

Dear Families,

What a super trip we had to Malvern at the weekend with the Year 4s, to replace our missed residential trip. Good luck at Middle School this week. We will be thinking of you all. Come back to see us.

Welcome back everyone. Welcome to our new families both in Red Class, Nursery and across the school.

At the start of the year I remind everyone (staff, parents, children and governors) of the school aim:

At Blackwell First School we aim to educate the whole child and to ensure children are happy, healthy and fulfil their potential in terms of development of skills for life,

social and moral values and academic success.

Following rather unusual Spring and Summer terms for schools nationally, we were delighted to be able to welcome back almost everyone during June and July and know that this will enable a smooth transition back for our existing children. Using a curriculum for the summer term based on international research on supporting children following periods of challenge, we addressed many of these challenges. The children are at the heart of all we do and we are pleased that the collaborative work between families and the school supported the school vision. Here is a sample of what some parents wrote at the end of the year on their feedback forms...

...Under very difficult circumstances, the school has given an enormous amount of support to all pupils and their families...

...what a difference you have made to him with your dedication, love and kindness...

...many thanks for all the brilliant resources and phone calls and support, they were greatly appreciated...

...the support provided during the COVID epidemic has been above and beyond our expectations and has enabled him to continue progressing...

...thank you to you all for the exceptional way in which you have supported everyone...

Please see the new academic year's School Development Plan headlines attached, to see our focus for development this year. We have continued with last year's plan and, in addition, added a large section addressing issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. We are looking forward to starting our new whole school topics. Years 1-4 will be learning all about "Bronze Age" following on from their work in the summer term on the Stone Age and Reception and Nursery will be learning "All about me" for the first few weeks in school. Mrs Mander is helping Nursery children 'learn the ropes' and follows their interests as they learn routines and become experts at tidying up with a little help from experienced Nursery children!

Class newsletters will provide you with information about what aspects of topics are being covered.



The children demonstrated such kindness and support for each other. 'Keep going!'



Concentration and focus on show here. Malvern brings together all of the skills we focus on in school throughout their time with us.



That zip line was a firm favourite...



Resilience was evident during the trip and nowhere more so than on the climbing wall...Flo got to the top of all three climbs. Wow!



Co-operation for Orienteering and lots of independence here, ready for Middle School.



WELCOME The start of term is always busy as children settle into new routines. Support them by encouraging them to be independent and reassuring them about any changes. If there is anything you are wondering about please email the office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk whilst we are working within government guidelines and families are encouraged to leave the site quickly at the end of the day. We are unable to offer our informal open evening on site so the children will make a presentation to share with you in a few weeks (details to follow) and teachers will send out letters offering telephone parent consultations before half term. For new families in Nursery and Reception, there will be some phonecalls home within the first few weeks to 'check in' with you about their settling in.

Sports – Mrs Webb is busy planning for the sporting events on the calendar this year. As part of the All Active Academy, a Bromsgrove wide organisation, we are sharing event planning for during this COVID-19 period. Well done to everyone, led by Mrs Webb for achieving the Platinum Sports Award.

Arts – Mrs Hipkiss has a full timetable for recorder lessons this term but please contact the school office if you are interested in your child (Year 1 upwards) learning to play the piano, flute or violin. We work with our music teachers, Miss Foster, Mrs Grainger and Mrs Grew from Severn Arts to offer lessons for children in school.

PARENTAPP - Our main form of communication is through ParentApp so please sign up if you have not already by emailing office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk

There have been some issues with notifications and messages saving. We have been advised that you should log out and log back in, using your email or if that fails, your mobile phone number and then go to My Profile and resubmit. If you continue to have difficulties, please notify the office. Thank you.

Afternoon school clubs are offered on the school site for children from Reception onwards as a way of extending children's learning, providing additional curriculum linked activities, providing the children with healthy activities in which to engage and stimulate the children's interests. These are free of charge. This term your children will be engaged in some of the clubs listed below:

- Art and craft
- Living Well
- Sport
- Music
- Outdoor Club
- Film
- Books and illustration

As part of maintaining bubbles, clubs will run within bubbles in the children's classrooms during the autumn term. The focus this term is on supporting children's mental wellbeing and return to school full time after many months away from a full day of learning. The children are likely to be tired from a full day. The option of a 1.40pm pick up is ideal for some children at this time, particularly the younger children.

Medical Needs and administering medication in school

For children with medical conditions that require support above and beyond the average child in mainstream provision, we follow guidance as set out by the Department for Education in the document 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions- April 2014'. The school policy is available from the school office on request.

Administration of medication

In light of government guidance, when children are well enough to be in school, but require medication (such as antibiotics) we ask that parents request that 'where clinically possible, medicines should be prescribed in dose frequencies which enable them to be taken outside school hours' (Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions- April 2014).

Where this is not possible, in agreement with the headteacher, school staff will administer medication with written parental consent and only when in date medication is received in original packaging that is clearly labelled and includes instructions for administration, dosage and storage. (This includes travel sickness medication). This will be administered at or as close to 12 noon as possible.

If your child has an inhaler, epipen or any long term medication, please ensure that it is in date and in school. School documentation needs completing by parents prior to medication being administered. Please also remember to tell us of changing medical needs so that we can amend school records and ensure the best possible care is available.

During COVID-19, children must not attend school if they have the COVID-19 symptoms of high temperature, persistent cough or loss of taste or smell. Please notify us of your child's absence and book a COVID-19 test as soon as possible and keep us informed. We are then required to report confirmed cases to the local health board and take action in school according to advice.

READING AND HOMEWORK

As last term, reading books will continue to be sent home each Monday and we ask that you practise reading these a few times and then return them by THURSDAY at the latest. This allows us to quarantine the books before sending them home to a different household. Year 3 and 4 children may need to keep their longer books for longer.

