



# Head Teacher's September Bulletin

## **A. Welcome Back!**

It's been brilliant to see our pupils back with us after the long summer break. Having dropped into all classes to check how well they have settled in, the staff and children reflected very positively indeed! I saw some very happy faces all round from each and every class. I must compliment the high standards of school uniform on display, the children look fantastic. I hope that this standard can be maintained from full uniform to PE kit. Please make sure you write your child's name clearly on the labels inside uniform. To help prevent any uniform losses, I will be asking the staff to invest some time in writing names in jumpers, cardigans, PE tops and perhaps coats where this has not been done at home. We have another very productive year ahead of us and I am looking forward to working alongside you all throughout the year.

## **B. Breakfast Club Changes**

On 21<sup>st</sup> July, schools received an email from the local authority to notify them of the changes enforced on Breakfast Club provisions in primary schools. Sadly, with the date of the email falling after our closure date for summer, we were unable to digest the information and inform parents in a timely manner. A summary of these changes can be seen below. A copy of the email sent to school can also be viewed on a separate document.

7:45am to 8:20am – Early Session = Price increase to £2 per child (50p for families previously receiving free school meals)  
8:20am to 8:50am – Free session = Free for all children

As always, we are unable to allow any access to Breakfast Club after 8:30am.

## **C. Useful Dates**

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October – Break up for half term  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November – Back to school

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December – Break up for Christmas  
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – Back to school

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February – Break up for half term  
Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February – Back to school

Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March – Break up for Easter  
Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April – Back to school  
Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May – School Closed for May Day

Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May – Break up for half term  
Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June – Back to school  
Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July – Break up for summer.

## **Staff Training Days**

1. Friday 1<sup>st</sup> September (done)
2. Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December
3. Monday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024
4. Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February
5. Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April
6. Friday 19<sup>th</sup> July

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> September – Individual photo day

There will be plenty more dates to follow, so please engage with See-Saw and future bulletins.

## **D. School Dinners**

Before summer, every child from Reception up to Year 2 was entitled to a free school meal (Universal Free School Meals initiative). Schools were then informed that this offer would be extended to Year 3, possibly Year 4 in September with an intention to add the Year 5 and 6's later in the year.

Scrap all of that, the decision from the local authority is that ALL children in every year group from Reception to Year 6 will be entitled to a Universal Free School Meal. However, please read on as I must stress the importance of pre-ordering the food for your children via the Parent Pay app even though you do not have to pay anything!!

As you can imagine, this situation has added a great deal of additional pressure in the kitchen to manage this volume of food preparation. One particular pressure that could be removed would be the guess-work around ordering and preparing the right quantity of food for the children. Last year, far too many families failed to pre-order meals in advance over Parent Pay. Even though the meals are free, they still have to be ordered.

Imagine trying to cook a choice of two main meals at home for 420 people without knowing exactly who is going to turn up to eat. It's impossible, stressful, creates unnecessary waste and presents disappointment if a certain meal choice has run out in the earlier sittings.

## **E. Car Park Rules – Same as always, no changes so we should have less confusion.**

**Up to 8:30am** = Access for Breakfast Club Drop-Off only. Year 4 children and above must use the STOP-DROP-GO bays to do this. Nursery to Year 3 can drive round to the left car park area as you enter the site.

**After 8:30am** = Permit holders only and access to STOP-DROP-GO bays for express drop-off. NO PARKING!!!!!! The Express Drop-off bays are for you to stop a vehicle, child gets out, walks safely into school and the parent leaves without having to exit the vehicle.

**12:30pm (new rule)** = Afternoon Nursery Class can enter the site for dropping children off. (please note, we are unable to offer the same facility for the morning Nursery class as there isn't room for it to be safe.

**Afternoon Pick-up** = School Taxi's and Permit holders only in their designated areas.

**School Clubs after school (e.g. Football etc)** = Parents can access site to pick up.

**After-School Club pick-up (Childcare/ Full Day Care Provision)** = Parents can access the site to pick up.

## **F. Holiday Requests**

Last academic year, I noticed a significant increase in the amount of holiday requests during term time. Although I fully understand why more families are going on holiday during term time, it must be made clear that any absences from school for such reasons are to be discouraged. My decision to authorise or unauthorise a holiday request is based on several key factors.

