



# Oaklands School

8 Albion Hill, Loughton  
Essex IG10 4RA

Tel: 020 8508 3517  
Fax: 020 8508 4454

## HEADMISTRESS

MRS SUE BELEJ B.A. (JNT HONS), CERT.ED.

E-mail: [info@oaklandsschool.co.uk](mailto:info@oaklandsschool.co.uk)  
Website: [www.oaklandsschool.co.uk](http://www.oaklandsschool.co.uk)

2 September 2020

Dear Parents

### Re: **Headmistress's Letter**

I hope you enjoyed the last few days of the summer holiday despite the distinctive autumnal temperatures over the Bank Holiday weekend. I expect you and your children are excited by the prospect of returning to school tomorrow. The staff are certainly looking forward to welcoming and getting to know their new pupils and parents over the forthcoming weeks.

### Staffing

During our two Inset days, I have been delighted to welcome all the staff back to Oaklands after the summer break, especially those who I have not seen since the end of March as they were medically advised to continue shielding at home for the duration of the summer term.

At the beginning of the summer holidays, Mrs Cameron-Mowatt, Y1Z's Teaching Assistant, resigned from her position as a member of the KS1 team due to her on-going health concerns. Mrs Cameron-Mowatt has been a highly valued member of staff for fifteen years and her patience, care and we will miss her understanding of the children. We wish her all the best and hope she will keep in contact with the school.

I am delighted to welcome Mrs Catherine Kelner as our new Teaching Assistant in Y1Z. Mrs Kelner is an experienced KS1 Teaching Assistant who previously worked for a number of years at St John's Primary School in Buckhurst Hill. I wish her every happiness and success in her role at Oaklands.

I would like to extend a warm welcome back to Mrs Lynne Turner, who is returning after an extended leave of absence to re-join the EYFS team in Upper Kindergarten.

As mentioned in the Year 1 to Year 5 'Class letters' last term, we have restructured the roles of responsibility within the Senior Leadership team. Miss Creedon, who has been Assistant Head and KS2 Coordinator for four years, will be concentrating on her Year 6 class teacher's role together with coordinating KS2 English and Art/DT across the school. Miss Jansen van Rensburg, Deputy Head, has become our KS2 Coordinator and Health and Safety Coordinator. Miss Sandford will continue to coordinate KS1 and organise work experience students and our School Council and Mrs Potts will continue as Head of EYFS and Assistant Pastoral Head.

Miss Dee's role will also be changing as she will be concentrating more on the specialist 11+ preparation for Year 6 until the February half term, and then for Year 5 for the remainder of the year. This arrangement will provide her with more time to dedicate to her wider Deputy Headship and Key Stage 2 curriculum coordination roles by working with Mrs Belej to monitor and develop the teaching throughout the school.

### Summer holiday work

The maintenance teams across the Oak-Tree Group have been very busy this holiday across the four schools. At Oaklands, our maintenance team has been hard at work refreshing many parts of the school buildings both internally and externally. Many areas have been repainted including the entrance foyer, stairwells, corridors and Upper Kindergarten.

### **Holiday activities**

Over the summer break, many of our pupils have made use of the holiday activity courses held at Oaklands and Coopersale Hall School. These included Multi-sports, Drama and Early Years activities. The courses were very well attended and the pupils had great fun! The Oak-Tree Group will be continuing their provision during some of the school holidays in 2020-2021 and we will write with more details nearer the time.

### **Developments at Braeside School**

As you may be aware, Braeside has been a 'split site' school with the Juniors on Palmerston Road in Buckhurst Hill and Seniors on the High Road next to the cricket ground. After extensive forward planning, over the summer the two halves were brought together to form a new 'all through' school on the larger High Road site for all children. All classrooms and communal areas were renovated over the break and I wish the team well for tomorrow's inaugural reopening.

### **Braeside and Normanhurst GCSE Results**

Well done to the Oak-Tree GCSE students this year. At Normanhurst, over 99% grades awarded were good passes with half of all grades in the top band of grades 9-7, which are equivalent to the old A\* and A grades. At Braeside, over 96% grades were good passes with nearly half of all grades in the top band.

The pupils at both schools have been able to move on to an excellent range of independent and state sixth forms for the next stage of their education.

### **Admissions Policy**

Our Admissions policy is, as always, available for reading on the school website. For those of you with pre-school children, please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the following section about 'Siblings.'

'We aim to give the siblings of current pupils at Oaklands priority when considering children applying to join the school from outside. However, admission is not necessarily automatic and siblings are still subject to the school's admissions procedures when applying for all year groups.'

The deadline by which time siblings must be registered to join Oaklands in September 2021 is Monday 5 October 2020. We will not be able guarantee siblings priority consideration if applications are made after this time as the process will have started for those who have already registered to enter the school from outside.'

