

Instagram - orchardprimary1234

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 29th 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 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 95%. This means an average of less than 1 day off each month. Persistent poor attendance (90% and below) or punctuality will have to be referred to the Local Authority.

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.

If your child has a medical appointment in the morning after which they will be returning to school, please telephone before 8.45am so that your child can be entered on the dinner register.

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.

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.

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.

SOCIAL MEDIA & WHATS APP GROUPS

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

I would kindly ask that should you have a situation you feel needs additional action from the school, that you discuss this with us, in person, rather than via email or social media, so that school correspondence can be interpreted accurately and a viewpoint is not presented on social media that may well not be reflective of the full facts.

Many thanks in anticipation of your understanding with this request.

DIARY DATES - AUTUMN TERM

- Fri 29th August 3.15-3.45pm - Meet the Teacher
- Mon 1st September - Character Ed Day & Rock Kidz visitors
- Thursday 4th September - LKS2 Inspiration Day: Marvellous Me & UKS2 Inspiration Day: Keeping Healthy (Medical Mavericks visitors)
- Mon 8th September - School Council President Hustings (Assembly)
- Mon 8th September - classes to vote for School Council Reps
- Fri 12th September Voting in classes for Y6 House Captains
- Monday 15th Sept - School Council Election President & VP
- Thursday 18th September - KS1 Bluebell Dairy Farm Visit
- Thurs 25th September - KS2 French Theme Day European Day of Languages
- Thurs 25th September - PTA Movie Night
- Friday 26th September - Macmillan House Cake Sale
- Mon 29th September - SEND – Parent Coffee afternoon
- Thurs 9th October - Phonics: Parent Workshops
- Parents' Evenings - Mon 13th October (3.30-6.30) & Thurs 16th October (4.00-6.00)
- WB 13th October - Book Fair
- School closes Friday 17th October
- Mon 27th October - school opens
- Prospective Parents Open Day - Tuesday 28th October 9.30am; Wednesday 29th October 9.30am & Thurs 30th Oct 1.30pm
- Friday 31st October - Halloween Dressing Up day
- Tues 4th November - prospective EYFS Stay & Play 3.30-4.15pm
- Tues 4th November - UKS2 Inspiration Day: Dig for Victory - Beaumanor Hall WW2 Experience
- Tues 11th Nov - Remembrance 'Discovery' afternoon
- Anti-Bullying Week and Odd Socks Day - Monday, Nov 10th to Friday, Nov 14th. (Odd Socks – 10th)
- Friday 14th Nov - Children in Need
- Thurs 4th December - PTA Festive Film Night
- Mon 8th December - Santa Dash
- Tues 9th December - KS1 Carol Concert
- Wed 10th December - EYFS Nativity
- Thurs 11th December - LKS2 Carol Concert
- Thurs 11th Dec ember - UKS2 Christmas Enterprise Scheme
- Mon 15th Dec Choir: Carols in the Community 5-6.30pm
- Tues 16th Dec - Christmas Jumper Day (Christmas Dinner)
- Christmas Parties (afternoons bar EYFS):
- Mon 15th KS1 Wed 17th LKS2 Thurs 18th UKS2
- Fri 19th a.m. EYFS
- School closes Friday 19th December

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 Dojo your child's class teacher /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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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, knowledge organisers, homework menus 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.

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.

Children in the EYFS and KS1 have a 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 as we will be using this form of home-school communication a lot this year. It's therefore crucial that you are able to regularly check for notices from the class teacher to enable you to be kept 'in the loop'.

SCHOOL UNIFORM & JEWELLERY

Thank you for your anticipated support in upholding our uniform policy throughout the year.

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.

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.

MAKING A COMPLAINT

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, Mr Fran Brown 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.

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.

SCHOOL MEALS

A polite reminder that your child's school meal should be booked by parents/carers each week - this is not a job for our office staff unless another arrangement has been agreed.

USE OF CLASS DOJO

In order to maintain the well-being of our teachers, although you can send a message at any time, staff are not required to respond to any messages during the 'quiet hours' (5pm-8am Monday-Friday), at weekends, or during school holidays. A response may therefore only be given during the directed hours of 8am – 5pm Monday-Friday (term-time).

We ask that parents/carers bear in mind that an immediate response cannot be expected due to teaching commitments, but staff will endeavour to reply within 48 hours (working days only). Urgent messages, concerns or queries, should be communicated via the school office therefore.

To streamline Dojo traffic, the following matters should always go through the office reception desk please (staffed from 7.30am-4pm):

- o Absence (including medical appointments)
- o Sickness
- o School dinner enquiries
- o Complaints
- o Urgent messages (e.g. collection of children)
- o School visits & residentials
- o Queries regarding after-school sporting events
- o Enquiries regarding swimming sessions
- o 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.