



HOW WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

ESTABLISHED 1968

Head Teacher: Mrs C Rowe
Newsletter 1

4th September 2016

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to a new academic year! I hope that everyone has had a well earned and restful summer holiday. I am thrilled to have been appointed as Head Teacher of How Wood School and I am very much looking forward to getting to know all our families – new and old. It has been lovely this week meeting parents at the beginning of the day and at home time as well as spending time in each class getting to know the children and their names! Having previously been Deputy Head Teacher, I feel very prepared to lead the school forward and I am excited at the prospect of building on our current strengths yet driving the school forward with fresh ideas and innovations. I am passionate about education and I am committed to raising the aspirations of each and every child at How Wood School.

We have much to be proud of at How Wood and I will endeavour to raise the profile of the school during my time as Head Teacher. I see How Wood as an important part of the community and I intend to ensure that our children have every opportunity to represent our school through their academic ability, sporting achievements and musical talents, to name but a few.

As the new Head Teacher, I will have a weekly teaching commitment and I will cover each class over the course of every half term. This will ensure that I quickly develop an understanding of the strengths and achievements of the children at How Wood as well as providing me with the opportunity to support my staff in their continual professional development – we will all be learning from each other.

I welcome any questions, queries, comments or feedback; please feel free to come and speak to me when I am out and about at the beginning and end of the day or make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Rowe
Head Teacher

New staff

We welcome three new teachers – Mr Sewell to Year 5; Mrs Johns to Year 1 and Miss Herbert to Year 2; a new Teaching Assistant, Mrs Meakin and a Mid-day Supervisor, Mrs Sykes to the team. We also welcome back Miss Baldock who is returning from maternity leave. A big welcome to all the children joining Nursery & Reception class and to new families joining in other year groups – a special and warm hello to you all.

Key dates for the term

I have attached a list of key dates for the term. Further information about the various forthcoming events will be sent out to relevant classes. ***It is important that all parents read newsletters regularly so that they are aware of all events and any changes that may take place.***

Start of academic year – Parent Teacher Meetings

Please find the date and time of the Parent Teacher Meetings below. The meetings will run from **9.05-9.55am on the following days and will be held in your child's new classroom.**

Monday 12th September – Year 1

Tuesday 13th September – Year 2

Wednesday 14th September – Year 3

Thursday 15th September – Year 4

Friday 16th September – Year 5

Monday 19th September – Year 6

At the meeting teachers will provide information about topics to be covered this academic year, give general class-organisation arrangements and share other relevant information for individual classes. This information has already been shared with Reception and Nursery parents.

It is important that all parents attend if possible so that they can find out about the year ahead.

Attendance

I am sure you are aware that The Department for Education has made amendments to school attendance regulations. The amendments make it clear that **'Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances'**. Head Teachers no longer have the discretion to allow up to 10 days in a school year for a family holiday or to agree extended leave for parents to visit their country of origin.

You will no doubt understand that as the Head Teacher I have a duty, along with the school Governors, to promote the highest attendance levels possible. The school is set very high attendance targets by the Government; and our attendance data is regularly scrutinised by the Local Authority and Ofsted and is one of the factors by which they measure the success of the school. The academic progress of a child, whatever his/her level of academic ability, will be adversely affected if they miss school. If a child is unwell then they should not come to school, but if, in addition, they have other time off school, then this will definitely have a detrimental effect on their progress. ***Please take this into consideration when planning trips in the future***

If you believe your circumstances may be exceptional, then please discuss your request with me before making final plans. I will review each request for absence carefully, consulting with the Local Authority's Attendance Improvement Officer where and if necessary, and give you an answer as soon as possible. If you need to make a request for leave, then please download a holiday request form from the school website or school office. We ask that all requests are put in writing using the form at least two weeks prior to any leave.

The overall attendance record of the vast majority of our pupils is very good and I very much appreciate your support in respecting and supporting the school's policy on attendance. ***The policy can be found on the school's website. Part of our new policy outlines the requirement for all parents to provide a written note or letter explaining their child's absence. Staff will actively be requesting letters and it would be most helpful if parents could send this letter in with their child when they return to school.***

May we also remind you that if you need to collect your child from school for any reason, they must be signed out and signed in if returning to school on the same day.

