



Blundeston CEVC Primary School



A Place to Flourish

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10)

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School Newsletter - Wednesday 04th September 2024

Welcome Back and School Values

The summer term may have been unusually wet but thank goodness the summer holiday has been largely warm and sunny. Whatever your break involved, I hope it has been a pleasant and enjoyable one. Personally, I really enjoyed the chance to have three weeks quality time with my two children. Now, it is back to work and for me that means being incredibly fortunate to be able to support and inspire the staff and your children to fulfil their potential.

As always, there will be challenges to overcome. Whilst many children will be looking forward to seeing their friends again, there will be a number of children who will be nervous about returning to school. This is completely normal. Thankfully, due to our skilled staff and the nurturing environment we provide, our children thrive at Blundeston.

Part of that nurturing environment comes from the strong Christian values we uphold. This year, our collective worships will be detailing the nine key values we have linked to our core school values of Family - Flourish - Respect. The accompanying attachment has examples of where each of the values fits in and what skills and knowledge we want the children to understand and apply, both in terms of their behaviour and learning.

As I explained in our first Collective Worship today, to be ready for school we need to pack our bags with the things we need in order to do well - a pencil, a pen, a ruler, a lunchbox, a reading book etc. Having these alone will not help us to make the best progress possible if we do not pack with us the values we need to be successful - compassion, responsibility, collaboration, wisdom, courage, hope, honesty, forgiveness and thoughtfulness.

Each week, our Flourishers Assembly will celebrate the children's successes, not just in their academic work but also for how they have excelled in the values we want them to be demonstrating. I am certain that this reinforcement of key values and the setting out of our expectations of the children as learners, will enable them to flourish.

Parental Engagement

Of course, for the children to achieve the best possible outcomes, we need parents on board too. This means school and home working closely together. Sharing information about your child enables us at school and you at home to put into place the best support possible. In order to do that there are several ways to communicate.

If you have lots to discuss, it is always best to try to talk to us face to face. This also eliminates the chances of misinterpreting messages via Class Dojo or from an email. You can either arrange a meeting via the school office or direct with us at the start or end of the school day. We always have an 'Open Door' policy in place as we value your support. However, we understand it may not always be possible to come into the school. In which case, please do not sit on issues or problems that may exist. Contact us any way you can.

For small issues which might affect a child's learning or behaviour through the day, a quick message is always appreciated first thing in the morning, before school starts. This is best sent to the school office, where it will be guaranteed to be seen or heard. These messages can then be relayed to the child's class teacher, enabling them the flexibility to make reasonable adjustments to a child's learning that day.

If you are using Class Dojo to communicate to the class teachers, please send messages after the end of the school day until 5:00pm.

Home-School Agreement

If you are new to the school, a copy of our home-school agreement will be sent home to you this week. Please read and complete this with your child if you agree to working together with the school for the benefit of your child.

If you haven't yet completed one, please do so. There is no trick to it. We simply wish to build the trust between the child, school and home. Establishing clear expectations, responsibilities and principles of respect is key to ensuring this can happen. The home-school agreement provides a statement of intent from school, parents and children.

We will be talking through the home-school agreement with the children before they take it home. Tying in with our work on values, we want the children to take ownership of their actions to help their school experience be a really positive one.

Thank you.

Class Curriculum Letters/Half-Termly Topic Information

To ensure parents feel they are in the best possible position to support their children, each class will continue to share the learning that will be covered at the start of each half-term. This information can also be viewed on the long-term curriculum maps on the school website.

Homework

Homework remains a contentious issue as parents have differing opinions about how much should be given. As a result, it is one of those areas where schools can never please all the people, all the time. Most parents are happy to support the basics – encouraging learning spellings, phonics/reading and some maths work.

Last year, we were finding that a lot of children were not completing weekly homework at all. This is incredibly frustrating as it disadvantages these children. Homework forms an important part of a child's learning. Regular practice and rehearsal leads to a greater chance of retaining important facts in their long-term memories.

Remember, homework should be short sharp bursts of practise rather than sitting down for an extended time. That is why we encourage the use of Numbots, TTRS and the quick practising of spellings or phonics. Finding just fifteen minutes a day to complete a combination of reading and Maths practise has incredibly powerful results.

Studies show that children committing to and completing fifteen minutes of homework a day can add months or even years of progress onto their learning within a year. It also helps children to become more independent and definitely readies them for high school, where the jump in expectations of what homework a child should complete is huge. Those children that disengage with homework in primary school, get a huge shock when moving into Y7!

Attendance

It was lovely to welcome the children back this morning. There were no tears so that was a huge positive. In order for us to help your child make the progress we wish to see, it is crucial that they attend school as often as possible. It is every child's right to an efficient and suitable full-time education and it is a parent's legal duty to ensure this happens.

As outlined last term, the focus on attendance is even greater, with new governmental changes coming into effect immediately. The attendance codes have changed so that there is no longer an H code for authorised holidays as holidays in term time will not be authorised.

Likewise, with long-term sickness, the rules are changing. We appreciate that there are times when your child is too unwell to attend school and would not expect them to attend in these circumstances. However, under the new guidance we have a statutory duty to report to the Local Authority those students who are off through illness (Code I) under the following circumstances:

1. Student is unable to attend through illness and there are reasonable grounds to believe they will miss 15 or more consecutive school days.

