



Daresbury Primary School

News

Autumn 1



Principal's Comments

Welcome back to school and a special welcome to those new Reception parents and a couple of other new parents in different year groups who have joined us last week – we all look forward to getting to know you over the coming term. Despite not being able to do their transition visits and once again Reception having to have a week of phased starts the children all seemed to enjoy their first days in school. Whilst you and your child are settling in please feel free to ask the staff if you have any questions or queries as you may well not be the only one wondering about an issue we haven't explained properly or even considered from a new parent angle! Sadly, due to COVID-19 we haven't been able to get to know our new Reception parents as well as we normally do before the children started school and Miss Kilpatrick and Mrs Moore may struggle (especially if you are wearing a mask) to identify parents quickly on the playground. It would really help us identify our new parents more easily if you could possibly upload a family photo to Seesaw so that we can put the correct child with the correct adults. I can see how well most of our new parents are already engaging with Seesaw - Thank you. Remember this is our main means of communication so it is important all parents have the family app on their phone and have their notifications switched on so that they can see messages from school.

What a year 2021 has turned out to be too so far and I am hoping the new school year is better than the previous two! It has been lovely to have all the children back in school and hear their happy voices in the classrooms and on the playground again, especially now we can have classes mixing. I'm sure you all are just as pleased to have them back in school as we are after the summer break! We are trying to be sensible about how much mixing we do in school and are limiting this where we can till we see what the Autumn and Winter bring. To also ease with increasing numbers of children in school we are having 2 classes playing out together. This gives the children much more space and allows them to burn off steam by having space to play safely too. Regarding Assemblies we are currently continuing to hold full school assemblies online as I am not sure 180 children in the school hall, plus staff would be a very sensible thing at the moment. We will be moving to having a couple of separate Key Stage assemblies twice weekly in the hall very shortly where 3 classes can spread out a bit more comfortably. Children will still sit in the class groupings and the hall will be well ventilated.

As a school we have worked really hard over recent years to improve our communication with parents and to try to involve them in their child's education whether they can physically attend the school themselves or not. The vast majority of parents have been really grateful for the efforts we have made with Seesaw. As I mentioned earlier, Seesaw is now our prime means of communication with families and I can already see that some classes are really hot on this and virtually all parents are engaging – in others there are still a handful of parents who are not as yet. Please do ensure you check Seesaw daily. Moving to this method of communication has also saved school a considerable amount of money in copying costs and man hours too and also avoids the 'letter getting lost' scenario. The children have become so skilled at using it for homework too (and those of you with children in Class 1 and 2 get ready because before long your children will be learning for themselves how to do this!). Staff have altered their practice to accommodate this method and I know many of them access Seesaw well into their evenings to pass on important information or to share your child's work with you. Please be aware that when you comment on a post which is to a group of parents or the whole class then others can read your comments. When you comment on a post which has only gone on your individual child's account then only you, the classteacher, Mrs Zuger and I can see it. Please also be mindful that staff do have lives and their own families to manage outside of school and may well not respond immediately to your messages. Please also be aware that teachers get notification alerts too (even though I tell them to switch them off!) so try to avoid those very late night uploads! We all need to maintain a good work/life balance.

This school year we fully expect Ofsted to come to visit. As most of you know it is a considerable number of years since they last came to the school – in fact it was September 2008. The Ofsted frameworks have changed multiple times since then and the process is very different now to what it was then. Our internal self evaluation, verified by external processes too, would have us achieving at least Good. We will of course keep parents informed as and when we hear from them and get the call to say they are coming the next day!

Parents of children with pre school age children due to start school in September 2022 should have received information both from the LA and us now. We will be adding the links from the LA to both our website and onto Seesaw this week. Please do let us know if you have a sibling due to join us in September. If you do want to attend a visit with your child then please do book on to one of the published dates with Mrs Staveley. Please take careful note of the deadline for applications and ensure you meet these or you may not get a place – even if you already have a sibling in the school!

Parents of current Y6 children, your information about applications for Secondary school places has also just been released and again we will be sharing details with you via Seesaw and putting it on the website. Please do ensure you do not miss the deadlines or you may well not get the place you want for your child. Thank you.

