



BHJ News Headlines

Academic Year 2023-24

Autumn Term Update No.2

Welcome back to school!

It has been lovely to be back especially as the summer weather is still here! This one is a lengthy newsletter with a few key bits and some general reminders for the start of the year.

As always, I will be on the gate and around the school when possible so I look forward to catching up with you all.

Newsletters

Recent feedback has commented upon the advantage of a simple key information news update so I will continue to do this 2-3 times a half term depending on news and information that needs to be sent out. We will continue to send out communication on a Friday unless key letters need to be sent earlier. Many enjoyed the video and audio news updates and I'm looking at how these will be done this year with a focus more on our pupils.

Home Time

Some older children often meet their parent at the front gate. We have reminded pupils that if their adult is late or has not turned up, they should always come back to the school office. Please can we ask parents to remind their children of this. We also ask that parents do not offer to help take a child home. If for any reason you do see a child unattended, please bring them to the office.

Secondary applications

The portal for Secondary applications is now open. The deadline for submission is 31st October 2023. Click [here to visit the Hertfordshire admissions page](#). If your child is taught in Year 5 but a deferred entry as they were summer born, you should make a Secondary Transfer application this year and contact the schools they are interested in applying for to check that they will accept an application for their child next year, outside of their chronological year group. If agreed, their application can be withdrawn and they can re-apply next year. School admission arrangements available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolsdirectory will also outline the application requirements for children educated out of year group.

Parking!

A great start so far...let's keep it up and remember to be mindful of pupils and residents around our community.

Google classroom

Staff are busy getting goggle classrooms up and running. Attached to this communication is a reminder of how to log in.

RAAC in school

I'm sure many of you have been interested as to whether we are affected. As you may have realised, we are not impacted. As part of our building project last year, we were inspected and cleared. Herts County Council also released this press statement,

“Hertfordshire County Council is not aware of any Hertfordshire schools needing to close as a result of the direction from the Department for Education (DfE) on managing Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in schools.

Between 2020 and 2021, we carried out surveys on 279 local authority maintained schools that had buildings constructed between 1959 and 1989, the risk period initially identified by the DfE. This identified three schools that needed remediation works, and those works were completed in 2022.

While we have no reason to believe that any other school buildings contain RAAC, as a precaution we will now also be carrying out surveys on schools with buildings built in the 1950s and early 90s, which are at lower risk.”

School day

Thank you for your patience with adjustments to the school day. The infants are sending out a letter to confirm adjustments for the infants to help with parents taking children to both schools, which will help ease any time pressures.

General information and reminders

For more details, please remember to look through our school brochure found on the school website, but as a general reminder...

Arrival and departure

Children may arrive at school between 8.45am and 8.55am. Children should not be left at school unattended before 8.45am as the school does not assume responsibility for children until a member of staff is on duty at 8.45am.

Parents should not drive into school; it would be dangerous for the children and we do not have sufficient car parking for parents. School finishes at 3.25pm. Again, parents should not drive into school or park on the yellow zigzag lines outside the gate. Parents are asked to wait on the playground and not in the narrow pathways into the school. Many of our older children come and go from school on their own; it is essential that there is a clear pedestrian path for them and clear visibility for them when they leave the gates outside the school. Adults should model safe behaviour by using the path not the drive. Some cars will leave and arrive at the same time as the children, making it unsafe to walk in the drive.

The playground is a very busy place at 3.25. Parents are waiting, 360 children are coming out. Parents should closely supervise toddlers and younger children. They should not play on the play equipment, which is designed for older children, nor play on the steps. In an emergency, if a younger child needs the toilet, there is disabled access toilet just inside the door of the Yr 6 block by the water fountain; this is the nearest toilet to the playground. Younger children must be supervised and not left to enter the school on their own. Please report to a member of staff if you need to enter the building at collection time, or report at the main reception desk in the usual way. You will understand that we cannot allow unidentifiable adults to enter the building at any time.

Children should be collected promptly at 3.25. If your collection arrangements break down for any reason we train the children to come back into school and report to a member of staff who can help. Please remind children to do this and not to go out of the school site to look for you. Tell them to stay in school and come back to us. Staff are always on the playground at home time and staff will be in the school office until 4pm.