Or

2. The student has reached, or exceeded 15 school days through absence through illness in the current academic year either consecutive or cumulative.

So that the school can review and consider the most appropriate support for your child under these circumstances, and to ensure the absences are appropriately recorded, we may request that medical evidence be provided from your child's GP or another medical practitioner. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Of course, most of you will already be aware of the biggest change to affect attendance and that is how the penalty fines are being toughened up.

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within 3 years)

- The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:
- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

- The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines of up to £2,500.
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Each school in Suffolk has an allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO). You can request the contact details of the Education Welfare Officer from us, or alternatively email schoolattendance@suffolk.gov.uk stating Blundeston CoEVC Primary School so the email can be forwarded to the correct EWO.

Parking

I am sure many of you spotted the traffic warden who was policing the parking outside school this morning. As a school, all we ask is that you are courteous and drive slowly at drop off and pick up times. Please don't block people's driveways or rush to school in your vehicle. We would rather you take a few extra seconds being cautious and considerate, rather than a child or adult getting seriously injured, or worse. The traffic warden informed me that he will be making regular visits to the school over the coming months.

Reflections - Moving Forwards

Having been in the hotseat for a year, I (and Mrs Ward) feel in a much better position to lead the school forward. When you move to a new school, there is such a vast amount of knowledge you need to acquire in such a short space of time on every single aspect of school, it can be a daunting experience at times. From teaching and learning to health and safety, budgetary pressures to infrastructure projects, being a headteacher brings with it a unique mix to deal with.

Add in having to learn several hundred new names and moving to a Church School and the expectations that brings and it has been a steep learning curve, but one which Mrs Ward and myself are now standing on top of, looking down. Many of the school improvements we identified have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

Our vision to enable Blundeston to continue to be the best place to flourish is being evidenced in the subtle shifts to teaching and learning across the school. Tweaked curriculums and new ways of approaching learning through metacognition and self-regulation techniques are helping children to commit more to their long-term memories.

Building staff knowledge and skills through increased training and professional development opportunities, are ensuring that the children are not only kept safe but are nurtured and pushed on to succeed. We want to ensure behaviour is at the very highest standard and children know that we follow through on those that do break a school rule with appropriate consequences.

All of these aspects of development are building the 'buzz' in the classrooms, where children are enthused about their learning. Children can relax and enjoy their playtimes and lunchtimes without having to worry about being emotionally or physically hurt as an adult is always on hand to help resolve any issues that arise.

In the coming months, I am hopeful that I will be able to share with you lots of exciting announcements about projects and pieces of work which will significantly improve the school environment. As you can appreciate, money in public services is tight at the moment. However, I intend to continually push for what I believe is in the best interests of the children. I expect to see the hard work that has been put in by many people and governors of the school to pay off soon and I look forward to being able to update you with what is happening in good time.

If you are new to the school, I really look forward to seeing and getting to know you at the start and end of the day, as you drop off and collect the children. Please don't be frightened to say hello. Here's to a very successful school year.

Term Dates and Events

Wednesday 4 th Sept.	Children return to school – Autumn Term starts
Wednesday 18 th September	Y3/Y4 Health Festival
Wednesday 25 th September	Y6 Inclusive Festival
Wednesday 2 nd October	Y6 Tag Rugby Event
Friday 4 th October	Flu Vaccinations
Monday 7 th – Monday 14 th October	Book Fair
Tuesday 8 th October	Y6 Football
Tuesday 8 th October	Parent Consultations
Thursday 10 th October	Parent Consultations
Monday 14 th October	School Photos
Tuesday 15 th October	Y6 School Trip to Aviation museum
Monday 21 st October	Y4 School Trip to Norwich Castle
Monday 28 th October – Friday 1 st November	Autumn Half-Term
Monday 4 th November	Teacher Training Day
Tuesday 5 th November	Children return to school
Thursday 14 th November	Y6 Crucial Crew Trip
Friday 20 th December	Last day of Autumn Term
Monday 23 rd December - Monday 6 th January 2025	Christmas Holiday
Monday 6 th January 2025	Teacher Training Day
Tuesday 7 th January 2025	Children return to school – Spring Term starts
Friday 14 th February 2025	Last day of half-term
Monday 17 th February – Friday 21 st February 2025	Spring Half-Term
Monday 24 th February 2025	Children return to school – 2 nd Half of Spring Term
Monday 3 rd – Friday 7 th March 2025	How Hill Residential: Y4 Monday to Wednesday Y5 Wednesday to Friday
Friday 4 th April 2025	Last day of Spring Term
Monday 7 th April – Tuesday 22 nd April 2025	Easter Holiday
Wednesday 23 rd April 2025	Children return to school – Summer Term starts
Monday 12 th May – Thursday 15 th May 2025	Y6 SATs Week
Friday 23 rd May 2025	Last day of half-term
Monday 26 th – Friday 30 th May 2025	Summer Half Term
Tuesday 22 nd July 2025	Last day of Summer Term
Wednesday 23 rd July – Tuesday 2 nd September	Summer holiday
Monday 1 st & Tuesday 2 nd September 2025	Teacher Training Days