Behaviour and Discipline in School

We continue to focus our Behaviour and Discipline on 3 key words – safe, kind and ready. All of our school rules link to these words so for your child to be doing the right thing they simply need to ask themselves- am I being kind? Am I being safe? Am I ready? Each class has a system where every child starts afresh each day with a ‘clean slate’ – this may be on a traffic light system (green, amber red in KS2) or a sunshine system (sunshine, raincloud, thunderstorm in KS1). If they make a mistake with their behaviour, as always, we would give them a warning first, if that is then repeated then they would move to the next level (eg to amber or raincloud). By keeping their behaviour to a good standard then they can move back into the green/sunshine throughout the course of the day. If their behaviour continues to deteriorate and despite further warnings they do not improve then they would move to the red/thunderstorm. If your child ends up at the end of the day being in the red/thunderstorm you would be informed. At the end of the day we start afresh. Punishments in school can range from being moved away from their own seat, being asked to work out of class for a short while, being asked to speak to either myself or Mrs Zuger or missing a short amount of their playtime. Wherever possible we will inform parents if behaviour has resulted in disrupting your child’s or other children’s day.

Homework

Individual teachers have outlined the homework expectations for each class clearly on their webpages for easy reference and also uploaded this same information to Seesaw in a welcome letter, but as a principle the following applies: Every child is expected to read daily. Parents are expected to sign the Reading records to say this has happened at least 3 times a week (or you will get a sticker to remind you!). All children, from class 2 upwards are expected to practise their times tables ready for the weekly challenge. Classes 1, 2 and 3 may well be given additional phonic or number/letter formation practice. Children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 will receive one piece of English or Maths work each week – Maths one week and English the next all of which will be uploaded to Seesaw on a Friday and due back in school the following Wednesday. For those parents who wish to do more then staff will include links to relevant websites and activities on their class pages on the school website.

Should your child need to self isolate either as an individual or, heaven forbid, should circumstances arise for their whole class to do so, we would upload work for your child onto Seesaw as per our Remote Learning Policy which is available on the school website. I sincerely hope that we do not have to have a third school year of significant disruption due to COVID 19.

Can I also make a plea that any parents who have not as yet returned any Emergency Contact forms to do so as soon as possible to help Mrs Staveley get this jobs completed in the office? Thank you.

Staffing News

We welcome Miss Kristie Rimmer to school as a permanent teacher in Class 2 and Miss Aimee Kilpatrick as a temporary member of staff covering Class 1 and Mrs Lockhart’s Maternity Leave. We are expecting Mrs Lockhart back with us straight after half term, although she is a frequent visitor to school and we don’t really feel she has been away! As I notified parents at the start of the year, Mrs Unsworth is expecting twins and we hope to have her with us for the rest of this term. I am currently looking at options for Class 4 moving forwards and will let parents know as soon as this is confirmed. We also have Mrs Jo Jones who has joined us as a temporary teacher covering PPA and some of Mrs Zuger’s Leadership and Management time. We also have Mr Paul Pomfret who will be with us this year supporting specific children as a 1:1 TA. We are currently interviewing for a new 1:1 TA to replace Miss Crook who left us last year and also

a new Middy to replace Mrs Lightfoot who left in the summer. We are still looking for a temporary midday till Christmas if anyone is interested or knows someone who may be – please pass on my details.

We also hope to continue to have a couple of other students throughout the year at various stages on their learning journey to becoming a teacher. As always, all students work under close supervision by classteachers and plan alongside them and have their lessons observed and teaching monitored very closely. These additional students really do help our staff to focus in on individuals and groups within their classroom and often allow teaching to be carried out more in single year groups (Classes 5 & 6) or much smaller groups.

Reading

Keep on encouraging the children to read and comment in their Reading records – we have seen a marked improvement in the children’s attitudes to their reading and books which is fantastic as Reading is so vital to your child’s education and you all know how much we value Reading at Daresbury ☺ If your child is in Class2 or above, please see the information about Reading Vipers on your child’s class pages on our website, which we have updated for the new year. These are a great resource to help you with supporting your child in their reading both at home and in school.

Uniform and PE kits

I am always conscious of the costs of school uniform and feel that we have been and continue to be quite flexible regarding our uniform, however, I am concerned about some ‘slips’ in appearance. Remember our school colours are pale blue (polo shirts/summer dresses), grey (trousers/skirts/pinafore dresses/shorts), burgundy (jumpers/cardigans – ideally with school logo) and grey/white/burgundy socks or tights. Shoes should be plain black with no heels. PE kits can be the school burgundy/white set or a plain white T-shirt with plain black shorts for indoor PE. For outdoor PE we have the school printed burgundy hoodie/ a plain burgundy hoodie and plain black joggers with plain black or white trainers. We introduced the plain white T-shirts and plain black shorts and joggers as these are so readily available cheaply within most supermarkets and stores. I would be grateful if parents would ensure that their child adheres to the school uniform policy. We continue to ask children to come to school wearing their PE kits on the days the class has PE. This information was shared on Seesaw and is also on the class website page.