### **Arrival**

As you know children can attend Breakfast Club from 7.30am, otherwise children should be at school by 8.40am for registration at 8.45am. Any child arriving after this time should be taken to the office and signed in. The office will notify the class teacher. The school doors to all areas of the school open at 8.15am and all teachers set early morning activities (EYFS) or early morning tasks (KS1&2) for the pupils.

### **Dismissal**

Morning sessions for the younger children (LK and UK) finish at 12 noon or 1.00pm if your child is staying for lunch and whole day sessions at 3pm. Reception pupils finish at 3pm; Year 1 and Year 2 at 3.15pm and Year 3 to Year 6 at 3.30pm. Please ensure that you wait at the correct dismissal/collection area for your child and make yourself clearly visible to the class teacher or teaching assistant. Thank you.

### **Siblings**

Siblings will continue to be supervised in Reception between 3pm to 3.30pm. However, in order to maintain the bubbles now in operation in the school, EYFS siblings will be looked after in Reception Robins classroom and Year 1 and Year 2 siblings will be looked after in Reception Owls classroom. Parents collecting their child from siblings must ensure that they are wearing a mask as they enter the school building via the main door to the Reception classrooms. Thank you.

### **Timetables: 'Response to Marking'**

As you are aware, we publish each class's timetable for parents to view and refer to on the parent Portal. For those of you with children in Year 2 to Year 6, you will notice the new addition of 'Response to marking' timetabled for 8.30-8.50/9.00am on some days of the week. It is planned that Year 1 classes will start these sessions during the Spring term 2021.

These 'Response to marking' sessions will create additional opportunities for teachers to provide individual verbal feedback to the children about a piece of work and to discuss new targets, and to ensure that the children complete their corrections across a range of subjects, particularly in English and Maths.

### **Reading**

This year, we are making Reading as one of our main school focuses. Besides aiming to further increase the reading level of each child in the school, we want to make reading a fun and pleasurable pastime for all the children.

There will be a number of different strategies used throughout the year to achieve these aims. For example, time has been allocated each week for 'Reading for pleasure' when everyone in the class, including the teachers, will 'drop everything and read'. To add to the enjoyment and novelty of the session, children will be encouraged to bring in their own reading materials from home to read and share with their peers. These can include fiction and non-fiction books, newspapers, magazines, manuals, puzzle and recipe books; the list is endless.

When convenient for you at home, we are keen for families to include a similar 'reading for pleasure' time during the weekend, as this will provide the children with another relaxed and positive reading experience with the adults in their home.

I will be including other strategies that you can hopefully participate in and assist us with in future Head's letters.

### **PE and Sport Clubs**

My Covid-19 letter sent to you last Thursday included details of which day/s each class has been timetabled for PE/Games for this half term. Please send your child into school in their PE kit and trainers on these day/s.

Please note that children who are due to attend an extracurricular sport club on a day when they are not timetabled for PE/Games should bring their PE kit into school in their usual PE bag. Class teachers will organise the children to get changed for their club in their respective bubble.

### **Absence**

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please telephone the school office to report the absence to a member of the Office team or email [absence@oaklandsschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@oaklandsschool.co.uk) by 9am. Please avoid booking medical, dental and orthodontic appointments in school time wherever possible; if this is not possible, please notify the school in advance with the appointment details by phone, email or letter.

Please note that children in Reception to Year 6 are of compulsory school age and the law in England and Wales states that schools are only allowed to permit term time holidays in exceptional circumstances. Requests for absence during term time for other reasons can only be approved in exceptional circumstances. If you wish to request time out of school for such a reason, then please download a 'Request for absence' form from our website, which should be completed and returned to the School Office; I will then confirm whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### **Breakfast and Teatime Clubs**

Teatime Club runs from 3pm to 6pm for children aged 3 years and above. Both Breakfast and Teatime Clubs are run by school staff and the children are given food and suitable activities. Please contact the office if you wish to use either Breakfast and/or Teatime Club facilities. The relevant forms are available to download from the school's website.

## **Supervision**

When you have collected your children at the end of the day, and in particular the younger children, please do not allow them to access the adventure playground or field, climb the fences or walls or access the car park in front of Oak House. Please also ensure that your child remains with you if you use the path at the perimeter of the field to access the school car park on Warren Hill. This also applies to those of you who collect your children later from an extracurricular club or Tea Time Club.

I would also be grateful if you could ensure that your children do not enter the front gardens or walk along the front walls of the houses of our residents in Albion Hill or the surrounding roads. Thank you.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities**

All clubs, except Gymnastics, Fitness and Tag-rugby begin as from Monday 7 September. Unfortunately, as the Mad Science company have not yet responded to our requests for risk assessments in light of the Covid-19 procedures, please be advised that this club is postponed until further notice.

A complete list of activities may be found on the website. If you have any queries regarding the club/s your child is attending, or require details regarding availability of places, please contact the School Office.

## **Parents' Association**

The Oaklands Parents Association work extremely hard to organise events and to enhance the children's experiences in school. We are grateful for as much support as possible and the Committee is always keen to welcome some 'new blood and enthusiasm'. Please email me via the School Office if you are interested in becoming a Class representative this year or would like to join the Committee.