All Reception and Year 1 children will be sent home with a reading book that reinforces their phonic learning. Children who are able to read at a level beyond the phonic level will also take home a different 'level' book to develop skills other than the phonic skills. Please speak to Mrs Moss or Mrs Webb if you would like to know more.

Homework for Year 1-4 children will also be sent home each Friday and we ask that you return homework on a Monday. Homework remains optional, with the exception of reading, which is vital to children's educational development. Help with mental maths and spelling is also greatly appreciated and will be shared with you on newsletters and homework sheets. Working together will be more vital than ever over the coming months, following the disruption to the children's learning last term. We continue to be grateful for the hard work on Home Learning that many of you engaged with last term. Thank you.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS

We are currently planning Educational visits and visits to school by visiting artists for this academic year as the children benefit hugely from the memorable experiences that these visits provide and the practical nature of the visits enhance their learning.

We are planning visits and experiences that enable safety measures to be adhered to. There will also be events for families to support your involvement in school life, although for the moment we are unable to offer on site large gatherings, in line with government guidance for COVID-19.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP – We start this term with 'New start' discussing making positive changes before moving on to 'Responsibility' next week, where we will consider the UN Rights of the child and associated responsibilities. We will cover the rule of law during this time as part of British Values education.

Each day, we will share this time via Zoom, whilst government guidance prevents class bubbles from mixing. This will help to maintain the community feel of the school.

THE BLACKWELL KITCHEN – Mrs Barker is in her seventh year as School Cook in 'The Blackwell Kitchen' and is doing a superb job alongside Mr Wilson in preparing such delicious, healthy meals for the children. Everyone who visits, from kitchen inspectors to other headteachers, comment on the quality of the food. We look forward to welcoming Red Class to lunchtimes next week, but it is good to see so many Year 3s taking up the option of School Meals once it is no longer free. It is so good to see how well the children eat our school meals when they are with their peers, helping to develop good eating habits. Our Nursery children eat their dinners brilliantly. Well done.

For the small number of children opting for packed lunches, please remember we adhere to government food standards for schools. Crisps, chocolate and sweets are not allowed. Thank you for your co-operation.

CHRISTMAS - It may seem a long way off, but it will be here before we know it! Under normal circumstances, each class from Reception to Year 4 performs in St Catherine's church. We have provisionally reserved some dates with the church. We are, however, uncertain about whether these events will take place and so we have booked Keith Woolford to film the events for parents, whether we are able to have an audience or not. If we are able to invite you to attend, please note that there are two Christmas Performances. We request that you only bring 2-3 people to a performance as space is limited. Although we do not have a toddler performance this year and you are welcome to bring a little one as long as they sit on your lap, please do go to the 'Wheel' room if they become restless. Thank you.

UNIFORM – Please ensure that all uniform is named as even with varying sizes it is tricky matching unnamed jumpers to owners! Children (YR-Y4) need trainers for outdoor PE lessons. They also need wellies, thick socks and gloves. Lost property is taken to relevant classes when named.

PFTA- The Parent Friend and Teacher Association helps to raise money for the school to spend to support children's learning. The group meets every half term and is looking for new members to support its work. Details of the first meeting will be shared shortly. Last year, the PFTA funded the purchase of new ipads and laptops as well as subsidising a school educational visit.

FIRST AID – Children bring home a sticker or letter following first aid treatment. From September, we will notify you of any head bumps via ParentApp so that you can monitor your child for 24 hours. Thank you. If you require support with ParentApp, contact the office.

Diary Dates Autumn term

- 1.9 and 2.9.20 School closed for TE Days
- 3.9.20 School opens for children
- 30.9.20 Virtual Open Evening for current families - details to follow
- w/b 12.10.20 Parent Consultation telephone calls
- 12.10.20 Flu immunisation
- 22.10.20 Purple Class assembly- a virtual event
- 22.10.20 School closes for children
- 23.10.20 School closed for TE Day Half Term
- 2.11.20 School opens for children
- 12.11.20 Individual school photographs- sorry we cannot take siblings who do not attend school due to COVID-19
- Family learning event for Red Class families- TBC
- 11.12.20 Christmas Concert filming morning- please order your DVDs!
- 11.12.20 Christmas Lunch – please order as part of your routine school lunch order
- 15.12.20 Christmas Concert- Red and Green Classes- 9.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2/3 adults per child welcome TBC dependent on COVID-19 guidance
- 15.12.20 Christmas Concert- Purple, Yellow and Blue Classes- 1.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2 adults per child welcome TBC dependent on COVID-19 guidance
- 16.12.20 Christmas Concert - Purple, Yellow and Blue Classes- 9.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2 adults per child welcome TBC dependent on COVID-19 guidance
- 16.12.20 Christmas Concert- Red and Green Classes - 1.30pm St Catherine's Church- 2/3 adults per child TBC dependent on COVID-19 guidance
- (If toddlers attend concerts, please sit them on an adult's lap and take them into 'The Wheel' at the side of the church if they become restless. Photographs and filming is welcomed but no images/ films are to be uploaded onto social media for child protection reasons).
- 17.12.20 Christmas Coffee sing song- 2.30pm- Nursery families TBC
- 18.12.20 Party Day- children may wear own clothes and remember sensible shoes and an outdoor coat are still required. Pantomime day.
- 18.12.20 School closes for children

Blackwell School Club is our school run Out of School Care provider. We are open from 7.15am until 6pm and provide a range of play based activities as well as breakfast and tea in a nurturing environment. We currently operate within the protective measures bubbles in line with school bubbles, adhering to Government COVID-19 guidelines. Please see the office or Mrs Moran/Mrs Edney for details.