

Highworth Combined School

September 2017 NEWSLETTER



Dear Parent,

It is hard to believe that it's already been 2 and a bit weeks since we returned to school after the summer holidays. I am pleased to report that it has been a calm and purposeful return for pupils and staff alike. If you are new to our school, I would like to take this opportunity of welcoming you. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and we look forward to working with both you and your child. We are a very active school and appreciate the support of parents. I would encourage you to work with us. These newsletters are published periodically to keep parents informed about important events, dates and issues. If you require further information or clarification about any of the items below please contact me or ask your child's teacher for additional details.

Staffing changes

We welcomed some new members of staff this term. The table below shows all the classroom teachers.

NAME	Year Group	Class Name	NOTES / RESPONSIBILITIES
Liz Ward	Nursery		Early Years Co-ordinator
Emma Robertson	Nursery		
Jasmine Johnson	Reception	RJ	
Tina Moody	Reception	RM	
Tracey Marshall	Year 1	1M	Lower School Co-ordinator
Georgie Terry	Year 1	1T	
Julia Makohon	Year 2	2M	Mrs Sturgeon and Mrs Hastie on Fridays each week
Katrina Barr	Year 2	2B	
Jillian Poulin	Year 3	3JP	New member of staff
Alana Moore & Marie Phillips	Year 3	3MP	
Siobhan Keep	Year 4	4K	
Fiona McCallum	Year 4	4M	
Yvonne Kern	Year 5	5K	
Dorsheena Naidoo	Year 5	5N	New member of staff
Megan Broadhurst	Year 6	6B	Upper School Co-ordinator
Katie Milner	Year 6	6M	
Caroline Day	Acting Deputy Head		

New Pupils - New Classes

This term our school welcomed 33 children into our Nursery and 60 children into Reception as well as 19 to different year groups throughout the school. Most children settle down quickly in their new classes and sets - because of our setting system some children may have a different teacher for Maths. If you feel your child is not settling down please let their teacher know. Either drop them a note, or arrange to meet them by telephoning the school. The best time for such meetings is usually after school has ended for the day or early in the morning. It is particularly important that you know that all the teachers are more than happy for you to do

this because parent consultations will take place later in the term than in previous years. If you have concerns, let us know now rather than waiting until November.

Home School Agreement

All schools were required to introduce these agreements to clarify the expectations of not just the school, but also the parent and child. We will send a copy of the agreement out prior to our open evenings. I would like to remind parents that it includes a clause about our library lending system. For the last few years we have used a thumbprint reader to allow pupils to check out their own library books. This works even for very young children who are still learning to read and write. Some early thumb print readers stored a picture of each child's thumb print and this raised questions about the storage of personal information. The system which we use operates differently and does NOT store an image of a child's thumbprint and it would be impossible to create such an image from the data which is stored. However legislation requires that permission is obtained on an individual basis and so it is included on the form. If any parent does have concerns about our use of this system please contact me and I will provide you with more information.

Open Evenings

We would like to invite both you and your child to attend this term's parent consultations. These will enable you to determine how well your child has settled down with their new teacher and renew the Home School Agreement which is a requirement for all schools in the country. For operational reasons we have had to change the dates for these from those previously advised. The meetings will be on Tuesday, 14th November from 5:30pm until 8pm or Thursday ,16th November from 3:30 until 6pm. Further details of these meetings and how to book appointments will follow nearer the time.

Harvest Celebration

As you know, our harvest festival this year will take place on the 6th October. We follow the format we have used successfully for the last few years. It will involve every child in our school but in order to allow sufficient space for parents to attend we will split the festival in half, with some of our pupils taking part in the morning and others during the afternoon. More details about who is performing when were sent last week. As in previous years, we will be holding a mufti day prior to the Harvest on Thursday 5th October when we ask pupils to bring into school an item of non-perishable food (dried, tinned or bottled). After these have been used in our

Harvest display, they will be donated to the One Can Trust - a charity based in High Wycombe which provides food for local families who are in need.

School Uniform

I was delighted with the standard of appearance of our pupils on the first day of term. I would like to thank parents for their response to the guidance issued last term about our uniform policy. Full details about this are on our website. For the benefit of new parents can I emphasise the ruling about jewellery. Children are NOT allowed to wear jewellery to school and we no longer allow 6 weeks grace for those who have just had their ears pierced because this waiver was being badly abused.

