

Willow Brook News

September 7th 2018



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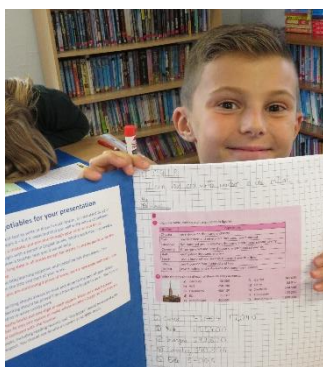
Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been an absolute pleasure to welcome you all to a new Willow Brook year and share a playground full of excitement and anticipation as the autumn term gets underway! Over the past two days we have settled our 28 new reception children in and they soon found their feet and have been completely delightful! Four new children have also joined other year groups – welcome to Amelia, Katie, Sarim and Rio. This makes our number on role an ever-growing 190! Our new Year 6 have proudly taken on the mantle of scooping up unfamiliar and lost little people, ringing the bell and serving the lunch and are already quite at home in their different roles and under the weight of a whole host of responsibilities. I have a feeling that they are going to be completely delightful too!



The first day of the school year always feels very smart. It's quite wonderful to stand at the front of our first assembly and see pristine uniforms, shiny shoes and very proud faces! The first pages of our new curriculum work books have been filled with fabulous first pieces of writing and the early merits for incredible effort were already starting to fly on Thursday! All of our classrooms and corridors have been decorated and feel clean and organised thanks to skills of Mr Holland and Mr Castledine's varnished hall floor is, as ever, the shiniest surface ever! It all bodes well for a year full of hard work and Willow Brook magic.

Our new curriculum plans are filled with details of what is happening in classrooms this half term. You will receive a copy of relevant plans from your child's teacher together with their welcome letter, but they are all available on the curriculum section of the school website together with an outline of the academic year ahead should you wish to browse. Our published information should reflect our new cross-curricular strategy and provide you with a more comprehensive insight into your child's lessons and learning.



Without wanting to overload you with paperwork, you should have today received a copy of our Home School Agreement. This is a document that has been agreed by staff and will be shared with the children in due course and sets out our hopes and expectations as we work in partnership with you. It makes reference to important policies on, for example, behaviour, uniform, attendance and homework – all of which can be found on the Willow Brook website. Please read the document, and whilst we do not ask you to sign to show your agreement with our aims, we hope that you will be in touch if you feel unable to support these important aspects of our collaboration.

Our extra-curricular timetable has now been published and is full of a range of activities and opportunities for the term ahead. As well as seeing many of our usual clubs continuing, we are looking forward to John starting regular football coaching for both boys and girls on a Monday and seeing how his first team fixtures go... Our two talented parents couldn't wait to sign up for another season of netball with their enthusiastic team... Miss Brearey and Mrs Allen have new plans for their recorder orchestra... Miss Phillips has a whole host of cardio classes and dance sessions ready... Sara Collins, one of our midday supervisors, is about to launch a lunchtime 'Make it a Mile' running club and we will have to start choir at some point before the original plan of after half term as there's a bit of a demand on our services over the festive season! In assembly yesterday encouraged the children to try something new - perhaps a game of chess or bridge... or simply sit and relax and read at Library Club. Whatever they do, all we ask is that once they have signed up they commit themselves to a half term and enjoy the experience. Details of all the activities will be available from staff co-ordinators in due course.

Whilst dates for the term ahead will be published as soon as the diary is finalised next week, can I give you advanced notice of this term's Parents Evenings. They will be held on the week beginning October 8th. We are revising our usual arrangements and offering 2 evenings where appointments will run until 7pm to accommodate working parents.

A newsletter tends to finish with a final 'ask' and this time it comes from the teachers rather than the office! With rising numbers – especially in our infant department – lining up and making sure that the transition in to school in the morning is smooth and happy is becoming a challenge when so many grown-ups stand in the lines too! Little people soon lose sight of their teachers and we have ended up with a few tears and worries in the process. We would dearly like to get back to what was the original routine whereby when the bell rings, children (as far as is reasonable and possible) say goodbye, join their lines and start their day with their class. Encouraging that first step in becoming independent in a safe environment is a very important one and your help would be greatly appreciated.



I'm sure there will be many messages heading your way over the coming days as the autumn term gets underway, but for now I just want to underline that our door is always open and we would like you to feel that you are welcome at any time to come and ask, share, comment or just let us know if we can help in any way. You are welcome to email or telephone if you are not here in person and, if you are, staff are in the playground twice a day to provide a point of contact.

I wish you a very happy new year and hope that 2018/2019 will be a busy and exciting one for us all.

With kind regards,

Louise Ballard