



# Avondale Preparatory School

*Ignite Your Purpose, Become Your Potential*

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Headmaster: Mr Stuart Watson BEd, Dip Tchg

Monday 12 April, 2020

Dear Parents

## Summer Term Newsletter

Welcome back to the Summer Term; I trust that the holiday period has been a restful one for the family. Let me start by welcoming a number of new families to our EYFS Department as well as the Cahill Family from America, who start with us in June. Parker will be joining Year 1 and Beckett, Year 4. We trust that all children will settle quickly and enjoy everything that Avondale has to offer once COVID restrictions are relaxed!

Firstly, let me thank the Parents Association, and specifically Claire Button, for her organisation of the Easter Competition. We had some wonderful entries, with Charlie Forster scooping the Prep award and Henry and George Davis sharing the Pre- Prep award.

Given that lockdown has had a significant impact on what we were permitted to offer in respect to the wider school picture last term, we draw our attention to the term ahead. Whilst the 'bubble' system will continue to be maintained across the school, you will be aware that the Prep Department will now be forming their own bubble, made up of 29 families. This arrangement will allow more flexibility in terms of before/ after school arrangements, break times and sport. It will also ensure that the team have further focus throughout the term as they aim to stage 'Peter Pan' in the penultimate week. We appreciate that the lifting of restrictions on 21<sup>st</sup> June is yet to be confirmed, but we prepare in anticipation. It is our intention to proceed if we can and this will be determined by government advice nearer the time. The Prep Production and Presentation Day are highlights in the school calendar; should our plans be compromised, then venturing outside is something that will be considered, weather permitting!

## Calendar

The Summer Term calendar shall be made available on the first day back of the term. Please find a draft copy attached, which will undoubtedly change as we are updated in respect to restrictions enforced by the pandemic. Planned fixtures with other schools and residential trips will **NOT** take place, but we expect things to resume in the 2021-22 academic year. Along with the calendar that the eldest child in the family will take home on Day 1, you will find a letter outlining the procedure for signing in and out at the end of the school day for children in Nursery- Year 6. **Please may we ask that the form for enlisting in after school activities is returned by Wednesday 21 April** so that updated lists can be confirmed quickly. **Clubs also start on this day.** As already advised, our Prep Department (Years 3-6) will be joining to form one bubble; attendance in the Production Club, on Tuesday afternoons from 3:30-4:30pm is expected, to minimise the disruption to classroom learning time. This is a free club.

## Summer Uniform and New Thrift Shop Arrangements

I should like to remind you that children return to school on **TUESDAY 20 APRIL**. All children should be in **Summer Uniform**. For girls, this means summer dresses and for boys, short sleeved shirts and shorts. **All children should arrive and depart school in their blazers and hats (with the exception of Nursery children)**. We are proud of our uniform; please may we ask for your support in this respect to avoid any awkward conversations at the gate. Whilst coats won't necessarily be required in the mornings, we recommend that your child brings their coat into school daily in case of wet break times. **Please may we kindly ask that all items of clothing are named; this includes renaming items bought from the Thrift Shop.** This way, we are able to return items of lost clothing to the rightful owner quickly. Any items of unnamed clothing will be placed in our Thrift Shop.

All children in Reception- Year 6 require **white sports socks** for games and the **school house polo shirt**. To aid you in preparing your child, our uniform shop, including thrift shop, shall be open on Monday 19 April from 1pm- 2pm; Mrs Hillyard shall be available to assist you during this time. Should you not be able to make this time, or require items throughout the course of the term, please contact Mrs Lister in the school office via phone or email.

### **Covered Area**

Please be advised that planning permission has been REJECTED for a covered area outside the south face of the main building and Nursery. It's all very political being in a conservation area on the other side of the road from the BWMC who haven't had a problem with their covered area being accepted.

However, we are still in the process of securing permission for a permanent sign more befitting of our image and changes to access points from the nursery and main building! The outlay for building modification still remains significant and its viability will be considered when class numbers and staffing are determined later into the Summer Term. Should the project proceed, any building work would be completed over the summer holiday period.

### **Parking**

Please be reminded about only marked parking bays may be used in the BWM'C for pick up and drop off. I am aware that there are only 23 marked spaces and a good deal more families at Avondale than that! Please find attached, our agreement with the club for our consideration. With the introduction of clubs this term, we are hopeful that pick-ups will be less congested than what I have witnessed in recent months. The real flashpoints to consider, in order to remain onside with our neighbours, are Tuesdays before school, (when deliveries take place) and Friday afternoons, (when patrons will access the club); more so, as lockdown restrictions are eased.

Please also be reminded not to park in front of driveways (or garages) of the cottages on the High St (next to Tots). Your support in this respect will make my job far easier; thank you.

### **Reclassification, Staffing and School Growth for the 2021-22 Academic Year**

Please be advised that we will no longer be pursuing reclassification for accepting children from 1 year of age (in this academic year at least). We have been let down by the Department for Education, who sat on our application for nearly four months, to then redirect us through Ofsted. Whilst we used to be part of the Early Years Register, it would appear that we need to jump through certain hoops once again to register and this process will take a further 6 months. The school's direction in respect to taking younger children will be re-evaluated over the coming months.

Despite this untimely advice, numbers continue to improve across all parts of the school; specifically, in our Pre- Prep and Early Years. In this respect, if you know of any potential families that would benefit from an Avondale education, please may I ask that you direct them to get in touch with the school office. We will be supporting an Open Day in the first half of this term as well as one in the second half; for those in the service industry, you will be aware that postings are not confirmed until much later in the school calendar and it is not uncommon for the bulk of new families to view us in the last few weeks of the term (or in fact over the summer holiday period). For this reason, the school structure, including staffing and class make-up will not be confirmed until well after half term, when postings materialise.

### **Home Schooling and Bubble Closure Lunch/ Snack Refunds**

As advised some time ago, we have now assessed and credited families of non- key worker children who were home schooled for the bulk of the Spring Term as well as those affected by Avondale bubble closures enforced by law. A significant figure of approximately £4000 has been paid back to families. For those affected, this will appear on the Summer Term invoice. As per our terms and conditions, we have not been able to refund in the event of absence for matters outside school control.

On a positive note, we have applied to Wiltshire Council for funding outside of the FEF in our Early Years to reimburse families affected by the Nursery/ Tots bubble closure earlier in the term. I am pleased to advise that we have been successful in achieving a positive response. Once payment is made from Wiltshire Council, we will credit individual accounts and advise accordingly.

### **1:1 Peripatetic Billing- Advance Notice**

Please be advised that all invoices for children receiving 1:1 music instruction, will be prepared SEPARATELY from school fee invoices from the start of the **2021-22 academic year**. Children will be charged half termly.

### **Notification of Fees for the Academic Year 2021-22**

Finally, in line with our policy on providing a term's notice, please find attached the pricing structure of fees for the following academic year (commencing September 2021). Historically, fees have generally increased approximately 3.5% each year.

Whilst this academic year, saw **NO** increase across the school, I have been unable to maintain the current structure of fees going forward, due to a continued rise in overheads; consequently, an increase of 2.4% has been applied for the **bulk of the school**.

I am mindful of the present economic climate. We still remain the most cost- effective independent option in the area. For the bulk of the school, this equates to over £3000 less per annum than the nearest school of similar standing; this margin has widened in recent years. Please also find an updated 'Terms and Conditions' and 'Complaints Procedure'.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and your children a successful term ahead.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Watson