



Birches First School **Believe, Grow, Succeed**

Birches Bulletin

September 2020

www.birches.staffs.sch.uk

Issue 1

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Autumn Term. Birches Value: **(Belief) Independence** British Value: **Individual Liberty**

Dear Parents,

A very warm welcome back to school!

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday/staycation! I hope that this letter finds you and your family safe and well and you are all ready for a busy and exciting term ahead. A special welcome to our new children and parents to our amazing school; I am sure you will be very happy here.

Thank you so much for your tremendous patience and support since March. We are delighted to welcome all the children back to school. Please continue to refer to our school website for reopening information.

I do understand that many of you will be nervous about the full reopening and some children will be returning to school who have suffered greatly during the lockdown, with some families in our area suffering sad losses as a result of Covid 19. We at Birches First School will continue to support our children in our care both educationally and emotionally, their wellbeing is our highest priority.

All children will have worked at a different rate whilst in lockdown; it is going to take time for teachers to be able to get a clear picture of children's strengths and gaps in learning with regards to the work set during the school partial closure and then to plan in order for all children to reach their potential. I do think that the children at Birches are at an advantage not only because we have fantastic teachers (who provided outstanding Home Learning throughout closure) and fantastic support staff; but also because we have very high aspirations for all of our children. I have every confidence that we will be able to quickly address any gaps in learning whilst at the same time nurture our children at this difficult time.

We are all so looking forward to seeing the school full, happy and busy again...

I wish you luck with your own reestablishment of normal bedtime and getting up routines! I also wish to reassure you and your children that a few nerves will be whistling around every home tonight, but we will do our very best to make everyone feel welcome and safe when we see them in the morning (Reception and Nursery on their specified days). Sleep well.

Best wishes

Miss Varricchione

Headteacher

School Uniform

We are aware Bradspotts are experiencing difficulties with their suppliers meaning that some orders have been delayed. We understand that some parents will be anxious that their child will not have their full uniform in time for the start of term despite ordering some time ago and paying in advance (and the obligatory first day back photos that fill social media may be quite different this year/delayed!).

Please be reassured that a simple school appropriate alternative is perfectly acceptable (plain white T-shirt/Red jumper if possible). I completely understand that not all children may have red jumpers so please send your child in something sensible and weather appropriate until their uniform is ready for collection.

If you can't get items of PE kit or other uniform in time, please don't worry. Again a simple, school-appropriate alternative (e.g. a plain white T-shirt instead of a PE top) will be perfectly acceptable until your order arrives. Children will not need PE kit for the first few days at school. Teachers will send information home regarding PE days next week.

Homework Grids

Homework Grids will be uploaded to our website for parents to access. Any issues please contact your child's class teacher via email.

Roald Dahl Day

11th September

We will be joining in with the world wide celebrations of the life and work of Roald Dahl one of the greatest story tellers. This year teachers will be celebrating his work within classes and we are asking that children come to school in normal school attire.

It will be very sad not to see any Umpa Lumpas, BFGs or Twits this year, however keeping everyone safe and well is our main priority.

Thank you for your understanding.

What is my child learning?

Your child's Curriculum Topic Web will be uploaded to school website by Wednesday. The class teachers are really excited about the learning experience they have planned and hope you will continue to support your child as much as possible.

School Photographs

Due to current restrictions we are unable to offer the opportunity for family photos this year. Children will all have their individual photograph taken and a sibling photograph if applicable. Please be reassured that all safety measures will be implemented throughout.

September Diary Dates -

1st - INSET Day, School Closed

18th—Jeans for Genes

2nd —Welcome Back all Children

23rd—Individual Photographs

Many of our usual planned activities are missing from this year's Diary Dates due to current Covid 19 restrictions.

Hopefully as the restrictions are lifted we will be able to host many of the wonderful whole school activities. Please keep referring to the website and monthly Newsletters for further information.

(Please see Diary Dates on our school website for whole year—subject to change).



Birches School Governors

- Governor details are posted on the school website www.birches.staffs.sch.uk
- Andrew Holmes Chair of Governors can be contacted directly by email: chair@birches.staffs.sch.uk

Penalty Notices for Absences from School

In accordance with Government legislation a request for leave can only be authorised if it is deemed to be an "exceptional circumstance". Where a request is not deemed to be an "exceptional circumstance" a child's non-attendance for this period will be marked as an unauthorised absence. This absence will be retained on record throughout their time at school.

If a child has ten days or more unauthorised absence over two half terms in a row, a penalty notice may be issued to parents/carers of that child. Late marks will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and these will also be taken into account when issuing Penalty Notices.

