

Dear Families,

What a super start to the school year we have had. Our new families are getting into the swing of the snake and ladder and the children have all been amazing at arriving independently and settling in so well.

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 a rather unusual last couple of years, we are settling quickly back into new arrangements and long may they last. The children are at the heart of all we do and we are pleased that the collaborative work between families and the school supports the school vision. Here is a sample of what some parents wrote at the end of the year on their feedback forms...

*...thank you for guiding us through the trickiest of years- we are so grateful to the staff...  
---staff have been such a fantastic support during the year and this has been invaluable in such strange times...*

*...the school and staff have gone above and beyond to ensure (his) education and support needs have been met...*

*...home school work was very well organised and clear and we felt well supported. Periods of transition back into school have been done seamlessly and we recognise great resilience in (her) as a result of the extraordinary situation and the fantastic support from school...*

*...we feel very lucky to live in Blackwell so that our children can attend the forward thinking, well led and happiness focussed BFS...*

*...I cannot thank the school enough for continuing to strive forward despite the pandemic...*

*...Blackwell is a truly remarkable and special place and it is all these things because of the wonderful, dedicated, patient and loving staff...*

Please see the new academic year's School Development Plan headlines attached, to see our focus for development this year. We are looking forward to starting our new whole school topics. Years 1-4 will be learning all about "Romans" and we are looking forward to educational visits 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 further information.

Best wishes,  
Mrs Moss



Holiday Club chefs in action. The children had a great time cooking goodies for teatime.



Nursery is good fun and everyone loves being outside. The sandpit is a really popular choice at the moment but buildings blocks are also part of the action.



Chalking at playtime on a lovely clean board. The new traversing wall is popular but I do believe you're supposed to stick to one colour for extra challenge girls! Thank you PFTA.



There are so many new resources to explore in Red Class and there's more every day...



**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](mailto: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 or zoom parent consultations soon. For new families in Nursery and Reception, there will be some phonecalls/zooms 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 Mrs Grainger and Mrs Johnson from Severn Arts to offer lessons for children in school.

**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.

**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](mailto:office@blackwell.worcs.sch.uk) 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. This term your children will be engaged in some of the clubs listed here: Art; Yoga; Film; Forest School and Sewing. The children are likely to be tired from a full day so the option of a 1.40pm pick up is ideal for some children at this time, particularly the younger children.

**COVID-** With transmission increasing in Bromsgrove and in particular the Lickey End/ Marlbrook area of Bromsgrove, please take extra precautions to help us reduce possible transmission. Thank you.



## 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 PCR 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** - In light of new guidance from Department for Education (DfE), we will be using a phonics programme called Little Wandle Letters and Sounds for the children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and the start of Year 2. This works by:

- Teachers teaching a set order of phonics;
- Children reading a book with the teachers three times a week that matches their phonic level;
- Children receiving details of how to access the same book that they read in school at home using an ebook once per week (this is to practise with you and should be one they are feeling secure with);
- Children bringing home a physical book once a week that matches the phonics taught but one that is less familiar and
- Children bringing home a book for their family to read to them each week as a library book.

We will provide more details of this programme and offer support for helping your child learn to read in family workshops.

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 year. 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.

**THE BLACKWELL KITCHEN** – Mrs Barker is in her eighth 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 and 4s 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.

Congratulations and thanks to Mr Wilson following his appointment into the world of IT. **We will be advertising two kitchen posts soon- please speak to Mrs Moss if you are interested.**

**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.

**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. The first meeting is on 20.9.21 at 7pm.

Last year, the PFTA funded the purchase of new ipads and laptops as well as subsidising resources, installing the traversing wall and building the 'High Street' as a result of a generous donation.

**FIRST AID** – Children bring home a sticker or letter following first aid treatment. 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.

**PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS** – We have two vacancies for Parent Governors- details to follow.

### Diary Dates Autumn term 2021

20.9.21 PFTA virtual meeting 7pm

27.9.21 Y1 eye tests- details TBC

29.9.21 Virtual topic presentation for current families - details to follow

w/b 11.10.21 Parent Consultation telephone calls/ zoom

21.10.21 Flu immunisation- nasal spray

21.10.21 Purple Class assembly- a virtual event

21.10.21 School closes for children

22.10.21 School closed for TE Day

Half Term

1.11.21 School opens for children

2.11.21 Individual school photographs- sorry we cannot take siblings who do not attend school due to COVID-19

Family learning event for Red Class families- Letter to follow: Virtual 4.11.21/ On site 18.11.21 if possible

8.12.21 Christmas Concert filming morning- please order your online access codes!

(If possible, we will have live on site performances for Christmas but if this is not possible, we will provide a film of performances prepared for you).

16.12.21 Christmas Lunch TBC – please order as part of your routine school lunch order

17.12.21 Panto (on site for all except Nursery) and Party Day- children may wear own clothes and remember sensible shoes and an outdoor coat are still required.

17.12.21 School closes for children

4.1.22 Training day for teachers

5.1.22 School opens 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, adhering to Government COVID-19 guidelines. Please see the office or Mrs Moran/Mrs Edney for details.