



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

Website: www.oaklandsschool.co.uk

1 November 2021

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 forthcoming half term as we rapidly progress towards Christmas.

The school calendar is bursting with activities including, for example, engaging workshops for specific age groups, Parliament Week for Year 6, Drop-in sessions, coffee mornings, sporting and House events, multi-cultural and 'Jigsaw' based assemblies and of course, the ever-popular Christmas performances and events.

School Uniform and PE Kit

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.

Parents of children in Year 3 to Year 6 were sent a letter just before the half term break providing details of the footwear required for Games/PE lessons for this half term.

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 Casualwear 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 4 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.

Awards

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

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, class teachers in Year 1 to Year 6 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. We keep a record to ensure that there is a fair distribution of awards within each class during an academic year.

Prospective Parents

We welcomed around forty prospective families to our Open Morning on Thursday 7 October, many of whom are now rapidly filling up my tour calendar to attend a personal tour with me during this forthcoming half term. Our Year 6 Prefects acted as tour guides for our prospective parents and were congratulated for their knowledge about the school and their impeccable manners. Well done Year 6!

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.

OPA

Thank you to Mrs O'Shea and her team who helped supervise all the children at the Movie Night on the second evening of Parent Consultation meetings just before half term. I know a substantial number of children thoroughly enjoyed watching the film, eating a bag of healthy 'goodies' and completing some Halloween based arts and craft activities.

The OPA would like to extend a warm invitation to all parents to attend the **Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 3 November at 8.50am** in the **studio**. Voting for the formation of a new Committee will take place at this meeting so it is an excellent opportunity for all parents, especially those who have joined the school during the last two years, to become involved.

Thank you to those parents who have already volunteered to be the Class Reps for 2021-2022; your hard work is much appreciated!

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.

During this Autumn Term, we have already organised a number of meetings for different groups of parents: Upper Kindergarten 'Welcome and Ready to read', Reception 'Welcome and RWI' meeting, Year 1 Maths and English Information meeting, Year 3 Maths and English Information meeting and the Year 5 11+ meeting.

I hope that parents found the meetings helpful and beneficial in order to further support their child's learning at home.

Parents' Evenings and Drop-in Sessions

I hope you found your recent meeting with your child's class teacher just before the half term holiday informative. During this half-term, we have timetabled a second series of Drop-in sessions for all the classes in KS1 and KS2 classes. These will take place first thing in the morning, 8.25-8.50am. Parents of children in the three areas of the EYFS will also receive invitations to attend another opportunity to view their child's work, either in the morning or the afternoon.

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, these sessions are not suitable for a 1:1 teacher/keyworker-parent discussion. As always, if you have any concerns during this half term about your child, please make a separate appointment, through the school office, to meet with your child's class teacher or keyworker or myself. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please refer to the Events List at the end of this Head's letter to check the date of the Drop-in session for your child during this half term.

Parking reminder

As you are aware, we regularly send out letters about parking on and around Albion Hill. Last half term, the flow of traffic around the school was severely affected by a series of road closures on Albion Hill, Nursery Road and the High Road. This unfortunately resulted in a number of parents performing 3-point turns outside the school, parking in residents' driveways and arguing with our neighbours when asked to move their vehicles from driveways. Consequently, Mr Hagger and I received an increasing number of justified complaints from our neighbouring residents.

I would like to take this opportunity to repeat our request that parents do not park across, or obstruct in any way, the driveways of our neighbours when dropping or collecting their children, to consider the safety of our children when parking and manoeuvring, particularly in Albion Hill, and to use the car park as much as possible.

Thank you to the majority of our families who continue to do as we ask and show respect to the residents.

'Everyone's Invited' and Keeping Children Safe in Education – New Government Statutory Guidance for Schools

Following the publication of the testimonies of the survivors of sexual abuse in schools, the Government asked Ofsted to undertake an immediate review of safeguarding in both state and independent schools. As a result of recommendations arising from the review, the Government issued new statutory guidance to all schools and colleges to be implemented from September 2021, which is found in the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education': https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf.

This guidance requires schools to look again at a number of aspects of what we teach about how to keep safe, maintaining healthy relationships, recognising peer-on-peer abuse and addressing concerns about sexual harassment or sexual violence.

All schools have needed to review their Relationships and Sex Education curriculum and consider how they create a culture in which pupils feel able to raise concerns and know that they will be listened to when they do so. Schools are required to take all concerns seriously and to have a 'zero tolerance' approach to unacceptable behaviour.

The review found that pupils find it very difficult to raise concerns in school and that they can feel very vulnerable in so doing, so we have been looking at how we can make a safe space for this to happen more easily for the Oak-Tree pupils, particularly those in the Seniors. We have decided to have a dedicated email address, which can be anonymous, at both Braeside and Normanhurst. Pupils and parents will receive information about this over the course of the next term.

In addition, we will be looking at our PSHE programme in all of the schools to ensure that lessons explore thoroughly the idea of consent and the safe use of the internet, including aspects like the sending of 'nudes' and 'semi-nudes' at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way.

National Online Safety Advice about Netflix's Squid Game

Netflix's Squid Game is set to become the service's most successful show of all time, with huge numbers of viewers taking to social media to discuss each new episode. The South Korean thriller features some scenes of fairly brutal violence and is rated 15 by the BBFC. It follows a group of adults who compete to win innocent-looking playground games, but who are killed if they do not succeed at the tasks.

Squid Game's popularity is beginning to spread across various online platforms. Associated content has been created – ranging from memes to apps – that convey the violence of the show, so it is helpful for parents to understand the basis of Squid Game and the potential risks to young people who might be exposed to it: https://nationalonlinesafety.com/wakeupwednesday/squid-game-trending-across-platforms-what-parents-need-to-know?fbclid=IwAR0gR4_0HjAYvPINA6UK0aszIKc10-8yC4K5CrOI2Es-dGzj9MjxeYQkBTQ.

