



Oakwood Junior School September 2009

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Dear Parent/Carers

We've had a really busy start to our school year - there's a lot for us to do and to remember (that's the adults in school as well as the children). The children seem to have settled back into the school routine very quickly even after the long summer break. I'm pleased with how smart and well turned out the children look in their new school uniform, I know it's an expensive time for parents, but a big thank you for supporting our school uniform policy.

Over the Summer holidays we had the windows replaced in Upper School courtyard. The job was complicated by the pond and unfortunately we lost most of our fish, but the windows look very posh. The chickens have come back from their holidays (thanks Mrs H for looking after them so well). The doves seem to be multiplying at an alarming rate and the allotments themselves need a lot of TLC to bring them back to how they were before we broke up.

If you remember our Eco Fest was cancelled because of the bad weather in July. We did intend to have the event in September, but after long discussions with the organising group we've decided not to go ahead, mainly because it no longer ties in with the work the children are doing and it would be really scaled down compared to what we planned to do before the break so, sadly that's what we've decided - but there's always next year!

Staffing



Miss Lawrence will be leaving us on the 18th September to have her first baby which is due any minute after that. She won't mind me saying, but she is enormous, but we're all looking forward to seeing what the bump looks like!

We also have a new Caretaker, Mr Allen, who started in the holidays. I hope he'll be very happy working as part of our team.

We are very fortunate in having a great, hardworking and talented team of adults in our school who work extremely hard to give your child the best education we can so that they become successful learners. In order to do this home and school need to work together, so if you have any concerns or worries related to your child in school do please get in touch with either your child's class teacher or myself.



Sponsored Walk

On 25th September we'll be holding our annual sponsored walk event. It will take place during the afternoon, providing the weather is suitable. The money we raise will go towards equipping our new library. I hope you will support us. The children will be given more information nearer the time together with a covering letter and sponsor forms. If you would like to take part, do come and join us - the more the merrier.

Homework



We've decided that for the first half term we will concentrate on engaging the children with their reading at all levels. A reading record will be sent home and we would ask you to hear your child read and sign their record book. Our library is well stocked and children will be able to change their books from 8.45 in the morning and at the end of the day. You're more than welcome to come in the morning - Miss Grundle will be happy to help. As well as the reading there are lots of appropriate activities on our school website in the learning zone section that will be useful.

Priorities this year

Every year we have areas of the curriculum that staff will be focussing on in order to improve standards. This year in school we will be looking at improving standards in reading and writing. In Numeracy the focus will be on improving the children's mental strategies and connecting their work in maths to every day situations. As well as these subject areas we will be working hard to ensure that the children become independent learners through our L2L work. In order for us to be successful in achieving these priorities we need to continue to work effectively with you as parents. A programme of workshop, open mornings and meetings have been planned for over the year, so we'll inform you of these nearer the time.

Curriculum

At the moment we're finalising leaflets that will shortly be sent out to parents that will outline aspects of work that your child will be covering this term as well as information about the schools website which we hope will be useful for you. On the leaflet we've also let you know when your child will be having PE and Games. Everyone will have 2 physical activity lessons a week and it's really important that children have their kit in school, otherwise they will not be able to take part in the lesson. If this happens we will be getting in touch so that we can help with any problems that could be causing this.

Just a reminder regarding PE kit for indoor PE the children will be expected to wear black shorts and a plain white T-shirt. It's usual for the children to work bare footed for dance and PE unless you get in touch with us if this is a problem. For outdoor games black shorts or black track suit bottoms with trainers or plimsolls are needed. Wearing black shoes in school, rather than trainers is also part of school uniform.

Free School meals

We've had a number of requests regarding Free School Meals. If you qualify applying for them is easy. I hope that this information is useful.

What are free school meals?

If you qualify, your child can have a school meal every day FREE of charge.

How will I know if I qualify?

You can qualify for free school meals for your children if you are getting:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Child Tax Credit - but **not** Working Tax Credit - **and** your annual income is **not** more than £16,040.
- Guarantee Credit element of State Pension Credit.
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance ESA(IR).

However, free school meals cannot be claimed by families receiving Working Tax Credit or for children in care.

If I claim free school meals, will it affect my other benefits?

No - no other benefits are affected by claiming free school meals.

How do I apply?

It is easy to apply. If you claim Housing and Council Tax Benefit we will automatically deal with your claim for free school meals at the same time.

If you want to apply for **free school meals only**, please contact us and we will send you a claim form or you can get one from our website at:

www.derby.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals

What if my child doesn't want a school meal every day?

Your child doesn't have to have one every day, but it's helpful if the school knows which days they want one at the start of each week. Menus are given to all children to take home so you know what is being served.

For more information about free school meals, please contact:

Free School Meals at The Council House

Telephone number: 01332 255114

Email: freeschoolmeals@derby.gov.uk

Kind regards

Nancy Elks

Dates for your diary

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| 18/09/09 | Curriculum booklets to be sent home to parents outlining what will be covered in class this term. |
| 25/09/09 | Sponsored Walk in the afternoon |
| 02/10/09 | Miss Winslow's class assembly |
| 06/10/09 | Parent's Workshop - Internet Safety - 1.30 > 3.15 (more information to follow later). |
| 09/10/09 | INSET Day - School Closed for staff training |
| 22/10/09 | Parent's open evening |
| 23/10/09 | Break Up |
| 02/11/09 | Return to school |
| 14/11/09 | INSET Day |
| 10/05/10 | SAT's Week for Year 6's. Could parents please ensure that holidays are not booked during this crucial week |

Term Dates

Autumn 2009

03/09/09 > 23/10/09

02/11/09 > 18/12/09

Spring 2010

04/01/10 > 12/02/10

22/02/10 > 01/04/10

Summer 2010

19/04/10 > 28/05/10

04/06/10 > 23/07/10