



### **Welcome Back**

I hope everyone had a fantastic summer break. It's always great to see everyone back fighting fit. Wandering around the classrooms, I have been pleased with how everyone has come back and got back into the swing of things really quickly, those couple of weeks moving up classes really seemed to have helped. It has been a joy to see our new smiley faces in Ducklings and Goslings, not too many tears, at least not from the children, I can't speak for the mum's. Coming to the end of week two and the children all seem well and truly settled.

At the risk of repeating the same opening paragraph as last year, I'm looking forward to a straightforward year, (I know, what could possibly go wrong) with our school getting back to normal, re instating some old tried and tested routines alongside introducing some new ones. The children can look forward to some fantastic topics, some great trips as well as two residential opportunities for pupils in KS2 this year. The first is Morfa Bay for Yr5 and Yr6 in November, then in April, Skern Lodge at Westward Ho for Yr3 and Yr4. I appreciate spare pennies are few and far between at the moment, but we've proved over the years that working together, we can provide the children with the best possible primary school experience and memories they will cherish for years to come.

### **New Faces**

We were lucky enough to have all our new team members with us before we broke up, but just to clarify, we welcome back Mrs Swanson into the classroom having returned from maternity leave and Miss Gumm to the teaching team. We have also welcomed a new Teaching Assistant to the Priestley Team, Mrs Windsor and a new HLTA, Mrs Hoadley.

### **Covid Plans**

This remains a contentious issue for most people in how best we move forward and get back to 'normal'. Currently other than having hygiene expectations, the school is not expected to have anything else in place. However, as we move into the autumn, we'll await any updates and hope the school isn't as affected as it was during Terms 3 and 4 last year.

### **Attendance**

There have been some 'very definite' communications from the Department for Education over the summer with regards to attendance. Expectations have now returned to how they were, with the last national average taken before the pandemic of just over 96% being used as a benchmark for schools. Please let's work together this year to ensure the attendance percentage for Priestley achieves at least the magic 96% mark.

Remember, as little as 7 days off during a whole school year for holiday, medical appointments or illness will already bring your child's attendance down to 96%.

You are required to contact school to inform us of a reason for absence and we are being required to ask for a little detail other than your child is 'just feeling poorly'. We will be following up all absences, so please do not take out any frustrations on the school staff, they are just doing what we are being told to do. Those parents of children whose attendance does start to drift will be expected to attend School Attendance Meetings to discuss the issue. Please work with us and stop this from needing to happen or worse still, having to involve the Education Welfare Officer. As usual the school's policy of not authorising holiday during term time will continue.

### **Change to the start of the day**

I am sure by now we have got used to the 8.30 am start, registers remain open for 20 minutes, so should your child arrive after 8.50 am they will be marked as late and then without a valid reason with an unauthorised absence. Remember, these unauthorised absences mount up quite quickly and will result in a fine. Can we please ask that if your child is not in school for any reason, that you leave a message on the school answer machine before 8.30 am, thank you. This allows us to mark the registers correctly and cancel any dinners as required.

I apologise for the slight crush in the morning when the gates open. We have had to close the gates until we are ready to accept pupils onto site, due to the fact a growing number were either being dropped off or making their way to school early, often entering the school site before 8.00 am. Children were then leaving the school site and going out on to the Rec. As we are not able to take responsibility for the children before the start of the school day, the decision was taken to close the site until the school is ready. We are looking at trying to widen the path from the gates up on to the playground, so bear with us. Thank you.

### **Breakfast Club**

We restarted Breakfast Club on Monday, 6 September. There is a limited number of places available, please contact the school office for more information.

### **Free School Meals**

**Can I please remind you that if you are entitled to apply for benefit based Free School Meals, that you do so as soon as possible, even if your child is in KS1 and also entitled to a UIFSM.** Should the Government continue to fund Free School Meals during the school holidays, you would be eligible for these vouchers and I would hate for anyone to miss out in October.

### **Bikes & Scooters**

Please can all those who ride or scoot to school, please ensure your child disembarks at the playground gates and walk their bike or scooter to the bike shed, that way we can ensure everyone stays safe on the playground.

### **Water Bottles**

Please can I remind everyone that the children require their own named water bottle in school that should be only filled with water please, no squash or juice. Thank you

## **Uniform**

It's always fantastic to see everyone back in school looking so smart in September, a massive part of being Priestley and Proud is wearing the team colours. I appreciate costs continue to rise but the children do look so smart in their uniform and it gives them a real sense of belonging. Please can I remind everyone that the children should not be wearing jewellery, earrings should just be studs and that skirts need to be knee length. We will be speaking to the children next term and encouraging them to make sure they are all wearing the correct uniform.

## **Dates**

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> September – TD Day**

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September – TD Day**

**Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September – Back to school**

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> September & Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September – Virtual Parent Evenings**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> October – KS1 Harvest Festival**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October – KS2 Harvest Festival**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October – Last day of term.**

**Monday – 31<sup>st</sup> October – Back to school**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> November – Bonfire Stories**

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November – Individual Photographs**

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November – Yr5/6 Residential Trip to Morfa Bay**

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December – Last day of term, 1pm finish.**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January – TD Day**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January – Back to school.**

Priestley & Proud

*A Marsh-Ballard*

Mr Marsh-Ballard