

Newsletter 8th September 2023

A Very Warm Welcome Back

It has been lovely to get the new school year under way this week, and in particular, seeing the children resume, or begin, their learning journeys at Berrywood. I would like to say a huge welcome to all our new Year R parents, who've stoically wiped away the tears to see their little ones embark on their education exploration. The very hot weather has, I believe, taken us all a little bit by surprise. Perhaps, in the storm of controversy erupting over RAAC and school building closures, some space can be made for a serious grown-up discussion about ensuring schools are designed and modified to be able to cope with the near certainty of increasingly hot temperatures... here's hoping! For the avoidance of any doubt, we are not impacted by RAAC. The children and members of staff have been pretty resilient in the face of the heat challenges, so well done and thank you to all for the positive mindset shown. I hope this bodes well for another terrific year of achievement for our school community. Despite the challenges and occasional frustration, it remains an overwhelming privilege and joy to play my part as Headteacher. I am as excited about what lies ahead this year as ever.

New year Message

Great News... research evidence is absolutely clear that: -

- **good school attendance,**
- **and regular reading routines at home...**

...make a big difference to the educational success of primary age children.

Why is this such good news? Because, these are attainable goals for the vast majority of families. I urge all parents to keep these simple truths close to heart, especially given the rise of device use and anxieties amongst young people.

Mrs Ainsworth

As many of you will recall, Mrs Ainsworth will fairly soon be leaving us to take up her post as Headteacher of Redlands Primary School in Fareham. I can now confirm that her last day with us will be **Friday 6th October**. We will of course suitably mark this *quite significant* occasion nearer the time. An advert has been placed as the starting point of a recruitment process to find her replacement, which will, of course, potentially open up new and exciting chapters for us...

School Uniform

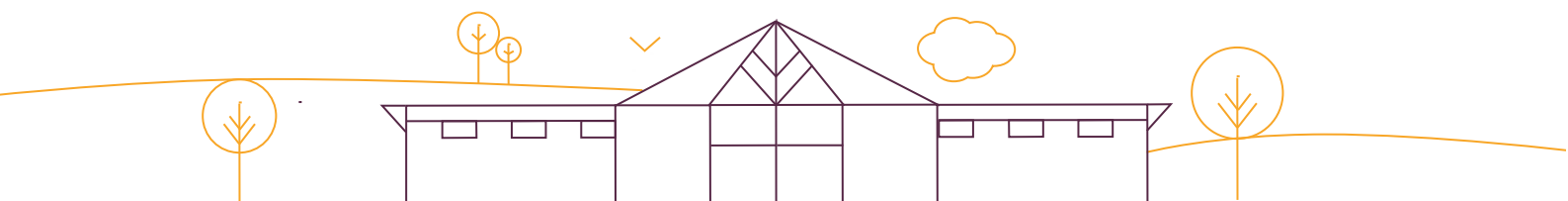
We are experiencing a bit of a drop off in children coming to school in appropriate school uniform. In particular, there has been a trend towards more fashionable and colourful items. Unfortunately, this can lead to problems between children and parents coming under pressure from their children to yield on certain clothing items *'because so and so wears them.'*

Before this becomes a significant issue, I would greatly appreciate parents' support in sticking to the uniform policy, which is located in the parents' handbook on the school website.

I fully understand that this policy needs to be updated, with clearer guidance provided to parents for certain clothing items. I promise that this is something we will amend and republish, with a very reasonable lead-in time for any changes we ask you to make.

Staff Car Park

For more frequent readers of this newsletter, here's your regular reminder that the staff car park should not be used by parents for general drop off in the mornings, or collection after school. This also applies to the collection from after school clubs. There are specific permissions granted for those with access difficulties, and



we of course open up the use of the car park for Berries parents at specified times. Many thanks to the vast and overwhelming majority of parents who continue to support us with this.

Gardening Volunteers

Are you a budding gardener or someone who enjoys tackling a new project? We are looking for volunteers to help us maintain and develop our extensive and vibrant school gardens. Our main focus will initially be our Polyculture beds, neighbouring our key stage two playgrounds. This will involve weeding, planting, watering and harvesting an array of fruits, vegetables and flowers in readiness for our markets and cooking opportunities.

Please contact Mrs Woods, via office@berrywoodprimary.co.uk, it would help us if you could add 'garden volunteer' in the subject; if you would like to join our 'School Within a Garden' community. We look forward to hearing from you.

