

Aldryngton Primary School

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Headteacher: Mark Wieder

4th September

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I hope that you have all enjoyed the Summer break and that your child is looking forward to returning back to school on September 5th. A particularly special welcome to any new families that will be starting at Aldryngton this year.

As it is the start of term, I am sure we would all benefit from a couple of reminders about routines, particularly those that may have changed from last year or have a child moving into a different area of the school.

8:45am New Official Start Time

A reminder that school now starts at 8:45am. We will continue to welcome children in classrooms from 8:40. However, all children will now need to be in classrooms by 8:45am as this is when lessons will now start.

First Day Back

Lower School teachers will meet classes on the playground outside the hall and take to the classes on the first day back. From Wednesday, children will need to be dropped off at the classroom. Lime Class children can enter through the hall, whilst the other classes will enter via the classroom doors.

Staffing Update

Congratulations to Mrs Fenning, whose daughter was born at the start of the Summer holidays. She will now be on maternity leave and Mrs Culham will be Acting Deputy Head this year. Mrs Culham's class will be covered by Mrs Witkowski each Tuesday. Mrs Witkowski had been providing ad hoc teacher cover during the Summer term and has now joined us to work each Tuesday.

I would also like to welcome Mrs Blakely, who will be our new SEN Leader and Miss Beckett, who will be working as a trainee teacher in Middle School this year.

RAAC Update

No doubt, you will be aware from press coverage of some school buildings around the country being deemed unsafe due to RAAC being present in the building. From the records that the school and local authority have, there is no evidence of RAAC being used in the construction of Aldryngton. However, Wokingham have committed to completing inspections across all of its schools during September to look to see if there is any evidence of RAAC being used.

Website Update

We changed our website provider just before the Summer holidays to improve the mobile version of the site. However, we are aware of some teething problems with the site, which we are working on resolving as soon as possible. This has particularly impacted content uploaded from June onwards by the school as this is not displaying correctly. Apologies for any inconvenience caused by this.



Communications

This year, we will be moving from using the Parent Mail system of sending communications to Arbor. Further details will be sent out from the office in due course.

I will continue to provide a weekly update of general information, usually on a Tuesday.

On a termly basis, we will continue publishing the Aldryngton Chronicle, which is a photographic celebration of all the various events that have taken place over the term.

The website is generally the hub of the main information regarding the school. For new Foundation parents/carers, we use Evidence Me as the online learning journey. There will be a workshop on how this can be used on the 10th October after school.

To communicate with your child's class teacher, for brief enquiries/updates there is an opportunity to speak to the teacher once the children have been collected at the end of the day. Please note that the teacher is likely to have other commitments such as running a club, attending a meeting or staff training on most days. Therefore, if you need to speak about a particular issue, then I would advise contacting the school office and they will be able to make an appointment for you after liaising with the teacher.

For any emails that you wish to address to particular members of staff, then please also email the school office who will be able to forward to the most appropriate people to respond to the particular query.

Attendance

As you are probably aware, there is a strong correlation between the time spent in school and the highest rates of progress being made. We also need to balance this with the fact that sometimes children may be too unwell to attend or have symptoms of infectious illnesses such as Covid or sickness/diarrhoea and need to stay at home for the required time to avoid onward transmission. Therefore, our attendance target for each child is 97%. Please support us to achieve this target and give your child the best possible chance of success by attending school regularly. As a school, we will not authorise any term time holiday requests and we request whenever possible any medical appointments are made outside of school hours.

To notify us if your child is too ill to attend school, please notify the school office via email at your earliest convenience. For safeguarding purposes, we will follow up with any families that we have not had an absence reason by 9:30am. For any request of leave of absence, there is a form available from the office or on the school website. Please complete this ahead of the day if you need to request leave of absence. Please note there is a very limited set of reasons for leave of absence that we can authorise. This is stipulated in our attendance policy, which is available on the school website.

If your child suffers from a bout of sickness/ diarrhoea, please keep your child off school for a minimum of 48 hours since the last episode.

If your child tests positive for Covid or you suspect that they may have Covid due to their symptoms, then please keep your child off school for a minimum of three days.

We routinely track attendance and will send out letters to you when attendance drops below 90%. Attendance below 90% is classified as persistently absent and is of concern. Where in an exam situation, a score of 90% would probably be seen as good, for attendance purposes, it indicates that a child misses a day off school every other week. To help understand school attendance percentages, please have a look at the table below which is taken from our policy:

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
99-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
97-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4
Below 50%	Severe Absence	More than 97	More than 19

Punctuality is also very important. Children that are frequently late often are uncomfortable entering classrooms when learning has started. They also miss out on vital learning time. Please see a summary table below of the impact of sustained poor punctuality. As a school, we recognise some of the challenges that families may have, particularly families with children at different settings. Therefore, we offer a five-minute window, where children be dropped off at any point to support with this.