Hot Meals

We continue to be very proud of the quality of our school meals. These are available for FREE to all pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, (regardless of qualification due to low income or receipt of benefits) and can be purchased for £2.25 by older pupils. However, it is important that parents remember that ALL meals - both free and paid - MUST be ordered no later than midnight on the Thursday of the week BEFORE they are to be eaten. Please remember, for children who do not have a hot meal each day that you must ensure that you send them to school with a packed lunch on days when they will not be eating a hot meal. Sue cooks quantities of food according to the orders received and it is very hard for us to provide a hot meal for children where no order has been received.

Confidential Information

All schools are required to collect information about their pupils and the Data Protection Act requires us to ensure that this is as accurate as possible. You will shortly receive a letter about this, asking for additional information, along with a copy of the data we hold on your child / children. If the data is accurate please sign and return the form. If there are errors in the data, please correct them, and then sign and return the amended form. It is very important that these records are accurate but PLEASE TAKE PARTICULAR CARE IN CHECKING THAT:

- I) THE MEDICAL INFORMATION IS ACCURATE, AND UP TO DATE - and includes details of any allergies.
- II) THE EMERGENCY CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBERS ARE ACCURATE. If a child is ill or has an accident at school we need to contact parents immediately. There have been occasions when this has not been possible because parents have not informed us of changed telephone contact numbers.

Allergies

There are some children at our school who have allergies - some of which are potentially life threatening and may require an urgent medical response. When these are first discovered a parent will usually tell their child's teacher. At the start of the new school year, when all pupils have moved up to a different teacher it is essential that information about allergies is included on the data checking form. It is the information on these forms which is used to create our classroom medical cards which are used to alert every teacher working in each room to pupils with medical conditions of which they need to be aware.

Do you qualify for £100's?

We have written to ALL mainstream parents about the additional money which is given to schools for those children whose parents qualify for income support. Because ALL pupils in Reception, Y1 and Y2 now qualify for a free lunch, we are concerned that parents from low income families who are in receipt of this benefit will miss out on the £1320 to which their child is still entitled. Please respond to this letter - even if you are not sure about your entitlement- and regardless of whether your child qualifies for free meals because they are in years Reception, 1 or 2. Applications will be treated in the strictest of confidence and we are keen that the £1320 is received for every child who qualifies for it. Brothers and sisters of these children then automatically qualify for similar payments and once qualified, the payments continue for 6 years!

Traffic and Car Parking

With the start of a new term it seems timely to mention again the dangers faced by pupils entering our school at the start and end of sessions. Can we appeal to all car drivers:

- 1) to exercise care, courtesy and consideration - both for each other and for local residents who have to suffer the early morning and afternoon congestion every day. Please do not block their drives, or park on their lawns and gardens. Last year the police issued tickets to some parents whose cars were parked illegally and they intend to conduct regular spot checks outside school.
- 2) not to block our school's driveway. Not only is this similarly illegal, but it can also result in grid lock when staff are unable to get into the car park and traffic backs up behind them.

School Clubs

This year I am delighted that we are able to offer a wider variety of clubs than ever before. More details will be sent out in the next few days, along with application forms - which parents will need to sign and return to school. However, I would like to thank all the staff - who are not paid or required to run clubs - for volunteering their time to benefit our pupils.

eSchools

Our main method of communication with parents is through the eSchools App and portal. New parents will receive an individual letter next week which will contain their log in details along with more information. Parents whose children were at our school last term will continue to use the same log in credentials but should see that the information about their child / children has been updated. If you have forgotten your log in details, please contact Mrs Bennett in our front office. Next month, all parents will need to use eSchools to book their parent consultation times. If you wait until then to resolve log in problems it is likely that your choice of times will be significantly restricted since the appointments this term will be on a first come, first served basis.

Pupil Collection / Delivery arrangements

Can I remind parents that pupils should not be on site before 8:45am when the gates open and supervision begins. However, children do need to arrive between 8:45am and 8:55am, after which the gates lock automatically and late-comers need to enter through our front door and be marked as arriving late by our office staff. Similarly, at the end of the day it is important that children are collected promptly at 3:20pm. Although Nursery pupils are not of statutory school age, it is even more important that they are collected promptly at 11:45am and 3:15pm. This is partly because being younger they quickly become upset and tearful, and partly because there is such a limited time for staff to tidy up after one session and then prepare for the next.

