



The Abbey CE VA Primary School

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7 September, 2018

Dear parents,

Welcome back to the start of the new school year. I hope you have all had a wonderful holiday. Thank you on behalf of myself and all the staff for the cards and generous tokens of appreciation at the end of last term, your kind words mean a great deal. A very warm welcome to the thirty new Reception children and their families, of whom seventeen families are new to our school community as the Reception class has thirteen siblings.

Diary Dates

We attach the Autumn Term Diary Dates and the Term Dates for the entire academic year. Please print these important documents off and refer to them as the term progresses as all key information is contained. These documents will shortly be available on the school website and paper copies can be collected from the School Office.

The diary dates highlight the annual **Curriculum Meeting** for parents to hear about year group specific curriculum information, school policies and procedures led by the class teacher and myself which we encourage parents to attend. **Helpful maths strategies** will also be demonstrated by the class teacher. This meeting will be followed by termly **curriculum letters** and **vocabulary lists** to help you support your child each term. Previous years copies of these documents can be found on the curriculum page of the school website.

Newsletters

Newsletters are usually sent out once a fortnight, sometimes more frequently at the start or end of a term, and always contain important information for parents. A copy is put on the school website. Please keep Mrs Upton in the School Office updated if your email address changes. The Autumn Term **Clubs List** will be circulated shortly.

Staffing Update

This academic year will be a time of change and it is with very mixed feelings that I inform you that two key Abbey School staff members will be saying goodbye to us on the last day of the autumn term. **Mrs Clerc**, one of our very talented and inspirational Year 5 teacher who works on a Monday and Tuesday is expecting her second baby in January 2019 and will commence maternity leave at the end of December. **Mrs Yeldham**, our committed and supportive Special Educational Needs teacher, will sadly be leaving us to pursue an exciting new opportunity outside of teaching. Both ladies will leave very big shoes to fill at Abbey School and they will be sorely missed. We are in the process of advertising the two roles and aim to have new teachers in place for January 2019. We will thank both teachers in style at the end of the autumn term for all they have done for our school and to wish them luck in their future adventures.

Staff joining Abbey School

We welcome new Teaching Assistant **Mrs Lucy Harris** in Year 5, not to be confused with Mrs Sarah Harris who works in Year 4. Mrs Harris will work in Year 5 every morning and will take up our new role of Playground Leader at lunchtimes encouraging games and monitoring vulnerable children.

We also welcome teachers **Mrs Kynaston** and **Mrs Harley** who are teaching in Year 3 and **Mrs Murden** will join the teaching team in January 2019.

We welcome our **new music teacher Mrs Baker** who will work with us every Monday. Mrs Price will remain as a peripatetic music teacher and teach Year 2 recorders on a Thursday whilst Mrs Baker will teach Year 3 recorders on a Monday.





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Choir and Orchestra

As Monday is Mrs Baker's only working day at Abbey School Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 will each have a music lesson on this day and a singing assembly will take place before break, leading into Key Stage 2 choir practice at break time. Years 5 and 6 will each have an hour long music lesson on Monday afternoon and orchestra will be held after school starting Monday 10th September for those who have registered. Please remember to bring in your music instruments!

Mrs Price worked a similar amount of time spread over two days whilst delivering peripatetic lessons in the non-teaching periods. Mrs Baker is looking forward to working a full day on a Monday, although she will not deliver peripatetic lessons.

This new model enables Year 5 and 6 to have a whole hour's music lesson on Monday afternoon but this would not allow for orchestra to also be included within the afternoon. Therefore, orchestra will move to after school, in line with netball and football club. With Monday being such a key day in the week of the school the teachers were unanimous to move away from orchestra being during school hours and leaving sometimes only ten children in the class each week. Even more crucial with the move to Monday, Mrs Baker's only available day, the loss of up to two thirds of the class every week when each class is also having a music lesson and singing assembly reduces the teaching time. Especially important for an increased number of job share classes, with 50% of Key stage 2 classes taught by more than one teacher.

Clubs or activities provided during school teaching hours cannot be charged for, unlike peripatetic lessons or lunchtime or afterschool clubs. When orchestra was run on a Wednesday afternoon during school hours it could not be charged for. With the move to after school orchestra, the Governing Board felt that the club which is an extra-curricular activity supplementing the National Curriculum music lessons we provide should be charged in line with the other school run after school clubs in line with our school charging policy. If the financial commitment proves a barrier please make an appointment to meet with me to discuss ways we can support confidentially.

Netball Club

Sadly, our wonderful netball coach Sarah Ward will deliver only two clubs this term before she leaves on the 21st September as she has got a new fulltime job. We are investigating finding a new coach and will keep Year 5 and 6 parents updated with our progress, obviously the day of the week may change based on the new coach's availability. If you know of anyone who may be interested in this position please do make contact with Mrs Upton.

Next Friends' Association Meeting–Thursday 20th September 8pm, Year 2 Classroom

A new academic year always brings new and exciting challenges to our school community. For the Abbey School Friends' Association this means re-grouping, and inviting existing and new parents to consider joining the team to raise important funds for our school.

The Abbey Friends' Association consists of a very enthusiastic bunch of parents, constantly striving to come up with new as well as maintain popular fundraising ideas. We look forward to seeing many of you at the first meeting of the year. We have new interactive screens in Years 2,3 and 5 this term due to the efforts of the Friends Association. Remember that all parents are automatically members.

Cathedral Vacancies

There is a current vacancy for a Parish Administrator and Learning Administrator. The Cathedral have told us that this role would really suit parents wanting to work school hours only. Details can be found at www.stalbanscathedral.org/news/job-vacancies.

Kind regards,

Emma Fenn
Headteacher