



Avondale Preparatory School

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Headmaster: Mr Stuart Watson BEd, Dip Tchg

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Dear Parents

I do hope the Christmas period was an enjoyable one for all and that the batteries have been recharged for the New Year ahead. I find it hard to believe that the Spring Term has already crept upon us; this term is a shorter one spread over 11 weeks.

Now... it is with grave sadness that I write the following paragraph; one of the most difficult I've needed to write over the course of my career. Some of you will be aware that I returned to the front line in the final week of the Autumn Term; this return was unfortunately brought about due to the sudden demise in Mrs Beresford's health. Over the Christmas period, Mrs Beresford's condition has not improved and it is highly probable that she will not be able to return to Avondale, which inevitably affects her daughter, Phoebe's attendance also.

Melissa has served at Avondale with distinction and commitment for the past three and a half years, initially heading up our Early Years Team. Her skill set and ability to inspire children was evident from the outset; indeed they were key factors in her appointment as Deputy Head, and more recently, Acting Head. I speak on behalf of all staff, children and parents saying that she will be incredibly missed; our thoughts are with her and the family at a most difficult time. It is my intention to have Mrs Beresford rejoin us on a suitable occasion later in the year so that we may have the opportunity to recognise her efforts collectively.

With the aforementioned news, please be advised that I shall be returning to lead the school. Please find attached a revised complaints procedure, which reflects the change in staffing structure. Please also be advised that Miss Vicky Scadden, who has vast experience within the EYFS will now oversee the Early Years Department, with myself overseeing the Pre- Prep as a whole.

Let's turn our attention to the children now; at the end of the Autumn Term, a number of Years 4- 6 children participated in Avondale's second Ski trip to Brasov, Romania. The group had superb weather and spent a number of days in the snow, improving their technique and prowess on the slopes. The trip also saw a charitable element to it, with the group shopping for, and distributing, Christmas gifts to those less fortunate in a poor rural village. Our Christmas Shoebox Appeal saw 80 boxes collected, for which we are most grateful; the group were able to hand these in person to recipients, making for an authentic charitable experience. There will be a special assembly at 8:45am on the first day back (Tuesday 8 January) documenting the group's time. A number of children will share their experiences and there will be a 10-minute movie showcasing events, including the distribution of presents; parents are most welcome to attend, especially those considering the trip for next year, as it will give a good insight into what your child can expect. Alternatively, the ski trip movie is now available on YouTube under Avondale Preparatory School.

To the term ahead, there is a great deal going on in classroom learning programmes that will be communicated with you in due course. On the first day back there will be a copy of the Spring Term Calendar given out to the eldest child in the family, together with accompanying correspondence that will give you the full picture.

As we start a new term, please find overleaf a number of housekeeping points that I should like to draw your attention to:

Christmas Collections

Congratulations to the Pre- Prep Department who put on two wonderful nativities in the lead up to the end of the Autumn Term and to the Prep Department for a fantastic carol service. Following respective performances, we have been able to hand over £225 to Barnardos and £60 to the church, aiding them in their charitable work over the Christmas period. The 'Children in Need' event held earlier in the Autumn Term raised £380 after expenses.

Autumn Term Swimming Reports

Please be advised that children in Reception to Year 4 will have their swimming reports sent home by the end of week two. Apologies for the delay.

Parking Reminder!

One of my least favourite jobs, but one that I need to do from time to time is car parking attendant! Please may I remind ALL parents that our agreement with the Working Men's Club allows us to park **ONLY** beyond the **yellow line** at the far end of the car park and not in front of the delivery doors. Please may I ask that this understanding is passed onto family members and childminders who may pick up or drop your children off, or for those who may be attending performances at the school.

Most years I get correspondence from the BWMC advising me that they wish to cancel our agreement due to it not being adhered to. With this facility lost, there would undoubtedly be chaos at the school gate! Please consider all parents by parking where we are permitted and walking those extra few steps. **Please also avoid parking in Camilla Close outside the gate or nursery as this prohibits other vehicles from turning and creates traffic congestion.**

Sickness

Tis the season for colds and flu! Please be reminded that should your child be sick, they are required to be kept away from school for a period of 24 hours. This measure is to safeguard both teaching staff and other children.

