



Oaklands School

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HEADMISTRESS

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6 November 2023

Dear Parents

Re: November 2023 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, Parents evenings, Drop-in sessions, 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.

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 the only items worn. Please do allow children to wear hats, gloves and scarves that are not from our uniform suppliers.

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. If we do have snow before the Christmas break we will aim to let you know by 7 am if we need to have a delayed start to the school day to safely clear the footpaths on site. Announcements will be made via Groupcall.

As usual, all items of uniform must be clearly named, preferably in the neck area so that staff can quickly identify the owner.

Individual Photographs

On Thursday 9 November, individual photographs will be taken of the children. It is particularly important that all the children look smart and are in the correct winter school uniform for these photographs. All long hair should be tied back with the regulation coloured hair bands.

Prospective Parents

We welcomed a high number of prospective families to our Open Morning in October, many of whom are now returning for personal tours of the school. Our Year 6 Prefects, along with year 5, acted as tour guides for our prospective parents and were congratulated for their knowledge about the school and their impeccable manners. Our Head Boy and Girl, Prabhlok and Hannah spoke to a hall full of visitors with confidence and passion for Oaklands. Well done to everyone involved in this successful morning.

Our 3+ and 4+ pre-offer taster/assessment programme takes place this half term for children who wish to join the school for 2024-25.

OPA

Thank you to Mrs O'Shea and her team who helped supervise all the children at the creche on the second evening of Parent Consultation meetings just before half term. I know a substantial number of children thoroughly enjoyed completing some arts and craft activities.

The OPA would like to extend a warm invitation to all parents to attend the **Annual General Meeting** this term, on Wednesday 15 November. 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.

The OPA are now very busy planning Christmas events for children to enjoy and I believe most of our children will be visiting a very special person in his Grotto! Year 6 are looking forward to their Christmas celebration of a pizza lunch in Loughton.

Thank you to those parents who have already volunteered to be the Class Reps for 2023 -24; your hard work is much appreciated!

Providing Information to Parents

As a school, 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 several 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. Year 3 to 6 parents were also invited to a webinar with Atom learning.

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

Parents' Evenings and Drop-in Sessions

I trust you all 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 UK and Reception will also receive invitations to attend an opportunity to view their child's work in the afternoon. We have combined some classes this half term due to the number of school events taking place. If you have a sibling clash, my apologies, please either split the time or ask one of the teachers to accommodate you on another day.

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.

Awards

As you are aware, we present several 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, KS1 and KS2 class teachers also award badges for Handwriting, Timetables Star, Good Reader, 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.

Siblings

As you are aware, we have a system whereby our staff supervise children in 'Siblings' (3.00-3.30pm). Please collect your child from 'Siblings' 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 in this matter.

Changes to afternoon pick up

If, during the school day, you need to change the collection arrangements for your child/children. Please ensure you let the school office know. Teachers do not routinely pick up emails whilst teaching and important collection information may be missed.

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. Tony Miller led a wonderful assembly that highlighted to our pupils exactly where their wonderful donations were going.

Parking reminder

Thank you to all our parents who are parking responsibly away from the school gates and avoiding the drives of our neighbours. Sadly, we had an increase in inconsiderate parking towards the end of this half term which led to a number of our neighbours complaining to the school office. Please remember not to bring the school name into disrepute by causing distress to our neighbours.

Site Security

Thank you again to the parents who gave their measured input to our security meeting this half term. From November, the gate leading to the High Road will have a timed locking device which will be released at key points at the start and end of the day. There has been a low level inner gate adjacent to Upper Kindergarten installed to further prevent children from running down the slope at peak times. The timers have been fitted to our car park gates and they will be closed between 9am and 2.30pm to further enhance the security of the site during the school day. There is an intercom to the school office on the outside should you need to pick up or drop off while the gates are closed.

ISA Autumn Conference

Miss Dee and I shall be out of school on Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 November as we are attending the Independent School's Association Autumn Study Conference. The conference provides a valuable opportunity to hear and learn about the latest educational developments in the UK and helps us to continue to provide an excellent educational experience for our pupils here at Oaklands. We can both be contacted via email for the duration of this conference.

