



Avondale Preparatory School

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Headmaster: Mr Stuart Watson BEd, Dip Tchg

Friday 3 January, 2020

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. We welcome 10 new children across all parts of the school as we start 2020. Please be reminded that children return on **Tuesday 7 January**.

At the end of the Autumn Term, a number of Years 5 and 6 children participated in Avondale's annual 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 60 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 7 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 will be made available on YouTube under Avondale Preparatory School in the near future.

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. For parents with children in the Prep Department, if I may draw to your attention, the events in Week 4 of the term; we will be providing an opportunity each morning for you to view your child (and their use of technological tools) approaching their learning.

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

Staffing

As numbers continue to grow across the school, we welcome to the staffing team, Miss Clare Dickinson. Clare is an experienced teacher who joins us from One School Global, Wilton. Clare's senior leadership experience at leading the 'student directed' learning approach in the past will be much valued moving forward. As the needs of the year ½ cohort continue to change, the class will be split into respective year groups each morning for the core subjects. Clare will be overseeing the Year 2 class in this respect. Both classes will combine together in the afternoons as they did so in the Autumn Term, with Miss Dickinson's skill- set being shared across other parts of the school. Clare will also be overseeing the development of Literacy across the school.

School Opening Times

The school opening times have been considered carefully over the course of last term; please be advised that the blue gate will be open at 8am moving forward due to the lack of demand before this time; there will

undoubtedly be occasions where you have an early meeting to get to and need to drop the children earlier. If this could be communicated with the office in advance please; children arriving prior to 8am will be asked to wait patiently in the dining room until duty staff go outside at 8am.

Demand for After School Care after 5:30pm has also proved to be insufficient for this facility to continue after this time. Consequently, the school will officially be shutting at 5:30pm moving forward. As with the arrangement at the start of each day, there will undoubtedly be occasions where you are running late. In this respect, please may I ask that you make contact with the school mobile (kept with me at all times) on 07825795116 should this be the case. Living on site has its benefits and all children will move to the Tots area post 5:30pm where they can be collected using the Tots front door.

Christmas Collections

Congratulations to the Pre- Prep and EYFS Departments who put on two wonderful nativities in the lead up to the end of the Autumn Term and to the school as a whole for a fantastic carol service. This was the first time children across the school from Reception to Year 6 were involved and the first time the service was held at Avondale, rather than St Leonard's Church. This allowed a more visual element to proceedings; thanks must also go to 'Die Kleine Kapelle', a local wind band involving ex- Avondale pupils, which made the evening special. Following respective performances, we have been able to hand over £342 to Barnardos, aiding them in their charitable work over the Christmas period. The 'Children in Need' event held earlier in the Autumn Term raised £332. Finally, our collection following the Remembrance Service on 11 November raised £46 for 'Help for Heroes'.

Parents Association

Thank you very much to the Parents Association for their hard work in the lead up to the end of last term. Years 1-6 enjoyed the pantomime and the EYFS had a productive craft and music morning at school. I would also like to recognise the efforts of Santa's little helpers in preparing gifts for respective year groups.

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.** We have a lovely group of neighbours who will only be too happy to voice their disapproval should congestion be caused through lack of thought.

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 hockey instruction taking place in the second half of the term. 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, coats and fleecy hats**. As a polite reminder all children from Reception upwards should arrive and depart school wearing the school felt cap (boys) or felt hat (girls). 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.

After School Clubs

All Spring Term activities are communicated in the calendar letter (going out Day 1) and will come into force from Wednesday 8th 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, 'Aladdin'. 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

Congratulations to Alex Rawlins and Thomas Davies who achieved the necessary marks for entry into Bishop Wordsworth School. Both Alex and Thomas were the only two boys who sat the examination this year, making it a 100% pass rate. Congratulations once again to Alex Rawlins as well as Pola Ferchow who were recognised late last term for their efforts in the 'student directed' learning approach, using Centurytech.

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.

For parents collecting children from the Prep Department on a Tuesday after the production rehearsal, please may we kindly ask that you wait outside the school hall (or under the nursery covered area in the event of inclement weather). All children will be signed out with staff once you have been identified. Please avoid waiting in the school hallway.

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; these will be communicated with you on respective Fridays via e-mail. Short- notice cancellations due to inclement weather will be communicated via text message as usual.

Best wishes for another successful term.

Stuart Watson