Attendance is monitored regularly by the Education Welfare Officer based at Staffordshire County Council. On-line spot register checks can be carried out without prior consultation with school and may lead to further investigation by the Education Welfare team.

School Uniform (Please see above regarding current situation)

Children at Birches wear their uniform with pride. Our school colours are red, grey and white. Please ensure that all items of clothing are clearly named to make the task of reuniting any clothing with its owner easier. Names written in using ball point pen need to be checked regularly to ensure the name is still legible. The dress code for winter is red logoed embroidered round-neck sweatshirt or cardigan. White logoed embroidered polo (preferred) or plain white T-shirt. White or grey socks/red or grey tights. Grey skirts or pinafore dresses, smart trousers for girls and boys.

Footwear

For health and safety reasons well fitting flat shoes are recommended for school wear. Sensible black shoes - not trainers or trainer style. Trainers should be worn for Games only. If you are sending your child with laced trainers please ensure they can tie them independently. Sandals with heels and sling backs are inappropriate and should not be worn.

Waterproofs

It is essential that children have rainwear in school. With many children arriving by car we often find that at damp playtimes children are not equipped to go out to play. The weather can change during the day and we do expect children to go out for fresh air and exercise at playtime if the rain is light.

Jewellery and Nail Varnish

We request that children do not wear any jewellery in school. Children with pierced ears should wear small studs. No jewellery is worn during physical activity lessons and these should be removed when participating in sporting activities. Nail varnish should be removed for school. Make up, hair gel, tramlines and highlights are inappropriate for school and should not be worn unless children are attending the school disco.

Sports Kit

PE: Red Shorts, white logoed embroidered (preferred)/plain T-shirt, elasticated black pumps and red zipped logoed embroidered hooded jumper. Games: Trainers, white logoed embroidered (preferred)/plain T-shirt, grey jogging bottoms (no logos or brand names) and red zipped logoed embroidered hooded jumper. Lightweight waterproof.

Remember your child needs to bring a water bottle to school everyday to keep hydrated!

If you are uncertain please see the prospectus on our website which illustrate our expectations.



Parking

A reminder to please park considerately in the roads around the school.

We continue to receive complaints from parents and residents regarding inconsiderate and sometimes illegal and/or dangerous parking. Cars should not park on the yellow zigzag lines outside school, on the junction of Birches Avenue and Birches Road, block driveways, double park along Birches Avenue or use the school drive to turn.

We appreciate the support of all our parents in keeping all road users safe and maintaining positive relationships with our residents.

Pupil Premium/School Lunches

All children in Reception and KS1 (Year 1 and Year 2) are entitled to Free School Meals. However, it is important that families who previously qualified for Free School Meals still apply as school receives additional funding for your child which will benefit your child in school. Please can we encourage any parents who are new to Birches and are in receipt of the following benefits to apply. We offer incentives to families who qualify for all new free school meal registrations. The criteria for qualifying would be to be in receipt of one of the following:

Income Support

Income based Job Seekers Allowance

Income based Employment and Support Allowance

Child tax credit and no working tax credit with a household income of less than £16,190

Universal Credit

The 'Guarantee' element of State Pension Credit

Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

For more information visit www.staffordshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals
or email freeschoolmeals@staffordshire.gov.uk

Early Years Pupil Premium (Nursery)

Parents in receipt of the above benefits are also eligible to apply for additional funding to support their child in Early Years. For an application form please contact the school office.

Service Pupil Premium (SPP)

The Department for Education introduced the Service Pupil Premium (SPP) in 2011 in recognition of the specific challenges children from service families face and as part of the commitment to delivering the armed forces covenant.

Schools which have children of service families from Reception onwards can receive the SPP funding. It is designed to assist the school in providing the additional support that these children may need and is currently worth £300 per service child.

Please contact the school office to check if your child meets the eligibility criteria.

After School Clubs...

We are looking forward to starting clubs as soon as we possibly can...I will be in touch with regards to this towards the end of the month.

Jeans for Genes- Friday 18th September

All children are invited to wear Jeans/Dungarees/Denim Skirts etc with their normal School Logoed Jumper/Cardigan for a £1 donation. Children can wear trainers on this day if they wish.

Parent Helpers

We'd like to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers that helped last year in school—your help makes such a difference! If you think you could spare a hour or so each week please speak to Miss Varricchione or the school office to complete a form and find out how to get involved in the future months.

Birches Values;

Belief **I**ndependence **R**esilience **C**uriosity **H**onesty **E**nthusiasm **S**uccess

Our Mission Statement; **Believe, Grow, Succeed**