



Avondale Preparatory School

Ignite Your Purpose, Become Your Potential

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Headmaster: Mr Stuart Watson BEd, Dip Tchg

Thursday 2 September, 2021

Dear Parents

I trust that the summer holiday period has been a beneficial one for the family and that the improved weather in recent weeks has had a positive influence on outlook despite these uncertain times!

May I take this opportunity to welcome a number of new families to Avondale. We had a small number of late registrations prior to the end of the term and over the holiday period; we look forward to working in partnership with you in the weeks/ terms ahead.

For those of you who have been at the school some time, you will note a number of improvements to the Nursery and side entrance. In time, we are hopeful that the existing nursery covered area, adjacent to the netball court, will be extended all the way to the main building and a newly covered area created in front of the new bi-fold doors. This is currently with the planning department and we are hopeful of a positive outcome in the weeks ahead. I am most grateful for the services of Mr Andy Watkins and his team, for the work completed. As I write, there are a multitude of things that still need to be finished, but we are hopeful that the important details will be addressed by the start of the term (Monday 6 September).

Please find below, the full staffing allocation for the year.

Year 5/6- Mrs Celina Rae/ Mrs Jo Stephenson- Jarrett (11+ focus/ SEN)

Year 3/4- Mr Josh Tolan, supported by Mrs Beth Henley and Mrs Carmel Everett- Collins (1:1)

Year 2- Mrs Georgina Barrington- Tolan, supported by Mrs Dawn Cannon

Year 1- Mrs Amy Worley, supported by Mrs Laura Coleman

Reception- Mrs Charlotte Hibbs (Mon- Wed) and Mrs Caroline Nash (Thurs/ Fri), supported by Mrs Sheryl Davis

Nursery/ Tots- Miss Victoria Scadden (EYFS Leader)/ Miss Shannon Pavey (Tots Leader), supported by Mrs Tracey Hall, Miss Keileigh Macdonald (am) and Mrs Aprille Nicholls (pm)

You will note that Tots and Nursery have been grouped together; this late measure is a necessary one given the slightly lower numbers and will see continuity for the children when Miss Keileigh MacDonald goes on maternity leave after the October half term break. Whilst children will continue to be extended within their key groups using a number of EYFS spaces, they will predominantly operate out of the main nursery with access through the new bi-fold doors.

I would encourage you to browse our '**Welcome to the Year Booklet**' where you will find further information on how we do things at Avondale, and how best you can support your child in their learning. A digital version of this will also be made available on our website.

Please find below a number of housekeeping points for consideration that will affect you in the terms ahead- the list continues to grow on a daily basis! In this respect, we will update you with our 'week ahead' emails, sent out each Friday.

COVID Precautions

Please find below a link to the latest Government advice in respect to COVID-19 and Education.

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19?utm_source=23%20August%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

Please also be advised that this is likely to change as the shape of the pandemic continues to evolve.

To summarise, the Government is keen that society returns ‘as close to normal’ as possible, learning to live with the virus, now that a large percentage of the population have been fully vaccinated. With this in mind, I am pleased to confirm that Avondale will return to its normal operating procedures that were in place before the pandemic; this means that there will be NO bubbles in place.

As you will be aware, should your child display symptoms whilst at school, they will be required to take a PCR test; the normal self-isolation period would be necessary for a positive result. There is now NO requirement for close contacts (including those within the household) to self-isolate, but they are encouraged to seek a PCR test. Should a case surface within the school, we will follow the advice as prescribed by Public Health England and advise you accordingly.

All children (and parents) are now able to enter the school through the newly constructed grey gates at the front of the school (on the High St) at 8am each morning. At the end of the academic day (3:20pm), all children will be handed back to parents through the blue gate; parents are encouraged to congregate in the newly astroturfed area, which we hope will be completed by the start of the term! Should these gates be locked (due to inclement weather or afternoon tea; 4:30- 5:00pm), entry should be made through the blue front door.

I am also pleased to confirm that parents will, once again, be permitted inside the school and its facilities. Whilst face masks are not required by law, we would kindly ask that one is worn whilst indoors if you are able to. The above news is good news, as it means that assemblies in the school hall can return; class assemblies take place at 8:35am on Fridays (as scheduled within the school calendar) and we warmly encourage you to attend. We are hopeful that the Nativity and Carol Services will resume later in the term, should the pandemic not take a sudden turn.

HOWEVER...