Earrings and other Jewellery

Parents should be aware that children should only wear plain studs if they have their ears pierced and that these must be removed for any PE lessons. Staff cannot assist with this nor can we permit plasters etc to cover pierced ears. Teachers will notify parents of the days when classes have PE so that parents can ensure their child removes earrings on that day if they are unable to do so for themselves. The only other item of jewellery which is permitted in school is a watch, which again must be removed for PE. Nail varnish is also not allowed in school. Please support us in ensuring your child adheres to school policy.

Mobile Phones

We have always actively discouraged children from having phones in school at Daresbury and the rule is anyone whose parents specifically request their child to bring a phone must do so in writing to myself. In the rare circumstances that I feel this is necessary then I would expect the phone to be handed into Mrs Staveley, kept locked in the office all day and only collected at the end of the school day. The phone must not be used on school premises and if taken on the school bus must only be used to make or receive text messages or calls direct from parents and not shared with other children on the bus either for call or games or internet access. Anyone bringing a mobile phone into school without permission or without following the rules will have that phone confiscated and parents will need to come and collect it from me. It would really help if parents did not allow their child to have a phone at Primary School.

Medicines in School

Please can I remind parents that we should only be asked to administer prescribed medicines which need administering **4 times** a day. There is a form available on the website which needs completing prior to the medicine coming into school and being stored in the office. There are a number of forms which need completing by school staff and so it can take some time to do this, even when you have already completed the original form at home. I apologise but this is both a Halton and Trust requirement. The forms are available on our website to help speed up this process in a morning.



Covid-19 symptoms & general illness

At this time of year we seem to get an increase in the numbers of children with colds, coughs, tonsillitis, sickness or tummy upsets and due to limited social mixing over the last couple of years we are anticipating an increase in children coming down with bugs this winter. Please can I remind parents that for the sake of avoiding passing any bugs onto others can they ensure that children have not been sick or had any upset stomach and **have eaten successfully** for an absolute minimum of 24 hours prior to them returning to school. Remember, if you suspect Norovirus then the advice is to keep the children off school for 48 hours. We have historically had cases of children being sent back to school when they are clearly still unwell and this just keeps the bugs circulating round the school!

Coughs and colds are already starting in school. Please do not send your child in if they are generally unwell or with any temperature, however we all know that colds and coughs are around so unless the cough is repeated frequently and persistent (a covid-19 symptom which means they should self isolate and be tested) then it is fine for the child to attend school with a cold. If we notice any symptoms which give us cause for concern eg raised temperature, repeated persistent coughing then we will contact you to take your child home immediately and get a test.

Please do refer to the latest COVID guidance for parents which is on the website and which I uploaded to Seesaw at the start of the year.

Clubs and Peripatetic Music Lessons

We hope to be starting clubs and other activities very soon – in fact Music lessons and Recorders all resume this week. I also believe that Coach Craig will be resuming some offers of Multi Sports and Active Soccer clubs soon too. Staff may well be offering their own clubs (for which there is no charge) at both lunchtimes or after school during various points in the school year. Clubs and activities are another important aspect which we have all missed in the last couple of years and I would encourage your child to participate if you are able. We hope to have Lego and Minecraft back again after Christmas too! Remember, with lots of the clubs there will be a restriction on age groups who can attend and numbers available and initially we do not open clubs up to our youngest children till we know they are settled and used to the long school day. Peripatetic music lessons are available in a range of instruments and open to children from Y1 upwards.

Please speak to Mrs Staveley if you require further information.

Parents' Opinions

Can I remind parents that we have a parents' suggestion box in the entrance area? Please fill in any ideas you may have and add them to the box – it is checked regularly.