Shoes

All children require two pairs of shoes at school every day. One pair of black school shoes for indoor use, and one pair of trainers, any colour, for PE and playtime. Children change their shoes when they come inside to keep the school as clean as possible.

Name labelling belongings

Please ensure that your child's uniform, PE kit, shoes and belongings are clearly labelled with their name. Your child's coat may be recognisable to you but it won't be to staff and children amongst 360 others. We acquire so much lost property at the end of each term. All unclaimed items will be disposed of at the end of the school year. Thanks for your support with this.

Birthday treats

In line with many schools, children should not bring sweets and sugary treats to school, on a weekly basis. Teachers will endeavour to remember to wish each child 'happy birthday', but we ask that parents do not provide alternative birthday treats to give out such as stickers/toys as this will cause an unnecessary cost to parents. Teachers may still arrange the occasional sweet treat for their children, but this will only be very occasionally. Teachers will not allow children to give out sweets in school. Thank you for your support in this.

E safety concerns

The school has a separate e mail address for parents and children for reporting e safety issues. besafe@bernardsheathjnr.herts.sch.uk The school monitors this regularly.

Safeguarding

Should you have a safeguarding concern, our school Safeguarding leads are:

- Darren Armoogum
- John Reynolds
- Hayley Gilbert
- Fae Honeybell

If reported to one of the DSPs or office, we will respond as soon as possible.

Bernards Heath Junior School Staff

The staff and I are committed to providing the best opportunities and education for your children. Like you, we want the children to be happy, secure and to make good progress in their learning. The children and staff are consistently encouraged to show good manners and politeness to each other in school and we ask that parents bear this in mind when communicating with us. We will do our best to resolve any difficulties and I am always willing to meet with parents if they feel that this has not been achieved.

Communication

Communication with Parents

The school has a group e-mail system it uses to communicate with parents. You will receive letters by e mail via notifications@primarysite.net. All emails sent from us will have the subject header clearly in the title. All letters are archived on the school website for ease of reference. School Gateway is the way school payments can be made for school meals, trips, swimming, music etc. There is an available app for ease of use.

Communication with School

If you are reporting an absence, Parents can email via absence@bernardsheathjnr.herts.sch.uk or ring the 24-hour absence line to report absences as these messages are read first thing. Equally, if a message needs to reach the teacher before the start of the school day, a phone call or written note handed to the teacher is asked for. Parents are asked not to use e-mail for last minute messages about collection arrangements, late in the school day, which need to be passed on to children. We cannot guarantee that they will be read and responded to in time.

For all other enquiries, Parents may communicate via admin@bernardsheathjnr.herts.sch.uk. If a parent communicates with the school using e-mail and it is of a material nature, a copy will be printed for the relevant pupil file. To help ensure contact is directed appropriately, please put on the subject line: Child's class, name and topic.

As with letters, staff will endeavour to reply to e-mails in a timely way. If a quick acknowledgement is required, this will be done. However, if a longer response or action is required and appropriate, we will respond within 5 school days. E-mails to class teachers, Senior Leaders or the Head teacher will be passed on by the office staff. The start of the school day is focused on ensuring all families are supported and children are in and ready to learn therefore E-mails may not be read until after 9.30am. It is important to note that we have a policy that class teachers will not e-mail parents. During a busy teaching day teachers have their whole class responsibilities and after school they may be planning and preparing lessons, running clubs or meeting with parents and professionals. They will not be spending precious time during the school day in e-mail dialogue. Teachers will be fully occupied teaching your children and ensuring their safety and happiness. Class teachers may phone parents or arrange to meet in response to e-mails. E-mails sent to admin after 4.00pm will not be read until after 9.30am the following working day, and therefore will not be acted upon until then.

Communication Via Social Media

Social media plays a key role in our lives and can be a useful tool to provide information and support. We work very hard to communicate with parents in a timely manner with accurate information. Currently, our key forms of communication are:

- Emails
- Twitter
- Website

We are not responsible for parental groups that maybe set up via WhatsApp or other communications. As result, we would like to remind parents that any questions or issues should be addressed to the appropriate person at school by the person it concerns. We are

not responsible for misinformation and conjecture on the parent WhatsApp groups. Please respect the fact that our staff work incredibly hard and we don't want social media to become a source of unnecessary stress.