Please be advised that the latest Government advice requires all schools to have in place, a contingency plan, should there be a ‘local’ outbreak. This will see a number of measures brought back, including limiting parents and visitors inside the school, the reintroduction of facemasks for staff and the postponement of field trips and fixtures until transmission is contained. The school may also be forced to revert back to the bubble system, determined as:

Early Years (including Reception)

Years 1 and 2

Prep (Years 3-6)

The Government have determined a local outbreak as being five cases being recorded within a setting, within a 10-day period. From experience, if a case surfaces, ‘the horse may have already bolted’ given the relaxation of measures previously in place; the likelihood of contingency measures being introduced and the school returning to the bubble system remains a very REAL possibility, given the national increase in transmission rates in recent weeks.

This said, it is our intention to keep all children at school unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Online learning

Please be advised that there is a great deal of extra work required from teachers in providing online learning. Whilst we are more than happy to provide this for those children who are required to self-

isolate due to the pandemic, or in the event of a school closure brought about through snow, it is not something that we will be looking to entertain for other absences. May I kindly ask that holidays are arranged in line with school holiday periods as determined by the school calendar. These can also be found on our website.

‘Peter Pan’

You will be aware, due to the extended COVID restrictions late last term, we recorded our Prep Production of ‘Peter Pan’. I can confirm that this has now been completed and will be distributed in the weeks ahead. We are most grateful for the amount of time that Mr Tom Davis has spent on filming and editing it for your perusal. Further details will follow.

Communication and Billing

Firstly, it will come as no surprise to you that you are receiving this letter by means of e-mail; this is our only method for correspondence and was borne out of the fact that many newsletters never made it home! Furthermore, all ASCC and uniform invoices shall be sent using this method, in addition to Termly invoices and letters. In this respect, please may we ask that your e-mail details are up-to-date and accurate with the school office. **We kindly ask that your spam folder is checked on a regular basis as this is where a number of items ended up last year.** Very occasionally, we have encountered some emails not reaching recipients (this includes home and school). If you think you may have missed a form of communication, please get in touch with the school office. Please be reassured, that unless otherwise stated, all email correspondence from home **will be acknowledged** by the office, or classroom teaching staff.

School Timings!

Please be reminded that the timings of the school day remain unchanged for those children in Reception to Year 6 (and those children not old enough to receive Wilshire Council’s Free Entitlement Funding).

As advised last year, the sessions for use of the 30 hours Free Entitlement Funding, have changed. Please see below:

8am- 12Noon- morning session

12Noon- 1pm- lunch period (Avondale rate)

1pm- 3pm- afternoon session

It is hoped, that as numbers increase, some of our parking woes will be resolved with an earlier finishing time. Please be reminded that our agreement with the BWM’C allows for parking in **marked parking bays only**. Further parking can be found in front of the cottages on the High St, but please avoid parking in front of driveways. Please could this advice be relayed to others who may pick your child up from time to time.

Autumn Term Calendar

An abbreviated A5 sized version of the Autumn Term calendar shall be sent home with children on the first day of the term; however, I would encourage you to refer to our website for further information. Due to schools being cautious in respect to the relaxation of COVID restrictions, the fixture list is not as comprehensive as normal; however, we hope to address this in time.

Any cancellation in respect to after school activities will be communicated via email should it be known about in advance; in the event of late notice, we shall continue to text parents. After school activity lists will be displayed in the hallway leading to the dining room. These lists are the official ones taken for communication with home- please may we kindly ask that you check that the details are accurate, as it is not uncommon for children to start (or stop) clubs later in the term and for texts to be omitted.

On the back page of the calendar, you will find a comprehensive list of after school activities. Whilst ASCC shall operate from Day 1, teacher led clubs will start on Tuesday 7 September. A permission letter shall be sent out with the calendar; return of the permission slip promptly will ensure acceptance

to some clubs that have restrictions on numbers. You will be contacted by phone if we are **unable** to accommodate your requests. Please also indicate your ASCC requirements.

Due to current requirements in respect to COVID testing, it will not be possible for the school to conduct the Christmas Ski Trip. However, we are hopeful that a Spring Term opportunity may present itself in due course.

Please note that our Nativity, planned for the latter part of the term, will now be EYFS focussed, with Reception children taking a more leading role. Numbers continue to grow across the school; in this respect, there are now sufficient numbers to stage a more comprehensive Pre- Prep Production for children in Years 1 and 2 later in the Summer Term.

Together with the calendar, you will also receive a pack containing permission slips to meet a number of school requirements. Please may we ask that these are returned promptly.