## **Home/School Links**

### **Parent/School Communication**

We value the healthy partnership we have between school and home. As well as the day-to-day informal conversations between you and your child's keyworker/teacher, I am happy to chat and meet with you informally or formally. I am usually available first thing in the morning or by appointment via the School Office.

We encourage parents to make use of our email facility – please see the staff list on our website for the links. If you send an email to your child's keyworker/class teacher, please be aware that they will always endeavour to reply to your message at lunchtime or at the end of the school day. It is often difficult to reply to messages first thing in the morning as they are busy preparing their classroom for the day ahead.

We will text you via our 'Groupcall' texting facility and we tweet news highlights several times each week!

## **Changes to Personal Details**

Please let us know as soon as possible if any of your contact details have changed over the summer. This includes your address, telephone numbers, emergency contact details, any changes to your child's health or any other changes of which we should be aware. You can check the current information we hold on your Parent Portal.

## **Parent Portals**

The office will contact new parents this week with information about how to access the Parent Portals. The email will contain your username and password details. Please email [support@oaktreeschools.co.uk](mailto:support@oaktreeschools.co.uk) if you need any assistance and our team will be happy to help. Your Parent Portal will contain much information, including the Parent's Handbook, timetable and Autumn Term 1 Curriculum overview. Please check your portal regularly as this is an important form of our parent/school communication. You should receive an email when new information has been uploaded.

## **Website and App**

Do not forget that you can access much information from our website that is updated regularly as well as our most informative app.

### Long term medication

If your child requires the school to store and when needed, administer long term medication, please download and complete the appropriate forms. These forms and the labelled medication should be given to the office staff on the first day of term. Thank you.

### Parents' Evenings

On Tuesday 13 and Thursday 15 October, we are hoping to be able to hold formal interviews with parents and class teachers for pupils in Reception to Year 6 so that parents and teachers can discuss how the children have settled into their new class and the curriculum of their age group. LK 'Settling in chats' will hopefully also be held on Monday 12, Tuesday 13 and Thursday 15 October, with UK 'Settling in chats' on Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 October. Confirmation and further details to follow.

### Year 3 Camp

As many of you are aware, Oaklands normally hosts the annual Oak-Tree Year 3 Camp during the third week of September on the two school fields. Due to current circumstances, this is unable to take place now, but I am sure that our Year 3 pupils will be excited to know that we have already made a provisional booking for the camp to take place over two days, Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 March at the end of the Spring Term 2021.

### Forthcoming Events

Normally the list of dates included in this Head's letter at this time of year is immense, ranging from Parents Meetings, trips and workshops, sport fixtures and Open Morning. I am sure you will appreciate that due to Covid-19 government guidelines, we are unable to organise mass gatherings on the school site, which therefore significantly reduces the number of events that we are able to hold.

This does unfortunately include the annual Oak-Tree Fireworks Night that was planned for the start of November, and potentially our weekly Coffee Mornings that are usually timetabled in the second half of the Autumn Term.

We are planning to organise our Harvest Festival in a different format for the children and we will be arranging some innovative virtual alternatives to our October Open Morning for prospective parents. Further details will follow in due course.

### Dates for the Diary

The following list provides a current list of events planned for the Autumn Term:

Thursday 3 September	Start of Autumn Term
Monday 7 September	All clubs start (except Fitness, Gymnastics, Tag-rugby and Mad Science)
Wednesday 23 September	Harvest Celebration
Monday 12 October	<b>LK</b> 'Settling-in' meetings 3.15pm – 6.00pm (tbc)
Monday 12 October	<b>UK</b> 'Settling-in' Meetings 3.15pm-6.00pm (tbc)
Tuesday 13 October	<b>LK</b> 'Settling-in' meetings 3.15pm – 6.00pm (tbc)
Tuesday 13 October	<b>UK</b> 'Settling-in' Meetings 3.15pm-6.00pm (tbc)
Tuesday 13 October	<b>Reception – Y6</b> Parent Consultation Meetings 3.15pm-7.00pm (tbc)
Wednesday 14 October	<b>UK</b> 'Settling-in' Meetings 3.15pm-6.00pm (tbc)
Thursday 15 October	<b>LK</b> 'Settling-in' meetings 3.15pm – 6.00pm (tbc)
Thursday 15 October	<b>Reception – Y6</b> Parent Consultation Meetings 3.15pm-7.00pm (tbc)

### Half Term Monday 19 October – Friday 30 October

Monday 2 November      First day back

I am looking forward to an exciting and productive year at Oaklands. As always, if you have any concerns or questions you wish to discuss, please contact your child's class teacher or keyworker, Key Stage Coordinator, Senior Leadership member or myself by contacting the school office to arrange an appointment.

I hope too that your children are excited about the challenges and opportunities that they will experience at Oaklands during the forthcoming year.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely

*Sue Belej*

Sue Belej  
Headmistress

