



# Birches First School

Believe, Grow, Succeed.....  
to be the best 'me' I can be

Issue 5

[www.birches.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.birches.staffs.sch.uk)



## Newsletter January 2022

Spring Term Birches Value: **Curiosity**

British Value: **Individual Liberty**

Here's to a great 2022...

I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and I sincerely wish you a **VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!** I know it has been a very hard Christmas and a lot of families were unable to spend it as planned with their loved ones due to the increasing cases of covid throughout the holiday period.

At Birches we will continue with our effective policies and procedures we have in place. I am very proud that we continued to run all classes throughout the whole of the Autumn Term-a HUGE achievement and I hope that this will continue to be the case. Thank you for your support.

I am sure the Spring Term will see our fantastic children continue to progress, develop, grow and as always make us proud. Curriculum timetables will shortly be online providing a 'snapshot' of what will be happening in classes this half term. Homework Grids for each class will also be uploaded. The class teachers and I thank you for all the hard work at home...the Showcase Homework sessions in class are absolutely fantastic. The children are so proud and speak so confidently about their learning; it is a real delight to see.

Please do visit our website where you will find a range of information about life at Birches.

Here's to a great (fingers crossed) 2022!

Best wishes,

S Varricchione

Headteacher

### New Staff...Welcome!

We are excited to welcome some new staff to the Birches team this term.

Mrs Cripps has commenced her role as class teacher for Year 4 with Mrs Hine.

Mrs Bleakley and Miss Hall have joined the Teaching Assistant team in main school and Mrs Barbe has joined the team supporting in Year Two.

I'm sure you will all make them feel very welcome and they will quickly feel and be part of our Birches community.

### Admissions 2022 Reception and Year 5

Applications close **January 15th 2022** for admission into Reception Class 2022 and for children transferring to the Middle School September 2022. If you live in Wolverhampton please ensure you fill out a Wolverhampton Admissions form. Any questions please ask and we will help.

## PFA

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the PFA for their ongoing support. Their hard work and commitment enables us to raise valuable funds and purchase resources that directly benefit the children. As you are aware, it is extremely difficult at present to raise any funds so whatever can be raised is truly a gift!

It was so lovely to see the children have a visit from Father Christmas and again a huge thank you to the PFA for our Movie Night and Christmas Raffle...which will enable us to purchase more ipads.

Remember, as a parent of a child at Birches First School, you are automatically a member of the PFA. If you are able to support in any way or have any ideas please contact the school office.

An invite for our next meeting will be sent to your child's team account if any parents would like to join us on **Monday 17th January at 7.30pm**

Thank you—I look forward to seeing you then!

## Mid Year Reports

As a school we are keen to continue our communication with home to ensure parents are aware of how your child/ren is progressing throughout the year.

Teachers will be writing Mid Year Reports which will be sent home week commencing Monday 7th February 2022.

This year we are inviting parents to a meeting before the school report is sent home as we feel it has been a long time since October to February. As always we would like to invite parents to discuss raise any comments, questions or queries about their child's learning with their class teacher.

Due to the current climate and restrictions Parents Evening will once again be held via Teams.

Further details will follow.

## Kingswood-Y4 9th-11th March 2022

We are hopeful that this annual event will take place-current guidance for residential visits are that they may still take place in the UK. I can only keep everything crossed that we will go in March! Final payments are to be secured by **January 3rd 2022**. Thank you.

Information will follow regarding a parent information meeting before the visit so that any questions may be asked regarding the trip.

This will be hosted via our TEAMS account.

## Dates for the Diary

**4th January** INSET

**5th January** Children return to school –times as before **EYFS 8.30/3.05, KS1 8.35/3.10, KS2 8.40/3.15**

**13th January** Cricket to commence for Y3/4 (Details to follow)

**17th January** PFA Meeting 7.30pm

**20th January** Keyboards Resume

**24th January** Arts Week in School

**W/C 31st January** Parent Meetings (in readiness for Reports (letter to follow))

## Birches Values:

Belief Independence Resilience Curiosity Honesty Enthusiasm Success

## Our Mission Statement

Believe, Grow, Succeed...to be the best 'me' I can be.

## Covid Update

There have been a lot of developments during the holidays from the Department for Education for education and childcare settings and providers. Below is Information on the changes which are relevant to our children:-

### Self-isolation period for individuals who test positive for COVID-19

Since Wednesday 22 December, the 10 day self-isolation period for people who record a positive PCR test result for COVID-19 has been reduced to **7 days** in most circumstances, unless you cannot test for any reason.

Individuals may now take LFD tests on **day 6** and **day 7** of their self-isolation period. Those who receive two negative test results are no longer required to complete 10 full days of self-isolation. The first test must be taken **no earlier** than **day 6** of the self-isolation period and tests must be taken **24 hours apart**. This also applies to **children under 5**, with LFD testing **at parental or guardian discretion**. If both these test results are negative, and you do not have a high temperature, you may end your self-isolation after the second negative test result and return to your education setting from day 8.

Anyone who is unable to take LFD tests will need to complete the full 10 day period of self-isolation. Further information is available in the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

### Daily testing for close contacts of COVID-19

People who are fully vaccinated, or children and young people aged between **5 and 18 years and 6 months**, identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19, **should take an LFD test every day for seven days** and **continue to attend their setting as normal**, unless they have a positive test result or develop symptoms at any time.

**Children under 5 are not** being advised to take part in daily testing of close contacts. If a child under 5 is a contact of a confirmed case, they are **not required to self-isolate and should not start daily testing**. If they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19 they should limit their contact with anyone who is at higher risk of severe illness if infected with COVID-19, and arrange to take a PCR test as soon as possible. They can continue to attend an education or childcare setting while waiting for the PCR result. If the test is positive, they should follow the [stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed COVID-19 infection](#).

### Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advice on COVID-19 vaccination for at-risk 5 to 11 year olds, and booster doses for at-risk 12 to 15 year olds and all 16 to 17 year olds

On Wednesday 22 December, the government accepted advice from the [Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation \(JCVI\)](#) that a primary course of vaccination should be offered to children aged 5 to 11 years old who are in a clinical risk group, or who are a household contact of someone (of any age) who is immunosuppressed.

The NHS is working through updated guidance and will set out how this is going to be operationalised shortly.

### Back to School

As a school we will continue with our arrangements as last half term with children in Key Stage Bubbles, having staggered starts/exits and lunchtimes etc.

We will continue to monitor and evaluate our Covid Risk Assessment and refer to our Contingency Plan as necessary. All government guidance will be implemented and communicated to all stakeholders as and when any changes occur for our school.

Please do not hesitate to contact school if you require any further information/clarification on any school matters (not just Covid related). We are here to help and support our school community.

Finally, thank you for your continued support to help keep everyone safe. The staff, Governors and I really appreciate all you do to help our school community.