

Highworth Combined School

October 2018 - NEWSLETTER

Dear Parent,

First of all, my apologies for not getting this first newsletter of the new academic year out to you sooner. As you will see, it has been a busy start to the year and as the 'dust settles' I am very pleased to be writing to you at last. This Newsletter is a brief guide; please use the website for more detailed information and for keeping up to date with forthcoming events.

Staffing changes

We welcomed some new members of staff this term. The table shows all the classroom teachers. Whilst the table is correct now, more changes are imminent! You may know that Tina Lawrence will start her Maternity Leave during next half term. We have recruited Kimberley-Jane Atkins who starts with us on October 29th, to work as class teacher in RL on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Furthermore, Tarryn Mann will also join us after half term to teach in 1LM on Mondays and Tuesdays. During the second half of the Autumn Term, Mrs Milner will start Maternity Leave. I will write with more information about cover for Mrs Milner nearer the time. And finally, Clare Dimishky will be taking Maternity Leave sometime during the Spring Term. Communication regarding arrangements to cover Clare's leave will follow at a later date. Very many congratulations ladies! We wish the happiest of times and will very much look forward to welcoming you back when the time is right.

| NAME | Year Group | Class Name | NOTES / RESPONSIBILITIES |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------|--|
| Liz Ward | Nursery | | Early Years Co-ordinator |
| Emma Robertson | Nursery | | |
| Donna Griffiths | Reception | RG | |
| Tina Lawrence & Jenny Bolton | Reception | RL | |
| Shelley Hawes | Year 1 | 1H | |
| Tina Lawrence & Jo Murado | Year 1 | 1LM | |
| Julia Makohon | Year 2 | 2M | Mrs Sturgeon and Mrs Hastie on Fridays each week |
| Katrina Barr | Year 2 | 2B | |
| Fiona McCallum | Year 3 | 3FM | |
| Alana Moore & Marie Phillips | Year 3 | 3MP | |
| Nina Sparkes | Year 4 | 4S | |
| Katie Milner | Year 4 | 4M | |
| Yvonne Kern | Year 5 | 5K | |
| Dorsheena Naidoo | Year 5 | 5N | |
| Ashling Smith | Year 6 | 6S | |
| Becca Dowling | Year 6 | 6D | Upper School Co-ordinator |
| Megan Broadhurst | Acting Deputy Head for Inclusion | | Lower School Co-ordinator |
| Clare Dimishky | Deputy Head for Teaching and Learning | | |
| Jo Peters | SENDCO | | |

New Pupils - New Classes

This term our school welcomed 39 children into our Nursery and 60 children into Reception as well as 15 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.

Year 6 Residential Trip to Marchants Hill

In a departure from Highworth tradition, Year 6 completed their residential trip this year during the last weekend of September. 33 children and 4 adults set off in beautiful sunshine and had a fabulous time completing a range of adventurous activities. A trip such as this enables children and adults alike to challenge, and learn more about themselves and form new relationships. It always seemed such a shame that shortly after trips in the past, the children moved on to Secondary School. This year, the children will all be able to use the benefits of their experience whilst still at Highworth!

Year 6 Bowling Trip

Those children who did not go to Marchants Hill, had a very enjoyable and rewarding time out and about in High Wycombe. They fitted a lot in to their day, but the most popular activity was bowling.

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. The dates for these are **Tuesday, 6th November from 5:30pm until 8pm or Thursday, 8th 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 **Friday 12th October** and a separate letter has been sent giving more detail. I would like to reiterate that wherever possible, it is expected that audience members will remain in the hall for the whole event. As in previous years, we will be holding a mufti day prior to the Harvest on **Thursday 11th 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 week's 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 **£2.30** 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 the 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 General Data Protection Requirements mean that we have to ensure that this is as accurate as possible. You will shortly receive a letter about this, 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. 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.
- 3) not to use the staff car park as a pedestrian entrance to the school. The traffic coming in and out of this car park is very busy, which makes it dangerous for anyone on foot. Please use the gate at the front of the school, regardless of where you have parked.

eSchools

Our main method of communication with parents is through the eSchools App and portal. New parents will have received an individual letter 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 Bucks County Council - who 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.

Mathematics Mastery Workshop

Hopefully you have received the recent letter and eSchool's message from Miss Broadhurst regarding the Mathematics Mastery Workshop on Thursday at 6:30pm. We are aware that several parents are unable to attend due to prior commitments, so we will put all of the materials from the workshop on the school website in the coming days. Please contact Miss Broadhurst with any further queries.

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.

2018/2019 Academic Year – Term Dates

| | School Opens | School Closes |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Autumn Term 2018 | 10th September 2018 29th October 2018 | 19th October 2018 19th December 2018 |
| Spring Term 2019 | 3rd January 2019 25th February 2019 | 15th February 2019 5th April 2019 |
| Summer Term 2019 | 23rd April 2019 4th June 2019 | 24th May 2019 24th July 2019 |