Squid Game's 15 rating has not prevented clips and images from the show being uploaded onto social media sites such as TikTok, with the #SquidGame hashtag being viewed more than 22.8 billion times. There have been reports of children who have accounts on these platforms inadvertently viewing gory, explicit scenes from the programme, and parents should be mindful of the prevalence of these uploads.

The popularity of the programme has also led to online challenges based on various scenes, which see people taking part in seemingly innocent children's games. On the show, however, characters are executed if they fail in the game – and videos of people pretending to kill each other after competing in Squid Game-style contests are going viral on social media, where they are easily accessible to children.

Siblings

As you are aware, we have a system whereby our staff supervise children in 'Siblings' (3pm-3.15pm) or in 'Lates' (3.15-3.30pm). 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. Thank you for your cooperation.

Harvest and the Whitechapel Mission

Thank you very much for your generous donations to our Harvest Festival which were given, as usual, to the Whitechapel Mission for the homeless. As you will see from the photographs included in the next Newsletter, the hall stage was brimming with goods. Although Mr Tony Miller was unable to personally attend our Harvest Festival due to Covid restrictions, (with regard to his role at the Mission), I received a lovely letter from him on behalf of the Whitechapel Mission thanking the school for our gifts. The letter is on display on the notice board just outside the school office.

ISA Autumn Conference

Miss Dee and I shall be out of school on Thursday 11 and Friday 12 November as we are attending the Independent School's Association Autumn Study Conference in Coventry. The conference provides a valuable opportunity to hear and learn about the latest educational developments in the UK and it should help us to continue to provide an excellent educational experience for our pupils here at Oaklands.

Coffee Mornings

Mr Matthew Hagger, Mrs Osborn and I will be holding our annual coffee mornings on Tuesday mornings starting on Tuesday 2 November. Please check the table below for your class time:

AUTUMN	TERM
Tues 2 Nov 8.45-9.30am	Upper Kindergarten
Tues 9 Nov 8.45-9.30am	Reception
Tues 16 Nov 8.45-9.30am	Y2
Tues 30 Nov 8.45-9.30am	Y6
Tues 7 Dec 8.45-9.30am	Y5

Coffee mornings for Lower Kindergarten, Years 1, 3, and 4 parents will be arranged in the New Year.

Forthcoming Events

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

Monday 1 November	First day back
Tuesday 2 November	UK Foxes + Hedgehogs Drop in session 8.25-8.45/9:00am, 2:30pm-3:00pm UK Coffee Morning 8:45am -9:30am
Wednesday 3 November	UK Badgers, Rabbits + Squirrels Drop in session 8.30-9:00am, 2:30pm-3:00pm Y3+Y4 West Essex Football Tournament 11:45am – 3:30pm
Thursday 4 November	LK-Y6 Individual Photographs
Friday 5 November	Reception Drop-in Sessions 8.30-9.00am Y5/Y6 Oak-Tree Football and Netball Tournaments
Monday 8 November	Y4, Y5 + Y6 ISA London North Swimming Championships 7:30am – 2:00pm
Tuesday 9 November	Reception Coffee Morning 8.45-9.30am
Thursday 11 November	LK Assembly to parents 9.00am
Monday 15 November	Y3-Y5 Diwali Workshop
Tuesday 16 November	Y2 Coffee Morning 8.45-9.30am
Thursday 18 November	Reception Christmas Show to parents 9.00am (Woodpeckers and Owls A)
Friday 19 November	Reception Christmas Show to parents 9.00am (Robins and Owls B)
Monday 22 November	Flu Immunisation catch up – time tbc
Tuesday 23 November	Y3C Drop in Session 8.25-8.50am
Wednesday 24 November	Y4C & Y5Z Drop in Session 8.25-8.50am
Thursday 25 November	UK Foxes, Rabbits + Badgers Christmas Play to parents 9.00am
Thursday 25 November	Y5/6 LN Indoor Athletics Competition
Friday 26 November	UK Hedgehogs + Squirrels Christmas play to parents 9:00am Y6C/G Drop in Session 8.25-8.50am Y5/6 WESSP Tag rugby Tournament
Friday 26 November	Y2S/Z Drop in Session 8.25-8.50am
Monday 29 November	Y6 Coffee Morning 8.45 – 9.30am
Tuesday 30 November	Y1C/F Drop in Session 8.25-8.50am
Tuesday 30 November	EYFS + KS1 Pantomime at school
Wednesday 1 December	Y6 Forest School Maths Day
Monday 6 December	LK Tea Party 3.15-4.00pm (new starters)
Tuesday 7 December	Y5 Coffee Morning 8:45am – 9:30am Y1-Y6 Carol Service Rehearsal, St Mary's Church LK Tea Party 3:15pm – 4:00pm (new starters)
Wednesday 8 December	Y1-Y6 Carol Service at St. Mary's Church 2.00pm
Thursday 9 December	UK Hedgehog, Badgers + Rabbits visit to Mellows Care Home
Friday 10 December	Y1+Y2 Christmas Party Y3-Y5 OPA Christmas Party 4.15-6.00pm
Monday 13 December	UK Squirrels + Foxes visit to Mellows Care Home
Tuesday 14 December	LK, UK + Rec Christmas Parties
Tuesday 14 December	Y6 Christmas Pizza Lunch
Wednesday 15 December	Last Day of term

The children will undoubtedly become more excited as the half term progresses towards Christmas. I look forward to seeing many of you at the various meetings and seasonal events the school is hosting this half term.

Yours sincerely

Sue Belej

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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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