



***Banks St. Stephen's CE Primary School***  
***"Belonging, Serving, Succeeding"***

Dear parents and carers,

I hope the children are all looking forward to coming back on Thursday and seeing their friends. We have certainly missed them! Let's hope too that the Y6 leavers settle in well at their new high schools.

**LATEST UPDATES**

The school has been a hive of activity for most of the Summer. Governors Mr O'Brien, Mr Sharples and Mr Cropper have been in and out of the school grounds all holidays; weeding, watering, sowing seeds, laying a path with chippings and putting aquatic plants in the new pond. It's been all go!

A dead tree in the Early Years Garden was safely felled and chipped by Dave Horton and his team – many thanks to them. Dave Horton and Brian Counce also gave us materials (bark chippings and membrane) to complete the pond area – we are very grateful for their generosity.

Richard from Claremont Aquatics kindly donated the flowering plants for our new pond: Hornwort, Water Plantain, Bog Bean, Water Forget-Me-Not and Water Lily. Please go and have a peek at the pond area when you drop the children off on Thursday – the transformation is quite stunning. A neglected wasteland of weeds and brambles, previously unusable, is now a beautiful, spacious, green and tranquil area. I know the children will love it and the pond is very securely fenced and safe for use.

Talking of gardening, I wonder who has grown the tallest sunflower over the holidays?

Mrs Moore has taken delivery of new equipment for the forest area, paid for by FOSS and the school's Sports Premium funding.

New brass instruments have arrived for both Y4 and Y5 and new music lessons are planned for other classes too – Mrs Mussell will tell you more over the next couple of weeks.

Congratulations to our cleaning supervisor Mrs Skates (formerly Mrs Winnard), who got married during holidays. She has also cleaned the school from top to bottom – she is a very busy lady!

There is "something in the water" in Early Years and the more eagle-eyed among you may have noticed a bump or two! This happy news has meant

that we have had to do a bit of juggling with teaching staff but fortunately all the classes now have excellent and experienced teachers in place.

The class teachers for 1<sup>st</sup> September are as follows:

Nursery: Mrs Moore

Reception: Mrs Swift (Miss Squibb will still be in school supporting the class as Early Years leader)

Y1: Mrs Robinson (Mon/Tues) and Miss Brown (an experienced teacher who is new to our school, Wed/Thurs/Fri)

Y2: Mrs Prescott (an experienced teacher who worked with Y1 and Y2 all last year and knows the children well)

Y3: Miss O'Brien

Y4: Mr Richardson

Y5: Mrs Mussell (Mrs Robinson on Weds)

Y6: Miss Sykes

## **COVID UPDATES**

I think it's safe to say that we have all "had it up to here" with Covid. However we need to continue to manage risk, as it doesn't seem to be going away! If you want to read the latest government guidance, links are below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/schools-covid-19-operational-guidance#stepping>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/step-4-update-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges>

## **MAIN COVID MESSAGES FOR SEPTEMBER**

- Children are no longer taught in bubbles
- All children mix as normal both indoors, in the dining hall and on the playground
- Whole school worship and assemblies resume in the Hall (although we may still have some assemblies on Zoom)
- Adults (staff, volunteers, parents, visitors) are no longer required to wear masks (but may do so if they wish)
- Children (under the age of 18 years and 6 months) who live in the same household and/or are a close contact or someone with Covid-19 are not required to isolate and can attend school as normal
- Adults working in school who live in the same household and/or are a close contact of someone with Covid-19 are not required to isolate and can attend school as normal, as long as they are fully vaccinated (or are not able to be vaccinated for medical reasons).
- School is not expected to identify close contacts – this will be done by NHS Track and Trace (who may contact the school for information).

- All staff should test themselves twice weekly using Lateral Flow Tests. If there is a positive test result, they should isolate and take a PCR test to confirm.
- Children are not tested in school but if parents give them a test and it is positive, the child should isolate and take a PCR test to confirm.
- If a child has to isolate due to a positive test result or following advice from Track and Trace (and is well enough to do work at home), the class teacher will provide them with work to do remotely.
- Under 18's and double-vaccinated adults do not need to isolate if they are a close contact of a positive case.
- Current hygiene measures in school will remain. Surfaces and door handles will be cleaned regularly throughout the day by class TAs and children will wash their hands and/or use sanitiser regularly.
- Ventilation levels in all classrooms will be checked daily with a Carbon Dioxide Monitor to ensure the air is fresh.
- Teachers, TAs and welfare staff will ensure the following minimum handwashing/sanitising: On arrival to school, end of morning break, before lunch, after lunch.
- Hand sanitiser is provided throughout the school and children may also bring their own personal bottle if they wish.
- The school will continue to be well ventilated. All windows and internal doors will be kept open as far as reasonably possible (i.e. not all the windows when it's freezing cold) to ensure the free flow of fresh air. Children and staff are advised to wear layers and always bring a coat.
- The school will seek advice from public health in the following circumstances:  
5 children, pupils, students or staff, who are likely to have mixed closely, test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period; or  
10% of children, pupils, students or staff who are likely to have mixed closely test positive for COVID-19 within a 10-day period The school may then be advised to take extra precautions e.g. adults wearing masks, additional cleaning. Sending pupils home will be a last resort.

The school's actions will be reviewed on a daily basis, reacting to circumstances as they arise and any changes will be communicated to staff, parents and carers. The school will follow the advice of the government and public health officials.

## **UNIFORM REMINDERS**

**There have been no changes to the school's uniform policy.**

Children will no longer come to school in PE Kit on their PE days – they bring in their kit on PE days in a PE bag/carrier bag (or keep it in school) and change in school (this will be reviewed at the end of September). Teachers will tell you when PE days are.

In 21-22 we will have high expectations of smart school uniform, particularly PE uniform. Main messages include:  
No earrings

No leggings

No designer clothes or football shirts for PE

Rucksacks/bulky bags are not required and are discouraged, as they don't fit into our cloakrooms and are a trip hazard.

We want all the children to look smart and wear their uniform with pride! If for any reason you are unable to send your child in the correct uniform, please inform the class teacher and we will always be sympathetic. Children who bring unsuitable clothes for PE or forget them will still do PE if practically possible, as it is a compulsory part of their curriculum. If affordability is an issue, please contact Mrs Owen in confidence and she will be happy to assist.

Link to school website for uniform:

<https://www.bank-st-stephens.lancs.sch.uk/parents/uniform>

Pick up time is back to the normal at 3.15. After school club is on as normal (please contact the office to book) and all being well, breakfast club will re-start after half term.

We hope that you enjoy what's left of the Summer break. The teachers have been busy getting the classrooms ready and they look great. We can't wait to be back together again (especially welcoming our new Reception and Nursery children!) and we will do everything possible to keep all staff and children safe and well.

See you on Thursday at ten to nine!

*Mrs Owen*