I have included a reminder of school dates for the coming year; please keep these dates in mind when making any arrangements for holidays. Term dates for 2017-18 will be shared in January 2017.

Autumn Term 2016

Inset Day: Friday 21st October
Half term: Monday 24th October – Friday 28th October
Occasional Day: Monday 21st November (school closed)
Term Ends: Wednesday 21st December – Please note new finishing time 1.30pm

Spring Term 2017

Children begin: Thursday 5th January
Half term: Monday 13th – Friday 17th February
Inset Day: Monday 20th February
Term Ends: Friday 31st March - Please note new finishing time 1.30pm

Summer Term 2017

Children begin: Tuesday 18th April
May Bank Holiday Monday 1st May
Half term: Monday 29th May – Friday 2nd June

Term Ends: Friday 21st July - Please note new finishing time 1.30pm
Inset Day: Monday 24th July

Absence and illness

If your child has been physically sick, he/she should be kept at home for a period of **48 hours**, to prevent the spreading of infections. We will endeavour to contact parents of any pupils who are away from school (unless we have been previously informed). Please let the office staff know of any absence before 9 am to save Mrs

Gooch or Mrs Clarke from having to make a call. As part of our new Attendance Policy all pupil absences must be followed up by a written note or letter.

Parent / Teacher Consultations

Parent/teacher consultation sessions will be held in the week before the October and February half-term holidays. This term the consultation sessions will be on Tuesday 18th October 3.30-6pm and Wednesday 19th October 5-8pm. Dates for February 2017 consultations will be sent out at a later date.

Parents will have a third opportunity to meet formally with the teachers, if they wish, at the end of the academic year, to discuss the annual written report. Parents of children who have additional needs are invited to Child Review Meetings which are held termly. During these, we discuss what is working well for your child and formulate a plan for next steps which involve the school and the family.

You will be aware that we encourage an open door policy at the school, so if you have any queries or concerns, do speak to class teachers or myself. It is always preferable to meet with teachers after school, rather than before school. Alternatively, you can call the school office to make an appointment.

General reminders

Punctuality

It is important that all children attend school regularly and on time each day. Please ensure that your child is in the playground before the whistle is blown at 8.50am, (8.45am for Nursery children) allowing sufficient time for your journey to school, so that a prompt start can be made. However, as the playground is not supervised before 8.40 am, I would ask that children **do not arrive** at school before this time. If your child arrives at school after 8.50am they should report to the school office, so that the register is accurate. We finish at 3.15pm each day; it is helpful if you are here to collect your child promptly at 3.15pm. Older children who are walking home by themselves should leave promptly.

End of the day arrangements

Children in Year R to Year 2 must be collected by an adult from the infant playground. Children in Year 3 must also be collected from outside their classroom. As from September, children in Year 4 are to be collected from their classroom. A letter explaining this has already been distributed to Year 4 parents and carers. Children in Years 5 and 6 are dismissed from their classrooms at the end of the day. Please ensure your child knows what arrangements have been made.

Coming into and leaving school

It is extremely important that all children and parents use the pathway and not the driveway to come into and leave school. I do appreciate this is quite a narrow pathway, however the driveway must not be used as pedestrian access. It can give mixed messages when parents use the driveway rather than the pathway at the end of the day when leaving the school. Please can all parents help keep our children safe by staying on the pathway.

Children who ride scooters and bikes should dismount by the school gate and walk their bikes and scooters down the pathway. ***It is also important that pre-school children who come into school do not use scooters or bikes in the school car park or along the path up to the office.***

The entrance to the school should not under any circumstances be used for turning cars round or dropping children off. I would like to remind all parents not to use the yellow zig zag area for parking in the interests of keeping all our children safe.

Important Notice to all Parents about the School Car Park

A reminder that parents are not permitted to use the car park at any time of the day. This includes picking up or dropping off children from clubs including the Time Out Club.

Uniform

Please note: Plimsolls are not suitable for outside PE so we ask that children are provided with trainers for outside PE sessions.