Mobile Phones

I would be grateful for your help in ensuring that children do not bring mobile phones to school. Although some parents may wish that their child could carry a mobile phone, and many pupils would want to because of the status it brings, they are not allowed for the following reasons:

- 1) Most are quite valuable and we do not allow pupils to bring any valuable items into school.

- 2) Many have cameras built into them and parents of some pupils do not allow their children to have their photograph taken, or have specified restrictions on how photographs may be used. It would be impossible to enforce this if pupils were able to take photographs on their own.
- 3) Many phones offer internet access. Although pupils do have access to the internet in school, our service is highly filtered and carefully controlled to ensure that pupils do not gain access to undesirable sites or material. Using a mobile phone to gain internet access would circumvent this protection and jeopardise the safety of not just the owner of the phone, but other pupils whose parents may view internet access very differently.

Any mobile phone found in school will be taken from the child and the parent will need to collect it.

Holidays in Term Time

Can I remind all parents that our school will not authorise any holidays during term time. Absence from school is still only allowed if a child is sick, attending a medical appointment which cannot be scheduled outside the school day, or in very exceptional circumstances. Absence for sickness of more than a few days may need to be verified by a doctor. Parents who fail to adhere to these requirements are referred to the Education Welfare Service - who still have the power to fine parents. Where children are absent from school without permission, we begin the process of removing the child from the school roll and offering the place to a child on our waiting list.

PTA Meet and Greet

Our PTA, Highworth's Friends, is inviting all parents to drop in for a drink and a nibble, at any time between 6.30 and 8:00pm on Tuesday, 26th September. Whether you want to make new friends, share ideas, meet members of the PTA, offer suggestions for the coming year - or just fancy a very informal evening out with free refreshments, please drop in.

After School Club

Highworth After School Club (HASC) still has a few vacancies at both their breakfast club and after school club sessions. If you are interested in finding out more about the child care they offer please phone the HASC phone line on 07953-528503.

Diary Dates

Wed	20 th	Headteacher meeting 2.20pm
Tue	26 th	PTA Meet & Greet 6.30-8.00pm
Fri	29 th	5K class assembly

OCTOBER 2017

Thur	5 th	Mufti Day
Fri	6 th	Harvest Festival 10.00am and 1.30pm
Fri	13 th	11+ Results Day
Wed	18 th	Individual Photographs
Thur	19 th	Firework Display
Fri	20 th	5N class assembly School closes 3.20pm for half term
Mon	30 th	School re-opens Parent Forum 2.20pm

NOVEMBER 2017

Mon	30 th	Parent Forum 9.00am Parent Forum 2.20pm
Wed	1 st	Shortenills Parents' Meeting 7pm
Thur	2 nd	Parent Forum 7.00pm
Wed	8 th	Parent Forum 7.00pm
Thur	9 th	PTA Pamper Evening
Fri	10 th	4M class assembly
Tue	14 th	Parent Forum 2.20pm HID Open Day Parents' Evening 5.30pm-8.00pm
Thur	16 th	Parent Forum 9.00am Parents' Evening 3.30pm-6.00pm
Fri	17 th	4K class assembly
Wed	29 th	Flu vaccinations YR – Y4 Shortenills trip for Y5 (29 th Nov-1 st Dec)

DECEMBER 2017

Sat	2 nd	Christmas Bazaar
Tue	5 th	Lower School Nativity
Wed	6 th	Lower School Nativity
Mon	11 th	Early Years' Nativity AM and PM
Tues	12 th	Christmas Concert 7pm
Wed	13 th	Christmas Lunch
Fri	15 th	Christmas Jumper Day

Mon 18th Mr Marvel and Christmas parties
Tues 19th School closes 2.15pm

JANUARY 2018

Wed 3rd INSET day
Thur 4th School re-opens 8.45am
Fri 26th Highworth Friends Quiz night

2017/2018 Academic Year

	<u>School opens</u>	<u>School closes</u>
Autumn Term 2017	7 th September 30 th October	20 th October 19 th December
Spring Term 2018	4 th January 19 th February	9 th February 29 th March
Summer Term 2018	16 th April 4 th June	25 th May 24 th July

The above take account of all school closures except one – which will occur during the next school year but has still to be decided.