



Avondale Preparatory School

Ignite Your Purpose, Become Your Potential

High Street, Bulford, SALISBURY SP4 9DR

Tel & Fax 01980 632387

E-Mail: office@avondaleschool.org

Web: www.avondaleschool.org

Headmaster: Mr Stuart Watson BEd, Dip Tchg

Friday 1 January, 2021

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. Thank you to all who contributed to our Christmas Shoebox Appeal; 80 boxes were collected, (with a combined effort from Durrington Community Church) for which we are most grateful.

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 five new children across our Early Years as we start 2021. Please be reminded that children return on **Tuesday 5 January**.

Parents Association

Thank you very much to the Parents Association for their hard work in the lead up to the end of last term. All parts of the school enjoyed a treasure hunt on the final day and Santa even stopped by with a present for all 'bubbles' to enjoy. The winner of the Parents' Christmas Raffle was Mrs Lewis.

Spring Term Calendar

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. Please appreciate that COVID measures will see a thinner looking Spring Term calendar than usual, BUT please be advised that we expect a jam-packed **Summer Term** with the possibility of social distancing measures being relaxed in the latter part of the year? We intend for Years 3-6 to form **one** bubble with the intention of running the production in the penultimate week of the Summer Term, along with other internal sports.

School Growth and Development

Nursery parents will receive a brief questionnaire home shortly, requesting confirmation of a place being required for our Reception class in the **2021-22 academic year**. Demand for places is high; we have had a number of enquiries and registrations received from prospective parents and anticipate a class larger than 14 children- probably between 15 and 18. With this in mind, the current Reception classroom will be too small for requirements. Whilst the school has been granted planning permission for a 2- storey development extending from the main school building, the timing is not right for such a large- scale investment. However, if current levels of demand remain in place for the future, this is something that will be pursued in the years ahead.

Instead, a sum of approximately £55,000 will be invested in developing a large covered area at the side entrance to the school (blue gate). This is something that I have wanted to entertain for a number of years and now the time is right! Please see a mock up of the vision below. As with any large- scale changes to the fabric of buildings, the project will require planning permission. I expect a decision back by the end of February and am hopeful that a revised signage option for the newly rendered wall will be supported, replacing the need for temporary signage! For your information, we are on the

boundary of a conservation area (hard to believe with the BWMC next door!) and different rules apply; we had a signage application refused some years back. Should we be successful, the Nursery will benefit from bi-fold doors to allow timetabled use of the space. Should the larger numbers in the Reception class materialise, then they will be accommodated in the classroom adjacent to my office (current Years 5/6 classroom). This will then have French doors leading onto the area, which will be Astroturfed. Access for arrival at school will be from the High St, which will be gated during school hours. This will, in turn, be opened at the end of the day, with the covered area providing a dry means of escape during inclement weather for parents waiting for children to be dismissed.

Should planning permission be granted, all building work will commence over the summer holiday period and be ready for use from the start of the 2021-22 academic year in September.



Change of Classification

A small number of parents will be aware of the following advice, having been approached in the playground for feedback some time ago. It would appear that there is sufficient interest from prospective, as well as existing parents, for Avondale to receive children younger than two years of age. For this reason, we have applied to the Department for Education and, in time, will be reclassified as an educational establishment catering for children from 1-11 years of age.

I believe the reclassification will enable us to accommodate younger siblings of those already at the school as well as prospective parents on a flexible basis; this would allow those returning from maternity leave, to perhaps return in a part-time capacity. However, I am mindful that our parameters will not meet the needs of every parent; I have always maintained that I will not have a two-tier staffing system at Avondale while accommodating younger children; for this reason, all parts of the school will be structured around a 36-week academic year, with school holidays largely coinciding with those listed by Wiltshire Council.

Attendance of one-year olds will commence from September 2021. If you would be interested in enrolling your little one, or know of anyone else who would consider doing the same, please may I ask that you contact the school office where further information and a registration form can be obtained.

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. Please be reminded of our operating procedures in respect to minimising the spread of the COVID-19 virus below.

<https://avondaleschool.org/images/downloads/operating-procedures-sept-20-21.pdf>

Should your child develop a cough or a temperature whilst at school, you will be phoned; your child will need to be collected from school and a COVID test sought. Should the results be negative, they will be permitted to return. If the test comes back positive, then the whole 'bubble' will need to self-isolate for a period of 10 days.

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. Please may we also remind you that all children in Years 3-6 should have long **RED** socks. 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.

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). The reversible fleecy coat/ rain jacket should be worn over the top of blazers in cold weather conditions. All coats **MUST** come to school so that children are appropriately attired during the colder months at break times.

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.

After School Clubs

All Spring Term activities are communicated in the calendar letter (going out Day 1) and will come into force from Wednesday 6th 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.

Years 5/6 Ski Trip

It is with regret that the Years 5/6 ski trip has been cancelled this academic year due to on-going COVID restrictions. Many airlines will not be resuming flights until the end of the Spring Term and this will be subject to change. I am as disappointed as what the children will be; we will be looking at the feasibility of a summer-based trip for Year 6 as we normally do and this will be communicated with you in due course.

Recognising Success

Congratulations to Pola Ferchow who achieved the necessary marks for entry into South Wilts Grammar School. Our empathy, as a school, goes to other candidates who came close, but just missed out.

Raising Standards- writing and presentation

One of the areas we are looking to build on, is the teaching of writing and handwriting across the school. This will remain the focus of staff meetings throughout the Spring Term. The school has invested over £1500 in training and resources for the 'Power of Reading' Scheme which will serve as the stimulus for writing instruction. By the end of Week 3, you can expect documentation associated with how we teach both handwriting and writing across the school to be sent home. We have already implemented strategies in raising standards across the school; your child may have been fortunate enough to be rewarded for their efforts as 'most improved' or 'best in the class' for their handwriting. Termly competitions for both handwriting and writing will continue to be run in this respect. Needless to say, children are motivated in their application!

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.

Staffing

As our EYFS numbers continue to grow, we welcome to the Avondale Team, Mrs Rachael Kenny. Rachael is an experienced practitioner and will be supporting learning programmes in the Tots classroom for the remainder of the year for mornings; it is very likely that her role will become full time as the year progresses.

Parking

Please be reminded that the only parking available for parents is in **marked parking bays** in the BWM'C. **Please do not park in Camilla Close.** Alternatively, you may find space in front of the cottages on the High St or down by the river in Water St.

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

As the winter weather has come in, please be advised that children in **ASCC** will be based inside from 3:30pm. This means that pick-up is through the blue door between 3:30pm and 4:30pm. Providing you are wearing a facemask, there is no problem with you waiting in the school foyer area whilst your child is collected. However, we will be limiting this to three people to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

If you are collecting your child from a **'teacher-led' after school activity at 4:30pm**, the pick-up point is the staff car park outside the blue gate. Please ensure your child only mixes with children in their 'bubble/ family' once they are handed back to you; if there is a 'dropping of our guard' at the

gate, all the work gone into keeping 'bubbles' apart in school, will be undone unnecessarily, compromising the integrity of the system, which could mean more parts of the school being required to self-isolate in the event of a case being diagnosed.

Should you be collecting your child after 4:30pm from **ASCC**, then the blue front door becomes the pick-up point. Again, providing you are wearing a facemask, there is no problem with you waiting in the school foyer area whilst your child is collected. (Limit of three at any one time.)

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