The school office sells school uniform at the ***following times only***,

- Tuesday mornings 8.50am-9.15am and Thursday afternoons 3.20-3.45pm. Order forms are available from the school office.

Office

The school office is opened from **8.15pm to 5pm term time only**. Please do not call into the office outside of these hours. The school's answer machine is always switched on and it is possible for parents to leave a message outside these times. Your support is appreciated.

Snacks

A reminder that if the Junior children bring in a mid-morning snack it should be a healthy one and consist of a ***piece of fruit***. Crisps, chocolate biscuits and sweets are not acceptable. The infant children will continue to receive a 'free' piece of fruit or vegetable at break time each morning. ***As there are some children across the school with nut allergies we ask all parents not to send in nut based products.***

Photographs and filming

Please remember that any photographs taken of children in school productions, assemblies, sports days and other events are solely for your own personal use. As a school community, we must always put the safety of all children first. With this in mind I would like to clarify;

- Any filming/photographs that parents take will be for personal use only.
- Images must not be uploaded onto any public Internet sites, such as Facebook, You Tube etc.

Payment of any money

Any money, cheques, etc for any school events or trips **must** be put into an envelope with your child's name and class clearly marked on it. The envelope should be handed to the class teacher if your child is an infant. Junior children should hand the envelope to their class teachers at the beginning of the day. This will help to reduce congestion in the office area during the morning session. At all times, our preference is to receive any payments in the form of cheques.

Reward and Certificate system.

Throughout the school all children will work towards gaining merits for learning, effort and behaviour which will be awarded by class teachers. Once a child gains ten merits they will receive a Head Teacher Certificate, which will be presented in assembly. The first Head Teacher's Certificate will be Bronze, followed by Silver and then Gold.

In addition to this each class teacher will be issuing three special certificates each week. These will be given out each Thursday in assembly.

Star of the Week- linked to behaviour

Learner of the Week- linked to work

Worker of the Week- linked to effort

All children are aware of our merit system which provides a consistent and shared approach for rewarding learning, effort and behaviour. I look forward to giving out the first Head Teacher's Certificate of the new academic year later on in the term.

Gates

A polite reminder to all parents - Please do not open the blue school gates onto the playground- if the gate is closed then please let a member of the office staff know.

Clubs

We will be running a number of clubs for children both during the school day and after school. Please look out for letters in your child's school bag.

Thank you

Mrs Rowe
Head Teacher

Please keep handy for future reference- additional dates and changes will be shared on future newsletters. Please ensure you read all newsletters carefully.

Key Dates for the Autumn Term 2015

Date	Event
Wednesday 5 th October 10.30am	Harvest assembly (All parents welcome-subject to space in the hall)
Tuesday 11 th October	Curriculum Enrichment Day E-Safety
Tuesday 18 th October 3.30-6pm	Parent Consultations
Wednesday 19 th October 5-8pm	Parent Consultations
Friday 21st October	Inset Day
Monday 24th - Friday 28th October	Half Term
Tuesday 1 st November	Individual photos
Friday 18 th November	Curriculum Enrichment Day Anti-Bullying
Monday 21 st November	Occasional Day (School closed)
Tuesday 6 th December 10.30am	Foundation Stage dress rehearsal
Wednesday 7 th December 6pm	Foundation Stage evening production
Tuesday 13 th December 10.30am	Key Stage 1 dress rehearsal
Wednesday 14 th December 6pm	Key Stage 1 evening production
Thursday 15 th December 1pm	Beauty and the Beast Pantomime. Whole School Trip to Watford Palace Theatre
Monday 19 th December	Christmas class parties
Tuesday 20 th December	Christmas lunch
Wednesday 21 st December 10.30am	Christingle assembly (Y3 parents invited)
Wednesday 21 st December- Finish at 1.30pm	Last day of term

Assemblies

Parents are invited to their child's class assembly at 9am. Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 will not be sharing an assembly as they will be performing an end of year Christmas production.

Date	Class	
Friday 23 rd September	Year 6	Parent Assembly
Friday 7 th October	Year 5	Parent Assembly
Friday 4 th November	Year 4	Parent Assembly
Friday 25 th November	Year 3	Parent Assembly

