



ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2020

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.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions, 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.

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 ALOT 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'.

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.

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.

If your child is unable to attend school through illness, please telephone the school office before 9.00am on the first day of absence so that the absence can be recorded as authorised. 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.

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 one disabled bay. 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.

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 message onto the class teacher via Dojo or to myself or Mrs Daft as you drop off/collect. If you have an issue that may take more time to resolve, we would ask that you ring the school office to make a phone appointment with either the class teacher, or myself. We will resume face to face appointments as soon as we can.

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.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING 2020-21

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.

DIARY DATES - AUTUMN TERM

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we will be unable to organise many of the usual social gatherings and events for the Autumn Term. Our Macmillan Coffee morning, Grandparents' Day, the Harvest Festival ... We are also having to consider telephone consultations or Zoom meetings for parents' evening, and if there is still a restriction on singing, we are unlikely to have a Christmas Show this year, Church visit or performances by the Hobgoblin Theatre Group. PTA fundraisers will go ahead in some shape and form but we'll have to think outside the box a little! E.g. Film Night in class bubbles.

We have pencilled in some dates below but will need to play things by ear for other planned activities.

Wk. bg 31/8 Inspiration Days for all phases

Wk. bg 5/10 Outcome Events for all phases bar UKS2

8th October - Photographs

Wk. bg 12/10 Hands on Harvest Week (Science Focus TBC)

Wk. bg 12/10 Book 'Sale'

Parent Consultations dates TBC as will need to do via email, phone or Zoom

Friday 16th October - School closes for half-term

Monday 26th October - INSET Day (Talk For Writing Training)

Tuesday 27th October - School opens for pupils

Wk. bg 26/10 Inspiration Days for all phases

Wednesday 11th November - Flu Vaccinations - all year groups

11th-15th November Anti Bullying Week

Friday 13th November - Kindness Day & Children in Need £1 donation

Wk. bg 7/12 Outcome Events for all phases

Y6 SATS 2021

In 2021, Year 6 SATs tests will take place throughout the week, starting on Monday 10th May and ending on Thursday 13th May. We would request full attendance; no leave of absence will be authorised during this time.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you so much to those parents who completed the questionnaire in May. The results of the survey are on the school's website. In response to your further suggestions, an action plan has been devised to address areas of development.

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, Classes 1, 2 and 3 receive free fruit at break-times as part of a national scheme.

LOCAL AUTHORITY NOTICE

The LA have asked schools to share the following with parents/carers:

Families with children returning to school in Leicestershire this autumn can access new online information and support. Leicestershire County Council has published new practical guidance about returning to school on themes such as attendance, hygiene and school transport, as well as information about health, wellbeing and adapting to new routines.

Deborah Taylor, Leicestershire County Council cabinet member for children and families, said: "Many of our children and young people have been out of school for some time now and the new 'norm' will be obviously be different from what they are used to.

We have included some practical information about returning to school on our web pages but would like to add that schools are making their individual arrangements about when they are returning and will be contacting parents about this through their usual communication channels.

We do appreciate that a return after such a long time can be an anxious time for families. For many, attending school on a daily basis again will be a big change in routine, possibly sleep patterns too, and may even spark some social anxiety. This is why we have also added information about managing worries and anxiety, keeping fit, creating structured routines and the importance of a healthy diet. We hope that the information we are providing will go some way towards allaying concerns."

Practical Information about returning to school in Leicestershire is available here <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/coronavirus-school-closures-and-updates>

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.

STAFFING UPDATE

We are delighted to welcome Mr Wayne Morant to our Support Staff Team, who will be working as a Learning Support Assistant in Class 6 during the morning sessions. Mr Morant has worked at Orchard school as Sports Coach for a number of years, and will continue to fulfil this role in the afternoons.

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 homework will at least be attempted.

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.

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

Please could you ensure that all belongings are labelled with your child's name. Items of lost property are stored in the disabled toilet area for KS2 or the foyer next to the front playground for KS1. Parents will not be able to come into school currently to look for lost property so named property will help us tremendously.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS & VISITORS

The staff and governing body of Orchard Primary School encourages close links with parents and the community. 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.

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. Sadly, due to COVID-19 restrictions we cannot invite volunteers into school at the moment.

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.

Events will be adapted to meet COVID-19 guidance for schools - information will be sent out in due course.

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!

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 & WRAPAROUND CARE

Wraparound care and after-school clubs will resume as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allow us to do so.

We are hoping to be able to communicate our plans to parents/carers within the next fortnight, after allowing pupils and staff the time to settle and get used to new routines and procedures.

Information will follow in due course.

We apologise for any inconvenience caused.

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.