



Newsletter 1 September 2020

Welcome back to the new academic year.

I hope you all had a lovely summer break. It is so lovely to go round the school and see how well the children have already settled into their new classes after all that has happened in the last 6 months. The teachers are always available to meet to discuss any concerns you may have but please email or phone, where possible. A special welcome to our new Year R children and their families.

Thank you for all your support in making the changes we have made to ensure safety for everyone on site. The children and teachers are adapting to the different way of working in school.

There are a few new members of staff who have joined us for the new year too. Miss Scriven, Y3 Teacher, Miss Watkins, Y4 Teacher, Miss Wright, Y5 Teacher. Mrs Birkett has also joined our lunchtime team.

Sadly Mrs Chick, HLTA and cleaner, will be leaving us on 25th September to take up a new role at a secondary school. Also Mrs Godden will be retiring from her breakfast club and lunch time roles on 2nd October. They have both worked incredibly hard during their time at Bitterne CE to make sure the children are safe, happy and learning well. They will both be greatly missed, and we wish them all the best for the future.

We currently have adverts out for an HLTA, breakfast club assistant, lunch supervisor and cleaner. If you or anyone you know is interested, please ask them to contact the office for details.

Love, Trust and Forgiveness

Our core Christian values that underpin all we do in school are 'Love, Trust and Forgiveness'. All staff work hard to behave in a loving, trusting and forgiving way, and teach what this means to the children. It helps lead to a respectful environment around school built on strong positive relationships. As parents, we ask you to also subscribe these values, regardless of your own faith background. This is what makes Bitterne CE distinctive and special.

Reading Books and Reading Log Books

In the next couple of weeks, every child will have read to an adult in school and been given an appropriate book to take home. This is taking longer than usual, so please be patient while we assess your child's individual reading level.

We expect children to read at home at least 3 times each week as homework, some children will choose to read more. Year R will be having a reading log book that will go home and return to school safely. Year 1 will use Tapestry and Y2 to Y6 will be able to share their home reading digitally using SEESAW when this is set up. This may be a child recording themselves reading, taking a photo of the book they read and adding a comment etc.

We will send out more details about how we will use SEESAW to support home reading in a few weeks time when all parents have registered

Safeguarding

We work hard to make sure that every child is safe and happy in school. Every school must have a 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL).

Mr Peterson is the DSL for Bitterne CE Primary. There are also 4 Deputy DSLs if Mr Peterson is not in school. They are Miss Allen, Mrs Bailey, Mr May and Miss Horan.

Our Safeguarding Governor is Tessa Hurst.

Health update

Has anything changed with your child's health over the summer? Please let us know so we can update our records.

As the teachers are getting to know the children, sometimes they raise a concern over hearing or sight. Even if they have been tested before, things can change and can really affect a child's learning. Class teachers will contact you to sign a referral form for the school nurse so that hearing and eyesight can quickly be checked.

Break time snacks

In **Year R, Year 1 and Year 2** the Government funds a piece of fruit or vegetable each day for every child at break time. We will distribute these safely.

Children in KS2 may bring their own healthy snacks from home such as fruit, vegetable or fruit/grain bars. However these **should not contain nuts**. We ask parents not to send in snacks that are high in sugar or include chocolate.

The lunchtime team are here to help

Mrs Baldwin is responsible for KS1 and Mrs Kitcher is responsible for KS2 at lunchtime. They can be contacted via the office email.

Every class bubble has their own allocated lunch supervisor. This is the same person each day and they are getting to know your child well as they eat and play.

Mobile Phones

Children are not allowed mobile phones in school.

If your child is in Y5 or Y6 and they walk home on their own, for safety, the children may bring a mobile phone. The use of the phone on the way to and from school is the responsibility of the parent. Please remember that most phones now connect to the internet, so restrictions would be needed.

Phones must be labelled and handed to the office at the start of the day and collected at the end of the day. We have measures in place to make sure this is COVID safe. **Your child will be given a parental and pupil agreement form to sign.**

Scooters and Bikes

We ask that children who cycle or scoot to school **do not ride their scooter or bike on the playground at the start or end of the day**. If possible, please can parents take the scooters and bikes home.

We are having the bike shed base moved from the Oakley John path area to create more space to socially distance and make it more accessible. Until this is done, we do not currently have secure bike storage.

We will let you know when the bike rack is ready to be used again.

School Meals

Every child in Year R, Year 1 and Year 2 is entitled to a free school dinner each day. We hope as many children as possible will have a school dinner every day. At the moment, the kitchen are providing a hot packed lunch for children, which they seem to be enjoying.

The cost of a school dinner in KS2 is £2.45 per day. This is excellent value for money in order for your child to have a balanced and nutritious lunch.

The only way to pay is online. Please ask at the office for details for you to set up your account. **All meals must be paid for in advance— only in an emergency will the school provide a meal without payment to ensure no child is without food.** If you think you might be entitled to Free School Meals, please check your eligibility with Miss Horan (Business Manager)

The menu for this half term is available at <http://www2.myschoollunch.co.uk/southampton/primary-schools/about-us/menu/>

If your child has special dietary needs, please let the office know, and we will ask our kitchen team to contact you. We are also looking at ways to provide lunch for children self isolating who are eligible for benefits linked free school meals.