Class Photographs

Sincere apologies for the long wait endured for your child's class photograph from last year. These, unfortunately, arrived much later than our finishing date in July and will be distributed on Day 1.

'Meet the Teacher' (Reception - Year 6)

Please be advised that there will be an opportunity made available for you to meet your child's teacher on the first afternoon back (Monday 6 September) from 3:35- 4:30pm. **FREE ASCC** will be made available for those in attendance. For those parents with children in Nursery or Tots, please be advised that communication can be sought on drop- off and pick- up.

Uniform

We have high expectations in respect to our uniform. Please be advised that only listed Avondale items of uniform are permitted to be worn at school. All uniform requirements and price lists can be found on our website www.avondaleschool.org

All uniform must be **clearly marked** with your child's name on it; this includes thrift shop uniform, which may require an old name being removed! Any uniform found without names will be put in lost property which can be found in the school hall, beside the piano. **The uniform shop will be open on Friday 3 September from 9.00 – 11.00am.**

Over the break, a number of uniform items have been purchased and there has been a considerable mark- up in prices. Please be advised that we will be amending our uniform prices to reflect these changes in the very near future, once old stock has gone. A number of larger hats have been purchased for boys; these have still not arrived with the school. We politely ask for your patience; should your child not have a suitable one in time for the start of the new school year, please don't worry. We will be in touch as soon as they arrive.

We are most grateful for the services of Mrs Emma Hillyard who continues to support Mrs Debbie Lister in a voluntary capacity in the running of the uniform shop. Should you require any uniform then please email office@avondaleschool.org and Mrs Hillyard, or Mrs Lister will sort it for you.

As advised in July, children should return to school in **SUMMER** uniform. Children in Reception to Year 6 require the school hat and blazer to be worn to and from school.

Additionally, the **SUMMER** PE kit, (short sleeved shirt, detailing house colours) for those children in Years 1 to 6, should be brought in for use in PE lessons. White sports socks are also required for children in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Boys in Year 3-6 will require long red socks to support the use of shin pads in football. Your child will bring a timetable home on Day 1 to communicate when PE lessons will take place. Please be advised that all children in Years 3-6 will require their PE kit on the **FIRST DAY BACK**.

Please also note that swimming commences for children in Years 1-3 on **Monday 13 September**. Our schedule has now been confirmed as 2pm-3pm. You are more than welcome to collect your child from the swimming pool at 3:15pm; alternatively, they will be returned to school in the minibus by 3:20pm.

Appointments/ Requests for Absence

Inevitably there are a number of appointments that are necessitated throughout the course of a school week- to ensure the safety of all children is kept paramount, please may we ask that the office is informed the moment you take your child and at the point in which they are returned to school.

All requests for absence other than doctor's/ dentists and the like, **should be directed to myself in writing. This is a mandatory requirement.**

Peripatetic Lessons

Timetables for respective teachers follow a tumble system so as to avoid children missing the same lesson each week. These timetables are displayed in respective classrooms and on the Parents Noticeboard in the school foyer/ hallway. Lessons with Mrs Reed, Mr Hunt and Mrs Sandu commence on Wednesday 8 September. Mrs Mettyear shall commence her lessons on Monday 13 September. Any absences for children on school trips are made up; we are unable to do the same, or refund, in the event of sickness or planned holidays.

Ofsted

Despite the pandemic affecting routine inspections, Ofsted have said that they will be resuming normal operations from September. We are now overdue an inspection. As a school, we are not complacent in our achievement of desired outcomes; we strive to provide the best possible education for your children.

In this respect, please may I ask that you make contact with either your child's class teacher or myself should you have any concerns that may arise. Communication is the key which will allow us to meet expectations. It would be much appreciated having the opportunity to address things prior to Ofsted arriving rather than learning about them in the form of questionnaire feedback during the visit. Please appreciate that we all want different things; home learning is a prime example- we are able to challenge/ increase/ decrease the quantity set with the right level of communication from home.

We intend to send home a questionnaire in the coming weeks that will be similar in structure to the Ofsted questionnaire. Responses will support future direction within the school; one option we are looking to consider is the introduction of holiday clubs for a definitive period in the lengthier school holidays at Christmas, Easter and the summer. Ultimately, it will be demand that determines the feasibility of these proceeding.

We finally got there! I have no doubt that there will be other little snippets that come up in the next couple of weeks. Needless to say, we look forward to welcoming you and the family back on Monday 6 September in what, I know, will be another successful year.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Watson