

Aldryngton Primary School

Silverdale Road,
Earley,
Reading,
RG6 7HR
Telephone (0118) 926 5843
E-mail admin@aldryngton.wokingham.sch.uk



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.

Aldryngton is 60!

This term marks a special anniversary for the school as it is 60 years since the school opened to its first cohort in 1964. We will keep you updated with our plans to celebrate this important milestone this term.

For now, I will include a copy of the first entrance into the school log book, recorded by the first headteacher, Mrs Fowles, on September 8th 1964:

‘The new school today began with 132 children, 40 juniors and 92 infants.’

Aldryngton is certainly a lot larger today and is likely to have educated over 3000 people since the first day in 1964!

Alun Major

I am sad to share that over the holidays, I was informed that Alun Major passed away peacefully aged 92. Mr Major, was the second headteacher of Aldryngton Primary School and gave great service to the school between 1974 and 1993.

Staffing Update

I would like to welcome Miss Beckett, who will be working as a teacher in Middle School this year.

Communications

This year, we will be sending communications via Arbor. There is an app that can be downloaded and this will hold all the information in one central place.

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 12th November after school.



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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 9am. 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:

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. Classroom doors are opened at 8:40am and children are expected to enter the classroom without their parent/carers. 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

When teaching phonics in Foundation Stage and Lower School, children are grouped according to their ability. 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 Y1-Y6 Session: 11th 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.

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. Where possible, it would be preferable if the snacks could be free from wrappers e.g. an apple. 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. 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

I will run a weekly assembly on a Monday morning and Mrs Fenning will run her Big Sing assemblies on a Wednesday. 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 ensure that if your child has long hair below shoulder length that it is tied up each day and earrings are removed on P.E. days.

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,



Mark Wieder
Headteacher