Communication via Telephone Calls

Staff will be informed by Office Staff if there is a telephone message for them. Teaching will not be interrupted for teachers to answer telephone calls. Teachers will usually try to phone back at the end of the teaching day. File notes will record the details of telephone conversations between staff and parents.

Office and Admin

Payments to school Parents are asked to pay for school meals promptly. We do not wish to chase for payments which can cause embarrassment to all concerned. If school meals are more than 2 weeks overdue, parents will be asked to provide a lunch from home. All individual music lessons are paid direct on line to Herts Music Service. Children entitled to Free School Meals may be eligible for subsidised music lessons subject to agreement with the school and Herts Music Service. Parents are asked to make voluntary contributions for all school trips. These trips could not take place without parental contributions. We may be able to help parents who are in receipt of free school meals for their children. Please see our Charging Policy for further clarification.

Contact Details It is essential that we always have up to date contact details for every child, including emergency alternative contact details. We must have at least two emergency contact numbers. Increasingly we are finding that we cannot get a response from numbers we have on file, sometimes resulting in delay and distress for a child. Often numbers become obsolete, please let us know if your contact numbers change.

Clubs and after school activities

Extracurricular activities and clubs are run by both outside providers as well as school staff. There is a combination of paid activities (various fees as indicated by provider) and clubs run voluntarily and free by staff in their own time. (There is a small registration fee of £5.00 per term for clubs run by school staff on a voluntary basis). Details of clubs and activities are available on the website; this may be subject to change, due for example to staff unavailability or poor weather. We ask parents to ensure that their child knows what to do in the case of cancellation of an after school activity. We will do our best to inform parents in advance but this is not always possible. We will always allow children to phone you in an emergency and they should report to a member of staff if they are unsure of what to do. Throughout the year, opportunities are offered to us for particular year groups or activities, often one off events at short notice. We take up these opportunities for your children, but that often means short term notifications and we ask for your appreciation of this. Clubs do not usually run in the first and last week of the term unless informed otherwise. Children in school teams will be offered the opportunity to go to other schools for matches on the understanding that parents can make arrangements to get their children there and back. We can only give children the opportunity of playing in leagues/tournaments at other schools with parental support for transport. These events are usually after school and at weekends and I am grateful to staff for giving up their time to take the children. Parents may have to be creative and get together with other parents to offer lifts.

Events tickets

Each year group performs a production, for parents, every year. Yr 5 at Christmas, Yr 4 before Easter, Yr 3 in the summer term and Yr 6 in July. We also have a School Christmas Concert (Yrs 3 & 4) at St Saviour's Church in Sandpit Lane and a Yr 6 Summer Leavers Concert at school. Entry to all of these events is by ticket. Each family will be allocated 2 tickets. This is due to fire regulation restrictions on space and seating. We ask that parents do not bring younger children (under 5s) to these events, as younger children often cause a distraction which can spoil the performance of a child who has been practising and is already nervous about speaking in front of an audience. These events are for the children and parents currently at our school.

Music lessons in school: (see separate letters)

In addition to our specialist music teacher Ms LLoyd, who teaches each class, each week, Herts Music Service provides individual instrumental lessons which are charged to parents on a termly basis 'Does your child want to start or continue music lessons at school in September? Hertfordshire Music Service are our school's provider of music lessons and they are now managing enrolment and billing. Visit <http://www.hertsmusicservice.org.uk/registeronline> for more information and details on how to enrol for lessons. We look forward to making music a part of everyone's life as they return to school in September.

Parent and Teacher Consultations

There are formal Parent Teacher consultations during the autumn and spring terms. Appointments can be booked on line and we will inform you well in advance when the booking system opens and closes. In the summer term, parents will receive an annual report on their child's progress and attainment. In between these times parents may need to speak to their child's teacher, or indeed teachers may need to contact parents. This can be arranged by phoning the office to make an appointment. Parents may also wish to speak to the Senior Leadership Team; again please phone to make an appointment. We are always happy to speak to parents. You can usually speak to us and teachers by phone initially as we appreciate that meetings during the day may be difficult for some parents. If it is just an informal quick contact, I am around at the end of each day as the children leave. Please feel free to speak to me then, likewise a quick chat to teachers then is also fine. However, if you wish to have a longer discussion it is better to make an appointment, as we can then ensure that we are free to talk to you properly.

Have a lovely weekend,

Mr Armoogum

Headteacher