Hockey Instruction/ Games Lessons

As the winter has finally set in, please may I remind all parents of children in Years 3-6 that the school sweatshirt top and jogging bottoms should be brought into school for all games lessons. We try and venture outside as much as possible and without the correct gear your child may not enjoy the time as much as they would, should they be correctly attired. We also wish to look the part when travelling to other schools for fixtures and it is essential that children have warm clothing for putting on when games have been completed.

For boys, the focus for games lessons will shift to tag rugby for the bulk of the term. With more than double the amount of boys to girls in the Prep Department, it is not conducive for hockey to be conducted in games time (even when swimmers depart). For this reason, hockey will be conducted in the after school club run by Miss Barrington on a Friday afternoon. Mouth guards are essential, and shin pads are strongly advised.

Uniform

Should you require uniform, please contact Mrs Lister in the school office. We are very proud of our uniform; please may I take this opportunity to remind you that only Avondale uniform is permitted to be worn at school; **this includes gloves**. As a polite reminder all children from Reception upwards should arrive and depart school wearing the school cap or hat. Fleece/ rain jackets should be worn over the top of blazers in cold weather conditions.

From time to time, we have items of uniform that go missing, or items that are misplaced! Should this happen to your child please may we kindly ask that contact is made with your child's teacher and NOT the school office. Items that are named usually find their way back to the correct party quickly. It is a very frustrating experience for all concerned should items not be named. In this respect, please may we ask for items that have been purchased from the Thrift Shop to have previous names taken out of garments and for them to be renamed with YOUR child's name.

Birthdays

Everyone loves a good Birthday Party and invitations to the like are something that schools generally stay well clear of. However, as a polite request, please may we ask that every effort be made in considering your invitation list so as not to exclude any one individual. Whilst we recognise it as very much a 'home' decision, this can very much affect children within school.

Separate Calendar Letter

All Spring Term activities are communicated in the calendar letter and will come into force from Wednesday 9th January. Please may we kindly ask for the permission letter to be returned to school promptly; some clubs have limits to the amount of participants and priority will be given to children whose forms are returned first. By the end of the second week back, all up- to- date information regarding school events can be found on our website. Please be advised that ALL children in the Prep Department (Years 3- 6) are required after school on Tuesdays as they prepare for the end of term production, 'Alice in Wonderland'. This is a free club and will allow far less 'learning time' taken away from the school day. Consequently, there will be no school choir (for this term only).

Recognising Success

At this time of year, it is always difficult knowing how to manage the following; we congratulate those children who have been successful in achieving the necessary marks for entry into grammar schools, whilst we empathise with those children who came close, but missed out. Congratulations go to the following children: Adam Runyard, Jack Lamont, Michael Field, Leo Musgrave, Jemima Wray and Chloe Steel. I feel it appropriate to recognise that all Avondale children are success stories and entry into selective schools is not the only measure of success; the overwhelming majority who go onto other schools, often find themselves in the top sets for the core subjects.

Adverse Weather Plan

As the colder weather is now well and truly upon us, the likelihood of our Adverse Weather Plan coming into effect becomes a distinct possibility with the onset of snow. Please find the plan attached for your reference.

Pick- ups at the End of the School Day and School Security

Please be reminded that children leaving at 4:30pm, following an after school activity, need to be signed out with Mrs Lister in the school office. Children, after this time, report back to the ASCC team and need to be signed out with them.

From time to time, your child may be collected by another parent at the end of the school day. Please may we politely ask that if your child is going home with someone else, that this is communicated with the school office to avoid any confusion. Furthermore, please be reminded that the blue gate beside Little Avondale will be locked from 3:30pm in the winter months. Should ASCC venture outside (as the term progresses) it will be opened to allow easy access. Entry to the school when the gate is locked is via the school front door. **Our remaining Tots join ASCC from 3:30pm and access for these parents should be made via the front door also.** Please may I politely point out that security is a joint effort- when collecting your child from ASCC (who will predominantly be in the library during the colder months), the front door MUST be locked when you exit the building.

There will undoubtedly be further things that come to light in the weeks ahead. Please refer to the whiteboard at the gate entrance for changes to programmes and up- coming events. This is put out daily and documents any club cancellations that we know about in advance. Short- notice cancellations due to inclement weather will be communicated via text message as usual.

Best wishes for another successful term.

Stuart Watson

