



Autumn Term Newsletter 1

Friday October 16th 2020



Dear parents/carers

It is lovely to be writing a more 'normal' newsletter for the first time since March 6th 2020. Thank you all so much for your patience and support from March up until now. The staff have loved reading every one of your emails and letters of thanks and support throughout this very strange 2020. I know that staff and leaders have also made best endeavours to act on advice from parents or to explain as best they can why certain things could and could not be achieved. Thank you to all the stakeholders of our lovely school for the way SBPS has managed, survived, pulled together, innovated, cared for etc... etc... in the most challenging of times.

Further thanks re. Virus Control and, 'touch wood!'

Since returning in September we have put so many measures in place to minimise the risk of spreading infection inside of school and at pick-up and drop-off times. Of course, what we can and can't do are dictated by our sites' geography, the number of staff, the weather and so many other factors. At home you are all doing so much to keep your families safe and to keep everyone around you safe. I can only thank you wholeheartedly for the efforts of every family member and every member of staff. The number of SBPS family members who have reported to us that they have had positive test results is incredibly low. No staff members have had positive test results and to-date we have only had one pupil test positive. Thanks to this pupil's family rigorously following guidance, the family all self-isolated the moment an adult showed symptoms, no other community members were put at risk and no class-mates were put at risk. Our one pupil showed symptoms a long time after being with class-mates. As a result, not one SBPS class has had to be sent home to isolate. This is not the case for our local schools and it is down to the efforts and sacrifices of all our stakeholders. And a bit of luck? 'Touch wood!'

Attendance.

Attendance for our whole-school currently stands at 97.5%. This is an excellent attendance figure, even with many children having short periods of absence to await test results due to having symptoms similar to Covid symptoms. One reason that attendance is so high is the number of children having holidays in term-time has fallen dramatically, which is of course no surprise, but is what we have always asked of families. It is vital that children attend school for the entire school-year in any year but this year especially our children need to be in school. Thank you. Keep it up.

Return to curriculum.

Children returned to school and were ready to learn very quickly. Every class has returned to a broad and balanced curriculum already. There are gaps in curriculum coverage and there has been regression for many children in the knowledge and skills they had prior to Lockdown. This is exactly what we predicted. Teachers will endeavour for all children to catch up so that they can leave primary education achieving as well as if there had been no school closure. Teachers can discuss this with you in next week's parent consultations.

Parents consultations.

The booking system has now closed. The response to booking appointments has been very high and slots are now fully booked. Teachers will ring you at your booked time and you will have approximately 5 minutes to talk. Please make sure you are available and in a confidential space. Please also note that teachers will need to keep to tight timescales in order to be ready to ring their next appointment on time. Please be a help in making this work.

Changes in School.

The children have adapted incredibly well to the changes in school routines and systems. Very regular handwashing, playtimes and lunchtimes without other year-groups, packed lunches in classrooms, keeping apart from other year-groups, not using corridors at the same time as other year-groups etc... etc... are all now second nature.

Sadly, we have not returned to school clubs, school trips, residential trips, mixed age-groups working together, parents/carers visiting to watch assemblies and performances etc... but we will as soon as we know it is safe to do so.

Certain challenges however, have presented lovely opportunities. Our Friday assemblies now take place on Teams. Every class has an interactive whiteboard and webcam. This means that every class from YR to Y6 participates in whole-school assembly and every pupil gets to see every child receive a Friday certificate and birthday mention. This is something we didn't do before March but we will continue as the staff and children love it.

Home Learning.

The system of home learning for children having short periods of self-isolation is working well. Work is prepared prior to every school week so that it is ready for any day that a child is self-isolating. You do not need to contact school to ask for home-learning, it will always be there, ready. Children self-isolating for more than a few days will be contacted by school for welfare reasons and for teachers to comment on the work they have been doing. If your child is not contacted by their teacher, please let school know. It is vital that any child self-isolating, who is well enough to, must complete their home-learning in order to continue to learn alongside their class-mates.

