



Balcombe

Church of England
Primary School

“In all that we do we are guided by God”



JUNE NEWSLETTER

parents@balcombeschool.co.uk

We do have learners with allergies, so please remember - no nuts in school.

Dear Parents / Carers,

I hope that you are all well and have managed to create some normality in this strange situation. I am writing to give you an update about a few areas.

I look forward to writing again soon, with more information, in the meantime, I hope you all stay safe and well.

Wendy Millbanks

Home Learning



I just wanted to say a massive well done to you all for the efforts that you and the children are going to with the home learning. Unfortunately, I have not been able to see all of the things that you are sending to the teachers, but I have seen some and have been very impressed. The teachers also tell me about the quality of work coming in to school and how imaginative you have been with your creative projects. This has been (and continues to be) a difficult time for all of us, but I commend all of you (including the children) for your efforts and resilience.

That said, I understand from some of you that your children are beginning to get a little “lockdown home learning fatigue” and so we have decided to

do something different for next week’s learning. I will be writing to you all again on Friday, with details of a family project for next week to replace the usual home learning. It will be an opportunity to work together as a family. Not only will it provide a break in the usual pattern, it will also give you time to catch up or revisit any areas already covered. I must stress though, that there is no expectation from us that you will do a certain amount in a certain way.....just do what you can.

Staffing

We recently welcomed our new premises officer, Mr Alistair Graham. Mr Graham has already met some of our children and is looking forward to meeting the rest in due course. In the short time that Mr Graham has been with us, he has been very busy working through a long list of jobs and is already having a positive impact in our school. We welcome him to our team and look forward to getting to know him better.

Mr Kemp, who joined us last autumn as a Teaching Assistant, will sadly be leaving us at the end of this term to go back to university to train as a teacher. In the time that Mr Kemp has been with us, he has very quickly become an important and well-respected member of the team. We are grateful for his hard work and wish him well with his training. I know that he will make an excellent teacher.

Vulnerable / Keyworker Group

A number of parents have contacted me asking that I consider admitting groups of children into

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school on a part time basis. I know that some schools locally are doing this and I realise that many of you are unsure as to why we are not.

The Government have clearly stated that children who are in the vulnerable or keyworker group must have priority for provision in school **every day that the school is open**. The DfE have issued guidance for both of these categories and in offering places to our families, we have adhered to this guidance.

The national average for pupils currently in schools from the vulnerable/keyworker group is **7%** of the total number of children usually in school. In our school, pupils from these groups (mainly keyworkers) make up **33%** of our usual number attending. This clearly demonstrates the exceptionally high number of keyworker parents in Balcombe as compared to other schools. If we had the average number of keyworker/vulnerable children, then **only 9** of our 44 places would be taken every day with the prioritised groups, leaving us 35 to offer on a rotational basis. As it stands, we simply do not have any flexibility to do this.

Summer Provision

You may be aware that the Prime Minister has promised a “summer school catch up” programme across the country, but we have yet to see any further details about that. The Local Authority are also reportedly working on something to be announced later but in the absence of clarity around this, we have begun looking at provision ourselves.

Both SCS, who provide some of our sporting clubs and Tree Tops, providers of our breakfast club, have confirmed that they will be offering socially distanced holiday clubs to those parents who want it. Once they confirm dates/costs etc. we will let you know.

Transition

Many of our children are due to transition later this year, to either a new school, or a new class. We are very aware that they will not have the usual experiences but assure you that there will still be some kind of transition taking place. For

pupils transferring to Secondary school it is likely that this will be mainly virtual and for pupils remaining or joining us it will likely be a mixture of virtual and in person, depending on the situation at the time. One of the benefits of a small school is that internal transitions are easy, as the children already know the staff and the site well.

Team Points



We would like to give the children the opportunity to contribute their team points earned to a team tally. Please email your children/s total so far to:

teampoints@balcombeschool.co.uk

Sports Day

Later this term, we will be holding our “alternative” sport’s day. We would like to create an opportunity for children to come together in the virtual sense and work as a team.

Pupils will be given several challenges in order to earn points to contribute towards a team total. The challenges will be chosen to include “sporty” and “not so sporty” activities that can be done at home or in school. Results will be shared and winners announced.

More details about this will follow in due course.

Work to the Building

Many of you walking past school will have noticed the scaffolding. As you know, our school is very old and some of the original stonework had begun to crumble. Repairing this is a specialised job and takes a long time, however the work is nearly finished and you will be relieved to know that our beautiful Victorian building looks as good as new.

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PTA Quiz

The PTA organised a virtual quiz on 6th June. A total of 13 teams took part of which 10 were teams of parents from school. Thank you to all those that supported this event. We raised an impressive £300! The winning team was "We get locked down, but we get up again"

Inset days for Academic Year 2020/21

2020

Thursday 3rd September

Friday 4th September

Monday 2nd November

2021

Monday 4th January

Monday 7th June

Fundraising for School

Remember to join **easyfundraising** and you can collect free donations for us every time you buy something online. It won't cost you a penny extra, so please help us to raise funds.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/balc-ombprimary>

REMINDER

Pupil Premium

If you are on a low income making a FSM application can greatly benefit your child.

It is often thought that parents of children in KS1 who currently receive Universal Free School Meals do not need to make a Free School Meals Application for the school to receive Pupil Premium. **THIS IS NOT THE CASE.**

Please read the linked information letter which explains that any accepted applications for Free School Meals (whether or not your child takes the meal up) attract £1320 per child per year which the school can use to greatly enhance the resources available for your child both within the classroom and for extra-curricular activities. We may be able to help with school uniform costs, trips and other extra-curricular activities like swimming and music tuition.

Making an application is easy and confidential.

[LINK](#) to pupil premium letter

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