



# DOWNSWAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

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12<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dear Parents & Carers,

We hope you have had a lovely summer break and a very warm welcome for the start of the new school year, in particular to our new families. The children have settled quickly into their new classes and are looking very smart. They seemed to have grown taller over the holidays! I have included a range of information within my first newsletter for this academic year and attached some of our key dates for this academic year. I hope you find it useful!

### **Thank you**

On behalf of all the staff, I would like to say a very big thank you for all of our lovely gifts, cards and kind words at the end of the academic year. We were overwhelmed by your generosity.

### **Macmillan Coffee Morning**

On Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2019 we will be hosting a Macmillan coffee morning in The Hub from 9 am to 10.30 am. Please refer to the information emailed out recently from Miss Gale regarding this event. We look forward to seeing as many families as possible for some cake and a natter!

### **Key dates**

Attached with this newsletter are some of our key dates. We will update it as we progress through the academic year and you will receive more information about each event nearer the time. We will continue to send weekly reminders each Monday for the week as well.

### **Welcome Time**

Welcome time is an informal opportunity for you to come into the classrooms and meet the team. Please pop in between 3.15 pm – 3.40 pm. Foundation Stage welcome time will start at 3.05 pm until 3.30 pm. We look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible on the dates at the end of my newsletter.

### **Harvest Festival**

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019 we will be having a Harvest Celebration and supporting the ReadiFood charity. ReadiFood has been providing an 'Emergency Food Parcel' service in Reading for over 25 years. They currently deliver over 140 Emergency Food Parcels every week to families and individuals across the greater Reading area. If you would like to support this event, we would like children to bring in a non-perishable food item on this day, e.g. *Tinned vegetables, small bag of rice, tinned ready meals, tinned chopped tomatoes, tinned soup, tinned potatoes, biscuits, small bag of pasta, pasta sauces, coffee, tea bags, etc.* All food must be within "use by date". All donations will be gratefully received.

### **Parent/Carer Helpers**

We value having an extra pair of hands within the classroom for specific projects and to listen to children read, so if you are able to offer any help then please do let your child's class teacher or the office know. We are appreciative of any help received.

### **Break Time Snacks**

At break times, children should eat fruit, ideally fresh fruit. Items such as cheese, biscuits, etc. are not allowed to be eaten during this time.

### **Nut Free School**

We are a nut free school and therefore children are not allowed to bring any items of food which contain nuts. We have children and a staff member with severe nut allergies and as a result have Epi-Pens. Anaphylaxis (also known as anaphylactic shock) is an allergic condition that can be severe and potentially fatal.

### **KS2 School dinner cost**

School dinners cost £2.35 per meal. Please ensure your school meal account has sufficient funds to pay for any school meals your child has and this can be done online through the school meal website. Alternatively your child may bring cash/cheque into the school office. Should there be insufficient funds, your child will be unable to order a school dinner in the classroom.

### **Singing Songs**

During the school year, the children learn songs relating to different religions and cultures, including learning Christmas carols or singing an assembly song which may have a reference to 'God'. We would hope that all children would embrace this, however if you feel that this would cause a conflict with your own religion or faith, then please do let the school office know.

### **Birthdays**

Children may wear non-school uniform on the Friday after their birthday, if they wish. We will also sing happy birthday to them in our Friday assembly.

### **Website App**

We aim to keep our website up to date with a range of information so that it is useful for all of our parents/carers. The website app is a great way to stay up to date and to find out about school news. The school app is available to download on your smart phone. This app will give you notifications and access to news, calendar dates, and photo albums when they are uploaded to the school website.

Please visit <https://www.downsway.w-berks.sch.uk/page/?title=School+News+app&pid=45> for full information on how to download the app.

### **Talk Homework**

Every fortnight, children in Years 1-6 are asked to write about a particular theme. The type of writing differs between each class but the topic is common to all. In preparation for writing, children take part in VCOP activities in class, focusing on *vocabulary*, *connectives*, *ways to open sentences* and *punctuation*. A key aspect of Big Write is the Big Talk homework which is set the week before a writing task. Big Talk homework does not include writing, simply the chance to discuss ideas with your child. If a child cannot speak their ideas, they will find it very difficult to write them so we actively encourage you to complete the Talk Focus homework with your child, so that they are able to write to the very best of their ability in the Big Write session.

### **Car park & Playground Equipment**

Once children enter the main school gates, they should get off their bike or scooter and push them, using the path to ensure they are kept safe. The same applies at the end of the day where they should push their bike or scooter to the main gates, before getting on. The reason for this is that the car park is busy at these times with staff arriving and leaving, as well as deliveries. In addition, children are not permitted to be on the field or play with the playground equipment before or after school so please ensure you remind your child of this expectation.

