



Oaklands School

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HEADMISTRESS

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2 November 2020

Dear Parents

Re: **November Headmistress's Letter**

I hope you and your family had an enjoyable half term break and are looking forward to the second half of the Autumn Term as we rapidly progress towards Christmas.

School Uniform

As we return to school, I would like to remind families that children should come to school in their full winter school uniform, unless they are timetabled for a PE/Games lesson.

We take great care to maintain high standards of uniform and presentation at school. This includes all children wearing the regulation school coat which must be purchased from Forest Casuals in Loughton. In cold weather, the school woollen hat, gloves and scarf, which are also available from the uniform suppliers, should be worn. No pupils of any age should wear coloured or patterned hats, ear muffs, gloves or scarves.

Boots are not suitable to wear for a day in school. Please make sure that the pupils have sturdy black school shoes through the winter months. If it does snow, pupils may wear boots to and from school, but will need to wear their normal school shoes in the buildings during the day.

Individual photographs

On Thursday 5 November, individual photographs will be taken of the children. It is particularly important that all the children look smart and are in correct winter school uniform for these photographs. All long hair should be tied back with the regulation coloured hair bands. Thank you for your support.

Prospective parents

We welcomed over fifty families to our first Virtual Open Morning on Thursday 8 October, many of whom are now rapidly filling up my 'tour calendar' to attend a personal tour with me during this forthcoming half term.

We will shortly be starting the 4+ and 3+ pre-offer taster/assessment programme before the Christmas holidays for children who wish to join the school during 2021-2022.

Providing information to parents

We are always looking for ways to share with you the educational methods our teachers use in the classroom to teach your children.

Normally during the Autumn Term, we organise a number of meetings for different groups of parents. These include the Upper Kindergarten 'Welcome and Ready to read' and Reception 'Welcome and Read, Write, Inc' meetings, followed closely by the Year 5 11+ meeting.

As we are currently unable to hold larger group meetings in school our Head of Early Year, Mrs Potts, recorded both the Upper Kindergarten and Reception input and I recorded the Year 5 11+ information. These video recordings have been successfully sent and shared with the relevant parents of the different year groups. Mrs Potts and I hope you found the recordings helpful and beneficial in order to support your child's learning at home.

Parents' Evenings

I am sure you all found your recent meeting with your child's class teacher just before the half term holiday informative. Thank you especially to those of you with two or more children that attended on two separate evenings. Due to COVID-19 government guidelines, I am sure you will appreciate that it was necessary to spread the meetings out over four nights instead of our usual two.

Please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher, a member of the Senior Leadership team or myself via email to arrange an appointment if you have any concern or question that we can help you with during the forthcoming half term.

Drop-in' sessions/'Sharing experience'

During this half-term, we normally timetable a series of 'Drop-in' sessions for each of the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes which take place first thing in the morning, 8.30-8.50am.

The main aim of the 'Drop-in' session is to give your child the opportunity to show you some of their work books and to explain what they have been doing and achieving. As you will appreciate, we are currently unable to facilitate these sessions.

Instead, children in Y1 to Y6 will bring home one of their workbooks to share their classwork with you at regular intervals. There will be a sticker stuck into the workbook for you to write a "positive" comment on. The comment might reflect, for example, an improvement in their classwork, in the quality of their handwriting or presentation, or be linked to the progress they have made in that subject.

Pupils in Years 3 to 6 piloted this 'sharing' experience just before half term by taking their English books home for the weekend and really enjoyed celebrating their work with members of their family.

OPA

Although at present it is not possible for our OPA to organise fund raising events for the children and their parents, it is nevertheless encouraging that so many parents have volunteered to be a Class Representative this year. In fact, some classes have two representatives for the year! Thank you in anticipation of your dedicated work!

Siblings

As you are aware, we have a system whereby our staff supervise children in 'Siblings' (3pm-3.15pm) or in 'Lates' (3.15pm-3.30pm). Please collect your child by either 3.15pm from 'Siblings' or by 3.30pm from 'Lates' before you collect your older child. Any child who has not been collected by 3.30pm will automatically be taken to Tea Time club, which does incur a charge.

These arrangements mean that the office staff will be able to provide the correct location of your child to you if there is an occasion when you are late for collection.

Harvest and the Whitechapel Mission

Thank you very much for your generous donations to our Harvest Festival. As you saw from the photographs included in the September Newsletter, the hall stage was brimming with goods.

I received a lovely letter from Mr Tony Miller on behalf of the Whitechapel Mission that includes the following:

'We acknowledge with gratitude the fantastic amount of harvest goods donated by your pupils and parents to support our work amongst people who are homeless and rely on the Whitechapel Mission for the simple necessities of life. Please convey our thanks to the children, teaching staff and parents.

