

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome to the new school year! I hope that you have had a happy and safe holiday. A very warm welcome to all of our new children and families, we hope that everyone settles quickly into school life, and you all enjoy your time at Willows Academy.

Whilst we are hoping to return to a school routine that reflects 'normality' this year, there are some changes that we will be keeping.

The school day

All children will arrive at school for 8:50am. Children and parents are to wait outside, and teachers will come and collect them from the playground. Children in nursery and reception are to wait in the Early Years playground. When arriving and leaving school, we will continue with the one-way system. At the end of the day, we ask that you wait in the playground and the class teachers will bring the children out. I would like to remind you that you are not allowed to smoke in or on the school premises, which includes the school's playgrounds and field. With the exception of guide dogs, dogs are not permitted on the school grounds.

Please remember that school starts at 8.50am, and ensure that your child is on time, so that lessons can commence promptly at 9am after registration.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast club will be open from Thursday 2nd September, this will need to be booked and paid for via Parent pay. Breakfast club starts at 8am, staff are not permitted to take children any earlier than 8am. Breakfast club is only available for children in years FS2 -6.

School Dinners

Throughout the summer, we have made some changes to our kitchen, and we are confident that this will have a positive impact on the quality of the lunches at Willows. We will continue to work with Chartwells to provide children with nutritional meals. Previously, for children to receive a school lunch you were required to book the meals several weeks in advance, this is no longer necessary. Children will now be able to choose their lunches on the day, pre ordering is no longer necessary weeks in advance and families can now have much more flexibility. Payments for a school meal are made through Parentpay, if your Parentpay account is in a debt of more than £4.40, the school **cannot** provide lunch for your child.

Covid-19

Whilst things are feeling much closer to normal, Covid-19 is still prevalent, and we all need to play our part in keeping our school community safe. If your child has symptoms, then please keep them at home and test them as soon as possible. The child will be able to return to school as soon as a negative test result has been received or, if it is a positive result, they will need to isolate for 10 days. There is no longer an expectation to close bubbles after a positive case in school but, if there are several positive cases, action will be taken to limit the spread throughout the rest of the school. In this case, I will work closely with public health and follow their advice. If anyone in your household has symptoms, the whole household does not need to isolate however, in the interests of everyone I ask that, anyone with symptoms does not enter the school grounds.

In order to slow the spread of Covid, we will be keeping all rooms well ventilated as much as possible, this may mean that the classrooms are a little cooler than possible so please ensure your child is wearing suitable clothing for the weather.

Uniform

All children at Willows Academy are expected to wear the school uniform, details of this can be found on the school website. Children also need an appropriate PE kit, this is black shorts and a white t-shirt however, the majority of our PE lessons are outside therefore, children can bring a jumper with them, and they will need appropriate footwear for outside. Please ensure your child brings their PE kit on a Monday and takes it home on a Friday.

Holidays and Absences

I would like to remind parents that, the law gives **no entitlement to parents to take their children on holiday during term time**. As headteacher I no longer have the authority in law to authorise absences for holidays or related activities, unless there are 'exceptional' circumstances. I would not be expected to class any term time holiday as 'exceptional'. All absences are monitored, and appropriate action will be taken if we believe that you have taken a holiday in term time. Please do not take holidays in term time to avoid any misunderstanding.

If your child is unwell, please ring the school office on the first day of the illness and subsequent days after. Our target is to have all children in school 96.5% of the time, if your child's attendance falls below 95%, their attendance will be closely monitored, and you may be expected to attend a meeting to discuss ways to improve this.

I firmly believe that if we work together, we can ensure that all children are in school ready and excited to learn. Willows Academy has a fantastic staff team that always puts the needs and education of the children first so, I know that this school year will be a successful one!

Important Dates

Please see the important dates below and can I please draw your attention to a training day on Tuesday 5th October, on this day school will be closed!

Thursday 2nd September – Children return to school

Tuesday 5th October – School is closed to all children

Friday 22nd October – School closes for half term

Monday 1st November – School opens to all children

Thursday 16th December – School closes for Christmas

I look forward to writing to you shortly with details of after school clubs, trips and residential that we are looking forward to this school year.

If you would like to discuss anything with either myself or your child's class teacher, please contact the school office.

Kind Regards,

Sarah Cox

Head of Academy