More details to follow

Attendance

I know this will be an unusual term for attendance, as we are all very aware that if your child or anyone in your household has a new and persistent cough, a high temperature and/or a loss of their sense of taste or smell, that they should not be in school and book a COVID test. Until the results of the test are back, your child should not be in school.

Each half term I will continue to meet with Liz Cummings, our Education Welfare Officer, to review the attendance across the school, but in particular any child whose attendance is below 90%. The Government continues to classify any child with attendance below 90% as a 'persistent absentee'. Liz and I will look at the reasons for absence and it may be that we phone you to look at how your child's attendance can improve. If there are a number of unauthorised absences, (days off with no reason given by a parent) a penalty notice referral may be made. We may also ask Liz Cummings to make a safe home visit, if we have not been able to get a reason for absence. This is why it is so important to let the school know if your child is unwell, especially if your family are self isolating. We do not want to make home visits if a family is isolating but have not informed us of this.

If at any time you have concerns over your child's health, sleep, behaviour etc please speak to us as a referral to the school nursing team or other professionals may help.

Holidays in term time As you know our policy, in line with Government expectations, is that all requests for leave in term time will be refused unless they are a one off **exceptional circumstance**. I do not want to have to refer our parents for a penalty notice for unauthorised holiday, but this is what will happen upon your child's return to school. Currently a penalty notice is £60 per child, per parent. Please check the school holiday dates before booking your holiday. If a leave request for holiday is likely to result in a penalty notice referral, you will be informed of this in writing as a response to your leave request form.

If you need to quarantine upon your return for 14 days, this will increase the negative impact on your child's learning, significantly. Please be mindful of current quarantine rules when booking holidays for half term.

Behaviour update Miss Allen (Deputy Head Teacher) is responsible for leading on behaviour in the school. **There is a copy of the latest Behaviour and Anti Bullying Policy on the website.**

The whole school ethos behind the policy is to manage behaviour in a positive way to ensure all children feel safe, are happy and able to learn well. We do need the continued support of parents and carers in making sure the policy works.

If at any time you have any concerns over your child's behaviour either in school or at home or are worried about the behaviour of another child or bullying, please speak to Miss Allen at an early stage so that we can all work together to bring about positive changes swiftly.

All classes are now using Class Dojo for recording internal school rewards. The children are loving this system.

Meeting your child's needs

Special Educational Needs and Disability– SEND. Mrs Bailey is our Assistant Head for Inclusion (SENCO) and Miss Stephenson is our Assistant SENCO. If you are ever concerned about your child's academic, social or emotional learning and progress over time, please make an appointment to speak to your child's class teacher, Mrs Bailey or Miss Stephenson. Our Local Offer for SEND is published on our website for information.

Pupil Premium

If you are entitled to certain benefits such as Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance your child may be eligible for 'Free School Meals' at KS2 and Pupil Premium. This is extra funding that the school gets from the Government to raise overall achievement and meet the needs of the children. I will be sending out our entitlement to parents eligible for Pupil Premium shortly. If you think you might be eligible, or your circumstances have changed, please speak to Miss Horan in the office, we can do a simple check for you. We just need your National Insurance number and date of birth.

Parents' Evenings this term

Sadly we will not be inviting parents in for the usual face to face parents' evening this term. With 420 children in school, this would just be too many people coming in and out of the building and this would not be a safe option at the moment.

We will however be having 10 minute phone appointments over a 3 week period to try to accommodate when parents are available. This means you won't be able to look at books in the way you previously would do but by then you will hopefully be seeing work from school using SEESAW.

I will be sending out more details of how parents' evenings will work soon.

Contact details and communication —This is extremely important

We send all of our communications via email to the registered address we have on our systems therefore it is vital that we have your most up to date email address. If you would like to update your details then please let the office know or send the updated information to info@bitterneceprimary.net

If the communication from school needs a reply slip or a form to complete then we will send this as a separate Google form to be completed online.

Please ensure that you check your emails for any updates on a regular basis.

If we need to send you an urgent message such as a bubble or school closure, then we will send this information via text and email.

If your child becomes unwell in school with any COVID symptoms, we will need to contact you urgently. To do this we need your most up to date phone contact details. Please make sure we have the most up to date phone numbers for all listed contacts.

If your child has visited the medical room for a minor injury then we will send you a text to inform you about this. If the injury is more serious we will contact you immediately by telephone. **We must have at least 2 current contacts for every child. If you have moved or changed your mobile number or your child's medical needs have changed, please inform the office as soon as you can.**

Lost Property—Dealing with lost property safely is a current concern. We want to avoid property being lost so please make sure all items of clothing are clearly labelled with your child's name.

We will no longer be keeping the school lost property box in the medical room by the office. From next week we will have two lost property boxes, one in the KS1 foyer and one in the KS2 foyer under the canopy. The boxes will be put onto the playground at the end of every day.

There will be hand gel available for parents to use before and after touching any lost property items. You may bring your own gloves if you need to look through lost property. Please remember to socially distance.

Volunteering in school—on hold for the time being

I know many of you like to volunteer in school, hearing children read, admin tasks or general assisting in the classroom. Unfortunately at the moment we will not be using parent volunteers in school. This decision will be reviewed in October and volunteers may start coming in, provided they have the correct checks, and we feel that we can do this in a safe way that does not compromise the COVID safety of bubbles. Thank you for your understanding.