Our guests, who are experiencing homelessness don't have the option to "stay at home" to avoid risk to themselves or others – so we are reliant on friends like you who choose to give generously'.

Awards

As you are aware, we present a number of different awards to the children throughout each term including the following:

- Merit certificates are presented to two children in each of the KS1 and KS2 classes on a fortnightly basis. A merit certificate can be awarded for a variety of reasons such as using ambitious words in creative writing, excellent problem solving skills, imaginative art work or independent research work.
- Good Behaviour and Friendship awards are also presented on a fortnightly basis.
- A Good Behaviour award is presented to a child who consistently displays positive behaviour and acts as a role model to their peers, or to a child who we can see is making extra effort to rectify any disruptive or unsocial behaviour in the classroom or the playground.
- The Friendship award is presented to a child who is a caring and understanding member of the class, willing to share, listen and help others. The children often discuss what it means to be a 'good friend' and the School's Code of Behaviour during their class assemblies or in a PSHE circle time.
- 'Wow' certificates are awarded once every half term in a special 'Wow' assembly. These are presented for an outstanding piece of work, independent research or presentation, or for displaying significant perseverance to complete a task.
- I also award Head teacher's certificates to a class for a number of reasons, such as excellent attitude and participation during a school visit or an outstanding class assembly. Sometimes individuals receive a Head Teacher's certificate for their contribution to the life of the school or for a special achievement or effort in their academic work.
- On a fortnightly basis, KS1 and KS2 class teachers also award badges for Handwriting, Timetables Star, Good Reader and Maths Master and English Superstar within their class. Photographs of the children who are awarded these badges are displayed on the 'Achievement' poster in each classroom.

All these awards are part of, and enhance, the school's aim to create a positive learning environment for the children, and to continually praise and celebrate their achievement and progress. By having a wide range of awards, we aim to ensure that a substantial number of children receive additional recognition for their effort and work during each half term.

Please be reassured that a log is kept for each award to monitor that there is a fair distribution of awards within each class during an academic year.

Coffee Mornings

Our programme of Coffee Mornings will run this half term, starting on Tuesday 10 November. However, due to Covid-19 government guidelines, we are unable to facilitate our normal group meetings in school.

Instead, we will be inviting you, in slightly larger groups than normal, to join Mr Hagger, Mrs Osborn and myself for 'Virtual Coffee Mornings'. The school office will email each group the week before their meeting on the following Tuesday with details about how to access the Zoom session.

Please refer to the Dates List below to check the date/s for your virtual meeting/s. We do hope you will be able to join us. We will arrange for an additional afternoon slot for all parents later in the academic year.

Parking reminder

As you are aware, we regularly send out letters about parking around the school. Last half term, I received an increasing number of communications from some of the frustrated residents in Albion Hill.

Do not park across, or obstruct in anyway, the driveways of our neighbours when dropping or collecting your children. Consider the safety of your children when parking and use our internal car park as much as possible.

Forthcoming Events

The following list provides an update of events planned for this half term:

Monday 2 November	First Day back
Thursday 5 November	Individual Photographs – whole school
Tuesday 10 November	LK/UK Virtual Coffee Morning, 9.15am
Tuesday 17 November	Reception Virtual Coffee Morning, 9.15am
Tuesday 24 November	Y1/Y2 Virtual Coffee Morning, 9.15am
Tuesday 1 December	Y3/Y4 Virtual Coffee Morning, 9.15am
Tuesday 8 December	Y5/Y6 Virtual Coffee Morning, 9.15am
Thursday 3 December	Flu Immunisation
Friday 11 December	Last Day of term

Spring Term begins on Wednesday 6 January 2021

I look forward to seeing you either at school or virtually for our Coffee Mornings over the coming weeks.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Sue Belej
Headmistress



OAK-TREE SCHOOLS is the group name of:

BRAESIDE SCHOOL, BUCKHURST HILL • COOPERSALE HALL SCHOOL, EPPING • NORMANHURST SCHOOL, NORTH CHINGFORD • OAKLANDS SCHOOL, LOUGHTON

HEAD OFFICE ADDRESS: 6 ALBION HILL, LOUGHTON, ESSEX IG10 4RA

GROUP MANAGING PRINCIPAL & DIRECTOR: MR MATTHEW HAGGER B.A. (HONS), M.ED., PGCE CO-DIRECTORS: MR NICHOLAS HAGGER M.A. (OXON), MRS ANN HAGGER CERT. ED.

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