We hope we never have to send a whole class/year-group home but staff are training and preparing for that possibility. In this scenario, we will endeavour to provide daily face-to-face contact with your class teacher to facilitate home learning.

Devices for Lockdown/Shutdown Home Learning.

If your child is classed as Pupil Premium ie. they receive Free School Meals, are Looked After, or Post Looked After then a government scheme promises laptops for a number of these children in the event of a whole class/year-group being sent home. We do not know how many laptops we will receive. We do not know how long it will take for us to access these laptops once we notify the LA and DFE that a class/year-group has been sent home. If you have Pupil Premium children and do not have access to PC, laptop or device for them then please let us know now so we can plan for this in case we need to shut down a class/year-group. Please email school and title it Pupil Premium laptops.

School Reading Books. A reminder.

Until further notice, children will continue to take their new reading books home on Fridays and return them on Tuesdays. Tuesday to Friday gives 72 hours quarantine time from house to house. Of course, you can keep books till the following Tuesday if you are still reading them. Please just write a note in your Reading Diary to let your teacher know.

Poppies and Poppy Recycling.

Poppies and other Remembrance items will continue to be available to buy on each site.

Once November 11th has passed, poppies can be recycled at Sainsburys. Thank you to the dad who let us know.

KS2 Wellies.

Now that Autumn weather is well and truly here, children in KS2 will require wellies for playing on the school fields. Not football boots, not outdoor shoes, wellies only. Wellies can be turned upside down and remain dry inside, whatever the weather. We have bought specific storage for KS2 for storing

wellies upside down and for keeping clean shoes dry during playtimes. KS2 children have been told that if they want to play football then this can only take place on the school fields, not the yards. Wellies can be taken home if needed or can remain in school all year.

Twitter.

Thank you so much to all the staff, children and families who have made our Twitter feed such a success this year. It was a vital platform for keeping in touch, getting motivated, feeling inspired, celebrating and sharing throughout Lockdown. Please do look at @ShotleyBPrimary Twitter feed to see daily updates on everything that is happening in school and to make engagement with your children about their school experiences so simple. Of course, you can log on to school's website to find a link to the feed if you do not want to follow school on Twitter. If you know of any parents making choices about where to send their new starters to school in September 2021, please direct them to our Twitter feed.

Farewell Mrs Byrne.

Farewell and good luck to Mrs Byrne who has begun a new career outside of education. She will be sorely missed by the whole of the SBPS community and I can't thank her enough for her outstanding teaching in her time with us.

Christmas.

Covid will not cancel Christmas In Shotley Bridge Primary School. The way we celebrate and the way children will perform to parents may be different this year, but we will innovate and adapt. Watch this space.

Mr Bell

Calendar of Events March to Sept 2020 2021

Please note some dates may change and hopefully LOTS of other dates will be added throughout the year.

| Dates | Event |
|--|---|
| 21 st , 22 nd , 23 rd October | Parent consultations. |
| 23 rd October | Inset Day. School closed to children. |
| 26 th to 31 st | Half term holiday. |
| November 13 th | Children in Need day. |
| 16 th November | Odd socks day. |
| 16 th to 21 st November | Anti-bullying week. |
| 24 th | Flu vaccinations. Puff up the nostril. |
| December 18 th | Last day of Autumn term. |
| Dec 21 st to Jan 1 st | Christmas holiday. |
| 4 th January | Inset Day. School closed to children. |
| 5 th January | First day of Spring term. |
| 15 th to 20 th February | Half term holiday. |
| Saturday 6 th or 13 th March | Provisional Y4,5,6 ski trip week. |
| 19 th March | Red Nose Day. |
| 29 th March to 10 th April | Easter holiday. |
| 12 th April | First day of Summer term. |
| 12 th to 14 th April | Provisional Y6 Robin Wood residential. |
| 3 rd May | Bank Holiday. |
| 31 st May to 5 th June | Half term holiday. |
| TBC | Provisional Y5 Ford Castle residential. |
| 16 th July. | Last day of summer term. |
| 19 th and 20 th July | Inset days. School closed to children. |