



Bernards Heath Junior School

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Deputy Head: Mr John Reynolds BSc QTS

General information for parents September 2014

I hope you find the following general information useful.

- **Communication**

We use **Schoolcomms** to communicate with parents. Sign up forms are available from the office. Please read these for letters and any other communications. We also keep the **website** updated with latest information as well as much other school information. **Letters are archived on the website in case you have missed a letter or mislaid it.** There are **class blogs** on the website with letters relevant to your child's particular class. There is also a Music **blog** and **Sports blog** with information about Choir, sporting events and matches. We use **Twitter** for short quick updates. The **Twitter** feed is on view on the website, you do not have to follow Twitter on your phone although you may find it useful to do so. We also give **verbal** messages to children. It is important that teachers and parents allow children to do this; it will prepare them for the level of independence required for secondary school. Parents may also phone school with queries, but we ask that parents avoid phoning us regularly at the last minute of the day with messages for children. We cannot guarantee that your child will receive this message as they may have already left the classroom.

- **Clubs and after school activities (see separate letter)**

Extracurricular activities and clubs are run by both outside providers as well as school staff. There is a combination of paid activities and clubs run voluntarily and free by staff in their own time. 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. 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. Parents may have to be creative and get together with other parents to offer lifts.

- **Arrival and departure**

Children may arrive at school between 8.40am and 8.50am. Children should not be left on the playground before 8.40 as the school does not assume responsibility for children until a member of staff is on duty at 8.40am. 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 3.20pm. Again parents should not drive into school or park on the yellow zig zag 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 3.20. Parents are waiting, 360 children are coming out and After School clubs and LINDEES are setting up and meeting. Toddlers and younger children should be closely supervised by parents. 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.

- **Payments to school**

Parents are asked to pay invoices for music lessons and school meals promptly. Increasingly we are having to chase for payments which causes 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 must be paid a term in advance, and lessons cannot start until payment has been received. Children entitled to Free School Meals may be eligible for subsidised music lessons subject to agreement with the school and the music school.

Parents are asked to make voluntary contributions for many 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.

- **School places**

The school is now almost full in every year group. If you planning to move your child to another school please ensure that you have spoken to Mrs Kilpatrick about it. Usually of course it is because you are moving away from the area. It is important that I am informed of potential moves as we have a waiting list for places. On occasion children are discussing a move to another school with their friends and we do not know about it. This can be unsettling for the friends and the child themselves.

- **Events tickets**

Every year group perform a production for parents every year. Yr 5 at Christmas, Yr 4 before Easter, Yr3 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 School Summer Concert (Yrs 5 & 6) 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 at school and their parents.

- **Music lessons in school: (see separate letter)**

In addition to our specialist music teacher Mrs Erlandsen who teaches all classes each week, **Herts Music Service** provides individual instrumental lessons which are charged to parents on a termly basis. **Herts Music Service** require half a terms notice to stop lessons. This means that the Friday before a half term, or the last day of a full term is the last day to give notice to cease lessons. You will be invoiced for that period. E.g.; written notice to cease lessons received by Friday 24th October 2014 will mean the lessons will stop in January but you will be invoiced for the next half term, Nov-Dec. **Herts Music Service** employs teachers according to parental requests for lessons; therefore notice is required to cease that contract with **Herts Music Service**. Individual instrumental lessons will require parents to purchase or hire the instrument as well as pay the termly fee. Parents are asked to think carefully before committing their child to these lessons, as the whole terms fee will be charged even if you or your child changes their mind after a few lessons. All individual music lessons must be paid a term in advance. Lessons will not start until payment has been received.

- **Parent and Teacher Consultations**

There are formal Parent Teacher consultations during the autumn and spring terms. 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 Headteacher; again please phone to make an appointment. I am always happy to speak to parents. You can usually speak to me 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.

- **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.

- **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 as children are often asked to sit on the carpet in the classrooms.

- **Contact Details**

It is essential that we always have up to date contact details for every child, including emergency alternative contact details. 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. It is often best to send an e mail to the office with e mail or phone number changes.

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