

### Welcome Back!

It is so lovely to see all the children back at the Academy after such a long time and it's wonderful to see them all happy and smiling, we have missed them. Thank you for making their return to school so positive and for helping them to follow all the new rules which will help keep everyone safe. A special welcome also to our new Reception classes and new families, along with some familiar faces.

I have attached a separate letter with the latest information available to us regarding Coronavirus. However, can I note again that parents are not allowed in the Academy at the moment and must drop off at the designated gate. Please do your best to get the children here on time – **late arrival creates difficulties** as the children have to enter through the front of school which compromises our systems for social distancing.

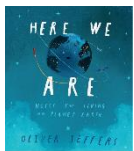
### Site Organisation

**Start to the Day** - we are constantly reviewing our risk assessment and trying to keep all at the Academy as safe as possible. I noticed that on the only wet morning this term, letting children go straight in on their arrival enabled everyone to socially distance more effectively. We have therefore decided to take this approach every morning. We will still maintain the staggered school day as this helps us manage spaces for playtimes and lunchtimes etc. but if you arrive 10 minutes before or later the staff will be on the gates to direct the children straight in to class. Please see the chart below to illustrate. Unfortunately, if you have siblings with different start times you will still have to wait for the later gate opening time. I am grateful for the teachers who have agreed to this as it is cutting down their preparation time in the mornings.

Year	Class	Gates Open From	Start time
Year 1/2	Oak, Larch & Cherry	8.30	8.40
Year 3/4	Maple, Magnolia & Cedar	8.45	8.55
Year 5/6	Willow, Copper Beech & Sequoia	8.30	8.40

This does not affect Reception and parents should continue to follow the bespoke timetable already successfully started.

### Learning



**Writing** - since the start of term, writing lessons in all year groups have been based around the picture book 'Here We Are' by Oliver Jeffers. It has helped us to explore how extraordinary it is to be living together here on Earth at this time. If you would like to learn more, have a look at the author explaining about his book in a Ted talk on Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpn6MCmoK0g>

**Reading** - we would like to say a huge thank you to our School Association who have bought a whole new reading scheme for Key Stage One. We are so excited to see the children reading brand new, up to date stories from Reading Planet which tie in brilliantly with our phonics teaching. You might notice some slight differences in your child's reading level when they bring their first book home this year because of the new scheme, there is detailed information on our school website if you want to know more. We hope you enjoy sharing these new stories!

### **Holidays During Term Time**

Whilst I realise absence through illness is unavoidable, I do have concerns about children missing school through holidays and the impact this makes on their learning. Children also need to be present for important assessments throughout the year – **there are particularly important tests for Year Six and Year Two in May and Year One in June. I cannot, therefore, authorise any requests for family holidays except in exceptional circumstances.**

## Staffing

Mr Wright will not be with us for a few weeks. If you have any SEN enquires in his absence, please send them via the office to Mrs Kingscote who will be working on the SEN caseload on Fridays. For any other queries Mr Wright was helping with, please contact me. As Mrs Kingscote is currently helping the school as SEN Lead whilst Mr Wright is away, we have asked Mrs McKenzie to work in Elm Class on Fridays. She is also covering Miss Brown's non-contact time in Palm Class on Tuesday mornings. Mrs McKenzie is a very experienced Reception teacher who is trained in social communication and has worked with us for many years.

## Contacting Staff

We know that it is currently hard to meet with staff to discuss how your child is doing. If you want to speak to them in any other way than a very quick word at the gate, please phone the office and the teachers will contact you.

## **Year Six Transfer to Secondary School**

Letters have been sealed in envelopes, left for 48 hours and will be handed to Year Six pupils on Monday. This letter gives details of the application process for secondary school. It also contains a unique code which you will need to make the application. If possible, it is best to make the application online but if you wish to use a paper form, it would be a good idea to enclose a stamped, addressed envelope when you send it off. The deadline for Year Six applications to secondary school is **31<sup>st</sup> October 2020**. Go to [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transfersecondaryschool](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transfersecondaryschool) for further information. If you need any help with the application, please let me know. The Local Authority has asked us to say that secondary schools are unlikely to be able to offer onsite tours/open events at the moment.

## **Change to Marling Entrance Test Date**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a change to the date of the grammar school test. This means that for students hoping to join Marling in September 2021, the test date has been moved from Saturday 12 September 2020 to Saturday 17 October 2020. For more information, see <https://www.marling.school/joining-us#admissions-policy> - 2021 Admissions Policy variation Aug 2020.

## **Parentpay**

Although relatively few children are taking baguette lunches at the moment, please can you check your child's Parentpay account to make sure the debts from the last academic year are cleared. Those children who have moved up from **Year 2 into Year 3 will no longer automatically receive universal free school meals**, and if your child is having a baguette lunch, but is not entitled to free school meals, they will be charged at the same price as a school meal. If you are a Year 3 parent and haven't already received a letter with your child's unique Parentpay code and log-in, please contact the school office.

## **School Association**

**Virtual 50/50 Bucket** – an email was sent out this week about membership of the Virtual 50/50 Bucket. This works very much like the "100 Club" we have at the school fairs and is a great way to support us, whilst having a flutter! To join in, please complete and sign the subscription form which will enter you into a monthly draw. All participants must be parents, guardians or staff at Dursley C of E Primary Academy or Treetops Nursery. The winner will receive 50% of the membership fee taken that month and the remainder will be used to help fund equipment and resources for school. Thank you for your support and good luck!!

Paul Daniels

**Together we shine brightly**

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