Punctuality	Approx. days lost per year
5 minutes late every day	3+
15 minutes late every day	10
30 minutes late every day	19

Thank you in advance for your support in ensuring that your child attend school and arrives on time regularly.

Start of the Day

We will continue with a soft start approach. Gates will open at 8:35am and will be closed at **8:45am** to ensure a prompt start to the school day. Please could you ensure that your child is ready to be in their classroom at **8:45am as that is the official start time of timetabled lessons.**

End of the Day

This will be 3:15pm for all pupils. Children will need to be collected from classrooms. Families with a sibling in Foundation Stage are encouraged to collect their older child first. Children in years 5 and 6, who have been given permission will be dismissed from the classroom door. Please note that it is not possible for children in years 5 and 6 to walk younger siblings home.

Staff will be around on the first day back to assist you in the right direction.

Setting/ Teaching Arrangements

Children will again be grouped in smaller mixed ability groups in Y1 to Y6 for mathematics this year. These smaller groups will enable further targeted support to be provided in one-year group of the National Curriculum rather than the two-year groups that is currently in place for other subjects.

We will continue with whole class differentiated teaching for English across the school. Therefore, your child will remain with the same class teacher for English lessons

For children in Foundation Stage and Lower School, we do set for our phonics teaching. These groups are dynamic and can often change as part of the ongoing teacher assessments.

All teachers are contractually entitled to 10% of their timetable for preparation, planning and assessment time (often referred to as PPA time). Therefore, this time will be covered by other staff and this usually takes place on one afternoon in a week. Teachers with leadership responsibilities either have a regular timetabled slot and/or ad hoc release to fulfil these duties, so again this time will be covered by other staff.

Meet the Teacher Session: 12th and 13th September (3:30pm-4pm)

As part of our Meet the Teacher session, there will be an opportunity to meet your child's class teacher and visit your child's classroom. They will also be able to share with you the other staff that will be working with your child; the typical timetable and routines; how to find out what your child will be learning about and what topics your child will cover that particular year.

For children in Foundation Stage, this will take place on Tuesday 12th September and for children in all other year groups, it will take place on Wednesday 13th September. Both sessions will run from 3:30-4pm.

Events List

We are currently finalising the events list for the year ahead. This list is dynamic and there is likely to be further additions as the year progresses. I will share the current list for the year with you in my weekly update next week.

Healthy Snacks

Children in both Foundation Stage and Lower School are provided with fruit daily. Children in other year groups may also bring in a snack for playtime. We strongly encourage the use of healthy snacks such as fruit for playtime. A reminder that we are a nut-free school.

Clubs

We will be continuing to run a mixture of both internally run clubs by staff and externally run clubs by organisations such as U Sports. Further details about the clubs on offer will follow in the coming weeks.

Lost Property

We will not be holding a central lost property. We will return all named items to the rightful owner. We will continue to use the lidded lost property bins for each team that will be kept outside on the playground for families to freely access. Un-named items will be disposed of after a week. Please could you support us by ensuring that all property in school is named and if the name is fading, then it is updated to make it clear again. For anyone unaware, products such as Stickins are a quick and easy way of labelling property in school.

Assemblies

We will be having face to face assemblies this academic year. I will run a weekly assembly on a Monday morning and Mrs Culham will run her Big Sing assemblies on a Thursday. Every Friday, there will be a celebration assembly at the end of the day to reward children for their efforts made during the week.

System Updates

Due to the way in which the current school management system works, it doesn't begin to update the other systems that rely on it such as Scopay until the day that children return to school. This inevitably causes some issues that are usually speedily sorted out by the office team, but I apologise to anyone in advance for any issues that may occur.

Uniform/ P.E. Kits

A reminder that children should now be wearing school shoes in school. We would also request that children keep a pair of trainers within school to change into for P.E. and the daily mile as well as to wear on the field when it becomes muddier again.

Please note P.E. lessons and daily mile activities are timetabled to start from tomorrow in some classes, so please could you ensure that your child arrives ready with their P.E. kit tomorrow.

I shall look forward to welcoming families back to Aldryngton tomorrow.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wieder', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Wieder
Headteacher