### **Contacting school**

If you or your children have any matters/queries you can contact the school office at any time between 8.15am and 4.15pm and class teachers can be contacted in four ways:

1. In person or on the phone after school. *We have staff meetings on Tuesdays which start promptly at 3.30 pm so please avoid this time.*
2. By e-mail using the address above.
3. By writing a short note for your child to bring in.
4. By relaying a quick message to them before school starts.

## Attendance & Punctuality

Children are expected to attend school each day unless they are unwell. The expected level of attendance at Downsway is a minimum of **96%**. This allows for the occasional day or two of absence through illness, without a child falling behind with their work. The school monitors attendance with parents being notified when attendance drops below 96%.

Children must attend school regularly if they are to make the best of the opportunities they have to learn and make best progress, and it is a parents'/carers' responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities. Statistics show a direct link between attendance and attainment.

Attendance	Days lost over 7 Primary years	Weeks lost over 7 Primary years	Equivalent in terms
95%	66	13	1 full term
90%	133	26	2 full terms
85%	200	39	3 full terms (whole year)

Children are expected to arrive at school on time, lateness causes disruption for the individual child and to that of other children in the class. Children may arrive at school from **8.45 am** and go into class. There is no adult supervision on site before this time, so the school is not legally responsible for children arriving early. Registration takes place at **8.55am** and at **1pm**. Registers close 10 minutes after registration commences. A child arriving after this time is marked as "late".

## School Meals - Your school could be missing out on funding

Our school could get an additional £1300 per year from the government for each child from a family on a low income. This is called Pupil Premium and it can be used to support children with their learning. Your confirmed registration could mean that your child is provided with extra support. If you are receiving any of the benefits listed below, please do **check your eligibility**.

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7400, as assessed by earnings from up to 3 of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (from the National Asylum Support Service)
- the guarantee element of State Pension
- Credit Child Tax Credit, provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual income of no more than £16,190
- Working tax credit run on-paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

To apply online go to <https://westberks.gov.uk/article/28013/Apply-for-Free-School-Meals> or you can call **01635 42400** to register by phone. All you need is your name and address, date of birth and National Insurance number!

## Uniform & Jewellery

We are a 'uniform school' and believe that a co-ordinated style makes for a smart business like appearance and encourages the children to take pride in their school. Black socks, black tights, black trousers, black skirts and black shorts (apart from PE) **are not** part of our school uniform. A detailed list of the school uniform is on the website. Please make sure that all items of clothing are clearly **labelled**. From time-to-time items go missing but it is far easier to return named items. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

We do not allow children to wear jewellery. The exceptions to this rule are earring studs in pierced ears and small objects of religious significance, such as a crucifix on a chain. We ask the children to either remove these objects during PE and games or to cover them with a plaster to prevent them from causing injury. If your child can tell the time, they may wear a watch. All children, girls and boys, are requested to tie hair up where it is long enough to do so.

## Safeguarding

As you will know, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and you too can play your part. If you have concerns about a child you can contact me, Mr Grover (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or Mrs Fyans (Safeguarding Governor) in confidence via the School Office.

### Staff for September 2019

Year Group	Teacher	Teaching Assistant <i>Please note, not all TAs will be in the classroom every day or for full days</i>
<b>Foundation Stage</b>	Miss Rackley – PPA covered by Miss Gale	Mrs Saunders – all day Mrs Harman – mornings Mrs Green - afternoons
<b>Year 1</b>	Miss Watson – PPA covered by Miss Gale	Mrs Holder & Mrs Thomas
<b>Year 2</b>	Mr Bolton – PPA covered by Miss Gale	Mrs Green, Mrs Eydmann & Mrs Roberts
<b>Year 3</b>	Mr Edwards (Monday – Wednesday) Mrs Burnham (Thursdays & Fridays) Miss Hobbs – trainee teacher	Miss Valentine & Mrs Preston
<b>Year 4</b>	Miss King - PPA covered by Miss Gale	Mrs Scott, Miss Series & Mrs Farr
<b>Year 5</b>	Mrs Jones (Mondays & Tuesdays) Mrs Lloyd (Wednesday – Friday)	Mrs Thomas, Miss Valentine & Mr Scott
<b>Year 6</b>	Mr Grover – PPA covered by Mrs Huntington	Mrs Taylor, Mrs Green & Mrs Thomas
<b>School Business Manager</b> - Mrs Hobbs <b>School Secretary</b> ( <i>whilst Miss Smith is on maternity leave</i> ) - Mrs Fox <b>Caretaker</b> - Mr Clarke <b>Lunchtime Supervisor</b> – Mrs Deane <b>Lunchtime Assistants</b> – Mrs Prescott, Mrs Morgan-Russell, Miss Series, Mrs Azzabi, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Thomas, Mrs Farr & Miss Parker.		

Finally, we are very much looking forward to working in partnership with you as we progress through this academic year. If at any point you have a question or query, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be more than happy to help.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs K. Ayres  
Headteacher