

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

WELCOME BACK!

I hope that the return to the school routine hasn't been too difficult and the children are settling well into their new classes with their new teachers (or simply enjoying being back with the same teacher if that's the case).

Once again, we start the year with slightly fewer children than we had with us in July and the school does feel a little smaller because of it. This is because we continue to admit 30 children in Year R each year as a result of the declining birth rate and the school's Published Admissions Number (PAN) being set at 30 – so as 48 Year 6 children leave us and 30 Year R children join us, we become ever smaller, and we will continue to do so for the next few years until we are, once again, a single form entry school. So, please don't worry if you also notice there are fewer children – we are not losing them!!

And just in case you are wondering how this affects your children next year, we will only have one class in each of the year groups from Reception to Year 4, but our Year 5 and 6 classes will remain mixed.

That is such a long way off though, and I hope we will all enjoy a great year before then. Please do call, email or come and see me if you have any questions about anything to do with school life. I love how WhatsApp can be a good source of information for families, but I would much prefer to have the opportunity to address any concerns that might circulate on the platform so please do let me know if there is anything on there that I can help with.

Best wishes

Mr Geraghty

A NEW YEAR, AND A NEW IMAGE

I am really pleased to be able to finally share with you the new school logo, that was voluntarily created by Fiona Burt, who is a parent at the school. For some time now, I have wanted to bring together the 4 (yes 4!) different logos that have existed in different formats across the school for many years. Taking into account all of the different documents, displays and websites that the logo appears on, but more importantly thinking carefully about the impact on parents and the cost of uniform, I took the decision to simply update the logo that appears on our jumpers, book bags and ties - and we are currently working with SchoolKit on new uniform items using this version of the logo.

Over the next few months, this new image will replace the existing logos, so you will undoubtedly see a mix of new and old as we make this transition. The same will be the case for uniform! Please do not feel pressured into buying anything new for the sake of the new logo, as the difference between new and existing uniform will be small and hardly noticeable. Over time, through wear and tear and children growing, the new versions will become the norm. Unlike some local schools, that gave parents a year to change, we are not putting a timeframe to this – it will be more of an organic change.

There are two versions of the new logo, plus various single colour versions for use in different media, but predominantly you will see the circle logo, as pictured at the top of the page and this 'arch' version...

We are so very grateful to Fiona for the time and effort she gave to supporting the school with this but I in her own words, *"It's been such a pleasure to work on this new logo for the school. I've really enjoyed bringing it all together and hope it helps create a more consistent look across the school's branding. It's so lovely to see it out in the world!"*



With God's love,
all are encouraged to thrive.

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MEET THE TEACHER PRESENTATIONS

A reminder that these are taking place next week and will be providing some important information about teaching and learning in your child's phase, including how you can support your child at home. We have child-care facilities in place for all children who attend school allowing all parents to attend the meetings. Please note the details below.

Tuesday 8th September – Year 3/4 in Wren Class (presentation followed by visits to individual classes). Please enter via the outside door for Wren Class, which is accessible by walking around the left-hand side of the school – the classroom door is opposite the green container (please take a moment to look at our Spirited Arts entry). Children will be able to wait with Mr Geraghty in Robin Class next door.

Wednesday 9th September – Year 5/6 in Red Kite Class (presentation followed by visits to individual classes). Please enter via the outside door for Red Kite Class, which is accessible by walking around the left-hand side of the school and walking towards the double green doors at the back – the classroom door is just on the right. Children will be able to wait with Mr Geraghty in Kestrel Class which is just opposite.

Thursday 10th September – Year 1 (Squirrel Class) and Year 2 (Hedgehog Class) presentations in classrooms. Both of these are accessible by walking around the right-hand side of the school. Hedgehog Class is at the top of the steps at the edge of the field, and Squirrel Class is in the grey outside classroom which you can't miss! Year 1 children will be able to stay with Mrs Pamphlett in the other Year 1 classroom. Year 2 children will be able to wait with Mr Geraghty which is just next door.

ALLERGY SAFETY – BENEDICT'S LAW

Benedict's Law, which is new allergy-safety legislation, came into effect at the start of September, and during our inset days this week, all staff were trained on all aspects of the new law and the statutory obligations it places on the whole school and individual staff. We have introduced new procedures where appropriate and have spare EpiPens for emergency use.

In response to this, we will continue to look at where food-related activities need to be assessed and share with you any of the issues or changes that will be necessary.

In the meantime, I need to remind you that nuts and chickpeas (including humous) are not allowed in school. We will monitor the snacks that children are bringing in to school, but please also check the ingredients of food before sending it in.

We may have to change some aspects of star parties and food technology units and will increase food labelling for events and cake sales. If you have any questions about this, please contact us.

CEREAL BOXES FOR ART BOOKS

Each year, the children add a new front cover to their home-made art books, so that they will have a lovely record of the classes they have been in during their time here. You may already have been asked to send in the cardboard from a cereal box to help with this, but with Benedict's Law in mind, can I please ask you to not send in boxes if they are from a nut-based cereal.

PHOTOS

This year, we are going to change the way that children's enjoyment of school is portrayed in newsletters and on the website. It is a sad fact that there are bad actors in the world who could take and manipulate photos of your children for their own use, and it is genuinely heart-breaking to think that this will affect how we share with you all of the great things your children do, and the personal successes they have with us.

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SCHOOL UNIFORM

The children look very smart in their school uniforms and the Year 3 children, who are in their shirts and ties for the first time are doing very well at remembering to tuck their shirts in (which must feel a little strange to them). Over the summer, there was much more talk in the news about the expense associated with school uniform. We are very aware of how this can be a burden, and along with many schools in the area we ask only that children wear a branded jumper or cardigan as this is important for creating a sense of belonging and for safety reasons when on trips away from school. Any other item of uniform can be purchased from any of the many retail outlets that provide coloured clothing to match our uniform colours - you can still buy fully branded items from SchoolKit, including ties, if desired. I also need to ask that children are coming to school in black shoes rather than trainers.

BIRTHDAY 'CELEBRATION' CLOTHES

It is lovely to be able to easily identify those children who are celebrating a birthday, when they come to school in non-uniform. When I started this as a new school tradition, children were coming in clothes they would wear for a party or celebration, but we are now seeing a change to this and I would love to come back to that original idea, with your help, so if your child is celebrating their birthing by wearing their own clothes to school, please ensure they are suitable and something they would wear to a party.

CARETAKER AND LUNCHTIME ASSISTANT VACANCIES

Sadly, we waved a fond farewell to Mr Hiscox last term, so we are currently advertising for a caretaker to help with daily duties and running repairs.

We are also looking for extra help to keep our children safe and entertained at lunchtimes.

If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in either of these roles, please contact Mrs Davenport in the first instance.

CONTACTING TEACHERS

Due to the nature of their working day, it is not an expectation that teachers will check emails every day. For that reason, we don't publish the email addresses of the teachers and instead, we ask that you contact the office

(admin@otterbourne.hants.sch.uk) in the first instance or myself (headteacher@otterbourne.hants.sch.uk) with any questions - these inboxes are monitored more regularly. For anything urgent, please always call the school office on 01962 712020.