The School Website – www.daresburyschool.co.uk

There is a lot of information on our school website plus a link to our Twitter account for those of you who do not have access to Twitter yourselves, so you can at least see what we have posted on there too. Copies of all the holiday dates, Leave of Absence requests, Medical forms, Uniform order forms and letters are all on there too to try to make your life a bit easier. There is also a lot of information about the Governing Body and the work they do. Please note at this time of year we are working through updating the website from last year. I have also just found out that our Trust will be moving the school onto a new website before Christmas and helping us to have a standard format across all the Trust

schools and be able to update relevant sections ourselves which will make life much easier all round! I will share the new website link as soon as I have it confirmed. Watch this space 😊

Twitter

As you know School has a Twitter account – so please follow us! Check out our latest news on @Daresburyschool. We do try to add information and photos where we can, especially linked to visitors or special days in school etc. I know many of you now are really enjoying Seesaw but for wider family members Twitter can be a good way to include them too!



Attendance, Punctuality & Absence

We are really proud of our high levels of attendance and wish to maintain this, or even improve on it. We would ask parents to ensure their children are always on time for school and arrive before 8:50am our official start time. The gates open at 8:45am and classes 3, 4, 5 and 6 enter immediately. This helps to stagger the number of adults on site and minimise the adult to adult contact as much as we can. A huge thank you to a lot of parents for continuing to wear your masks on site – we do appreciate this. If your child is late and arrives after the gate is locked at 9am, please bring them to the office, sign them in and leave the school staff to take them to their classrooms. All parents will be contacted if their child's attendance is starting to give us cause for concern. It is important that children are in school as much as possible. Any child arriving after 9am will be recorded as late in the register. When children are late they miss starts of lessons and valuable learning time – remember a few minutes every day or every week can add up to hours or even days lost over the year!

One slight issue we have become aware of, and are monitoring closely with a few children, is regarding medical appointments. Obviously absence is granted for children to attend such appointments but they should be collected from and returned to school as soon as possible. We would not expect medical appointments to require a full day's absence. In these circumstances please do not be offended if we ask for copies of letters from hospital, GP etc. We have a duty to ensure children are in school for as much time as possible.

All details of Leave of Absence procedures are on the website and requests for holidays will only be granted in the exceptional cases listed in the policy. Parents should also remember that children do tend to tell their friends or teachers when they are going away too! In these circumstances the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, even if you ring to say they are ill! Parents will be fined if they take children out for unauthorised holidays of a week or more. It is vitally important that children are in school as much as they can be!

Parking

As in all schools, parking at the starts and ends of the day can be a nightmare – our Trust is still working with the LA and Lord Daresbury to see if plans can be drawn up for a temporary staff only car park on the field. I understand that this is now held up by the Green Belt review. We are optimistic that this may be approved to remove up to 30 staff cars from the road outside school. Watch this space – we will let you know if it is successful! Please be aware that our PCSO does regularly attend and will ticket anyone parking illegally. Try to avoid doing u turns on Chester Road as these put pedestrians and other road users at risk. It also helps with traffic flow if people try to stick to driving one way down the road (with school on the left hand side). Also be considerate of our parents and carers with disabled badges and don't park or drop off in the disabled bays. Likewise we would also ask Disabled Drivers to be considerate of keeping the crossing area by the gate as visible as possible and try to avoid parking so that this is not clearly visible. Please drive carefully and slowly around the school vicinity and make sure you park safely and legally and not on the double yellow

lines or zigzags or blocking residents' driveways etc. I understand that some parents have been not using the parking bays at the Church car park and so blocking the roadways inside it. I uploaded a photo of the parking bays to Seesaw last week to try to help with this but would be very grateful if parents can use the bays properly. Thank you.



Open Classrooms & Parents Evenings

Sadly at this time we still do not feel it is fully safe to hold our usual weekly Open Classrooms each Wednesday after school. Staff are trying to ensure that they continue to make good use of Seesaw so that you can still be involved in seeing your child's work in school. Following feedback from parents after last year's Parents' Evenings we have decided that the Parents' Evenings this year will be offered as either online using Google Meets or face to face – watch out for information coming later this term from your child's classteacher about this. We hope this will be seen as a positive step for busy parents too.

And Finally.....

We will be sending out a list dates for your diary for the year ahead in the coming week. We will try to update this list with each newsletter we produce. We continue to send a newsletter out each half term. As the year progresses we will advise you of any changes we need to make linked to COVID-19 etc

Mrs Roberts & Staff

If you have any suggestions for future newsletters or other comments to make, please contact me direct via Seesaw or by email on head.daresbury@halton.gov.uk