1. The number of days requested - No more than a **maximum** of 10 school days per child in a year.
2. Have there been other holiday requests made in the same academic year?
3. What is the attendance percentage for the current academic year and/or previous academic year?
4. Holiday requests to celebrate birthdays will not be authorised.
5. Are there any special circumstances for the request other than a family holiday?

## **G. Rodney The Dog**

Rodney has been very excited to be back in school surrounded by the children again. He's found it hard to adjust his body clock to suit the workings of the school day – but I know how he feels! Rodney's training and development programme continues and the demands and expectations required of him will also grow as and when he is ready. Our aspirations are for Rodney to become a fully-fledged school therapy/ wellbeing dog in the future.

That said, the next stage of his development will see him take a more active role in school by spending increased time within each classroom on a timetable basis. To begin with, *up to* half a day spent in a particular class/year group with the adults in charge of him rather than me. We're becoming a bit inseparable at times, so this will help with any anxiety he feels when he's not with me. If and when appropriate, Rodney will be allowed off his lead within a closed class environment with children being selected to take him for his routine walks outside. At all times, Rodney will be allowed to be withdrawn from the class should he or any children display any signs of being unsettled or anxious.

As the open-plan Early Years Department is far more active and busy with resources, Rodney will not be spending time without me (or one of his other closest adult staff members) when he visits the youngest children. Don't get me wrong, he adores the Early Years children and is very gentle but things could get a little too over-stimulating for Rodney and the children should he be allowed to roam.

**To assist with how Rodney engages within each class, I want to keep my records up to date as to which children have any dog-related issues. Via See-Saw, please tell your child's class teacher if your child.....**

1. ... is scared of dogs and does not want any direct contact with Rodney.
2. ... is highly allergic to dogs (even cockapoos being one of the most hypoallergenic of dogs).
3. ... is a little wary or a bit scared of dogs so might be a little nervous of him.
4. ... would like to benefit from any *specific* wellbeing or therapeutic time with Rodney.

## **H. Site Safety Reminder**

As you all know, the school site is very busy during the peak flow times of drop-off and pick-up and these are the times of day that give me the highest amount of stress and worry over health and safety. Generally, health and safety issues caused by adults on site are easily avoided by following the simple rules below. It is vital that you are seen to be following the rules as an adult as our pupils will copy you. One day, your young child may walk to school by themselves, so it is important that they follow a perfect example.

1. ALWAYS cross the car park road using the three zebra crossings.
2. If you are driving a vehicle on site (in line with the rules in section E) the speed limit is 5 m.p.h.
3. Do NOT drop your child off at the roadside as you approach the round-about. Some parents do this because they are running a bit late and may miss the gate closure time of 8:50am. To avoid the temptation of doing this, arrive on site a bit sooner.
4. Pedestrians at the designated crossing points ALWAYS have the right of way. This includes the pavement that crosses the entrance to the car park areas.
5. Do not walk across the staff car park. Follow the pathway around the car park instead – you won't come across any cars on this path.
6. Only cross Borrass Park Road with Carol the Lollipop Lady. DO NOT cross the road at the bottom of Cherry Hill in order to get the gate. This is the worst possible place to cross a road.

## **I. School Session Times – Please be on time**

8:40am approx = Perimeter gates for site access when the Breakfast Club group have been secured.

8:45am = School doors open and access to classes begins from Reception to Year 6.

8:50am = Registration time begins (Train leaving the platform!)

8:50am = No more access through perimeter gates will be allowed. As explained many times before, if we continue to let parents and children in after 8:50am, the Breakfast Club staff are late to begin their work with children in school. Breakfast Club staff are only paid up to 8:50am. Children arriving after 8:50am must be taken to the main school office. Arrivals after 8:50am will be recorded as late.

8:55am = Nursery morning session begins.

11:25am = Morning Nursery session ends.

12:30pm = Afternoon Nursery session begins.

3:00pm = Home-time for Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

3:10pm = Home-time for Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 classes

**(Please do not allow your children to play on the bikes and scooters stored near the Year 3 door whilst you wait for older children to come out of school)**