Coffee Mornings

Mr Matthew Hagger, Mrs Osborn and I will be holding our annual coffee mornings on Tuesday mornings starting on Tuesday 14 November. Please check the table below for your class time:

AUTUMN	TERM
Tues 14 Nov 8.45-9.30 am	Years 3 to 6
Tues 28 Nov 8.45-9.30 am	Years 1 and 2
Tues 9 Jan 8.45-9.30 am	Reception
Tues 16 Jan 8.45-9.30 am	LK and UK

Christmas Performances

In response to parental feedback last year I am pleased to remind you that this year KS 1 and 2 will be split for their Christmas performances. Year 1 and 2 will be performing a Nativity in the school hall over a period of two days and Year 3-6 will have their service at St Mary's church in Loughton. The splitting of the year groups will ensure each family can have two tickets for the performance, something I know has caused a great deal of distress in previous years.

Please rest assured that rehearsals do not disrupt the learning of our core subjects, staff cleverly weave rehearsals into PE, RE, PSHE and Drama lessons.

Dates for the Diary

The following list provides an update of events planned for the Autumn Term:

Tuesday 7 November	9am – 3pm PM	Trip to Celtic Harmony House Cross Country Event	Year 3 Year 1 to Year 6
Thursday 9 November	AM/PM 1.30pm – 3.30pm	Individual School Photos Diwali Drama Workshop	Whole School Year 3
Tuesday 14 November	8.45am – 9.30am 1pm – 3.30pm	Coffee Morning 7+ Interviews with Mrs Copeman	Year 3 - Year 6 Year 2
Wednesday 15 November	9am – 12pm	Florence Nightingale W/shop	Year 2
Thursday 16 November	3.30pm – 5pm 9am – 10am 8.25am – 8.45am 7.30am – 12pm	Oak-Tree Maths at Braeside Assembly to Parents Drop In Session London North Cross Country	KS2 by Invitation Lower Kindergarten Year 1, Year 3 & Year 4 By Invitation
Friday 17 November	8.25am – 8.45am AM	Drop In Session Flu Immunisations	Year 2, Year 5 & Year 6 Reception – Year 6
Tuesday 21 November	2.30pm – 3pm	Drop In Session	UK Foxes & Rabbits
Wednesday 22 November	9am – 10am 9am – 12pm 2.30 – 3pm	Christmas Concert to Parents 11+ Mock Exams Drop In Session	Rec Woodpeckers & Owls A Year 6 Squirrels, Badgers, Hedgehogs
Friday 24 November	9am – 10am 9am – 12pm	Christmas Concert to Parents 11+ Mock Exams	Rec Robins & Owls B Year 6
Tuesday 28 November	8.45am – 9.30am 1.30pm – 3.30pm 2.30pm-3pm	Coffee Morning Athletics @ Peter May Drop in Session	Year 1 and Year 2 U11 by Invitation Reception
Wednesday 29 November	2.30pm – 3pm	Drop in Session	Reception
Thursday 30 November	9am – 10am	Christmas Show to Parents	UK Foxes, Rabbits and Badgers
Friday 1 December	9am – 10am	Christmas Show to Parents	UK Hedgehogs and Squirrels
Wednesday 6 December	2pm – 5pm	Carol Service at St Marys	Year 3 – Year 6
Thursday 7 December	9am – 10am	Nativity Play to Parents	Year 1V and Year 2S
Friday 8 December	9am – 10am	Nativity Play to Parents	Year 1C and Year 2Z

Monday 11 December	AM/PM 2.30pm – 4.30pm	Christmas Disco Christmas Disco	LK, UK, Reception, Y1, Y2 Year 3 – Year 5
Tuesday 12 December	AM/PM 12pm – 3pm 9am – 10.30am	Santa's Grotto Pantomime at Millfield Pantomime at Oaklands	LK, UK and Reception Year 1 - Year 6 LK, UK and Reception
Wednesday 13 December	AM/PM AM/PM	Christmas Jumper/Dinner Day Santa's Grotto	Whole School Year 1 – Year 6
Thursday 14 December	12pm 12.15pm 12.30pm	Last Day of Term Last Day of Term Last Day of Term	LK, UK and Reception Year 1 and Year 2 Year 3 – Year 6
Tuesday 9 January	8.45am – 9.30am	Coffee Morning	Reception

Friday 15 December – Monday 8 January – Christmas Holiday. School resumes on Tuesday 9 January 2024

With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Gretchen Copeman
Headmistress



OAK-TREE SCHOOLS is the group name of:

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

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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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