

Aldryngton Primary School

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Headteacher: Mark Wieder



Weekly Update: 7th September

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I would like to extend a warm welcome all new Reception families as well as any new families joining the school in other year groups this September. Each week, usually on a Tuesday, I will send out an update with the latest information. Our new website, launched on the last day of the academic year will be updated regularly with the latest information. Each team has a specific page which answers a lot of questions such as P.E. days and when homework is sent home (please note that we have also made some updates to our homework policy that reflects current practice, which can be found on the policies page of our new website). For most families, either the parents or school information section should resolve most other queries. If however, you have any questions or need to speak to a member of staff, there will be a representative from each team out on the playground at the start of each day.

I will also be outside on the gate at the top end of the field most days. Please feel to drop by say hello and chat. Our office team are also able to assist with queries and can be contacted via email and telephone. They will also be able to assist on site, but we will be maintaining a one in, one out with queuing outside system to resolve queries. You would also be required to wear a face covering, unless exempt.

Three Rules

This year, all classes and all staff will be referring to three school rules:

- Be ready
- Be respectful
- Be safe

As part of our September INSET day, we discussed the introduction and implementation of the three new school rules with staff. In my assembly last week, we spoke about what the rules look like in everyday school practice.



Attendance

Please note that this policy was updated recently and can be viewed in full on our policy page of the school website. We have updated it to highlight the importance of school attendance. Please see the table below taken from the new policy, which defines how we classify attendance at the school:

| Attendance | Description | Approximate Days Lost Per Year | Approximate Weeks Lost Per Year |
|-------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 99 or 100% | Excellent | 0-4 | Less than 1 |
| 97 or 98% | Good | 5-9 | 1-2 |
| 96% | Satisfactory | 10-13 | 2-3 |
| 90%-95% | Unsatisfactory | 14-18 | 3-4 |
| Below 90% | Persistent Absence | 19+ | 4+ |

There is a strong correlation between high school attendance and the high rates of academic progress. Therefore we track attendance of pupils closely and will send out letters to families when attendance drops below one of our markers. We prefer to work with families and recognise that a child may have very valid reasons for absence such as illness. However as a school we do not authorise any term time holidays. Term time holidays may be subject to a fine issued by Wokingham Borough Council.

If your child becomes ill and is absent, then we would require email confirmation about the reason why they are not in. If you are requesting absence in advance for any other reason, then you must complete a leave of absence form, which can be found on our school website or requested from the school office.

A reminder that if your child develops any of the Covid related symptoms (high temperature, new continuous cough or a loss of taste/smell) then a PCR test should be obtained. Your child should then self-isolate until the return of the test. If the test result is negative, then they can return straight away. If it is positive, then a ten day self-isolation will be required. Full details about the isolation will be provided to you by Track and Trace.

Reconnecting

It has been a difficult last 18 months for all concerned. Restrictions on everyday things that we took for granted, school closures, social distancing and a host of other things that we would never want to see the return of. In recent weeks, it has been great to start doing things that we haven't been able to do for a long time now. Equally in school we will be keen to return to more of the community things that make Aldryngton a great place to be.

Next week I will share with you some of our upcoming events for the year. Whilst I hope that most of the events will be able to take place with families on site, we may need to make changes in light of the situation at the time of the event.

We are keen to work with families and appreciate that we may not get everything right straight away and accept that we can always improve. We will be introducing termly question and answer sessions with the leadership team that will take place over Teams and will be recorded for anyone unable to attend.

Equally, if you have a concern, compliment or suggestion please feel free to write to admin@aldryngton.wokingham.sch.uk and our office team will send on to the most relevant person. If at any

point, you remain unhappy with a response, then there is a separate complaints policy that can be found on the school website.

Covid-19 Arrangements

Whilst it has been great that the government has felt that restrictions could be eased and that a lot of close contact self-isolations are no longer required at this stage, we remain cautious and ready to change procedures if called to do so. It was great to have an assembly last week and see the children play freely with their friends on the field without any constraints at the start of term. We will also be introducing music tuition that we had previously as well as adding to the offer with the introduction of Catherine and James Holt (further details follow later in this letter). U Sports will be running sports clubs and we also hope to add to this in the next few weeks with more staff run clubs.

However, what the last 18 months has taught us are things can change. My favourite football team begun the Premier League season in first place, they are now tenth! Whilst tenth place is not a concern at the moment, if they fall into the relegation zone, it would become a concern and something may need to change. Apologies for the football analogy, but the essence of what I am trying to say is if we can work together and mitigate what we can without significant disruption to the children (e.g. wearing face coverings, seeking PCR testing on symptoms or close contacts, engaging in the twice weekly lateral flow testing), then hopefully we can avoid a return to some of the previous measures.

Our current risk assessment can be found on the school website and this will be continued to be reviewed frequently in line with positive case notifications and national/ local guidance.

Whilst Track and Trace now contacts close contacts if felt necessary to do so and not the school, we will continue to update you with summary information (e.g. the area of the school where a confirmatory PCR has indicated positive for Covid-19) on any positive cases shared with the school during term time. Please contact the office to notify any positive cases.

School Tours

We are aware that families this year and indeed many of our families in Year 1 would not have had the opportunity to participate in a school tour before starting at Aldryngton due to the level of Covid restrictions in place at the time. Therefore, we have organised an event on Monday 20th September after drop off in the school hall to meet members of school staff and the PTA. There will also be an opportunity to take a tour in small groups. Please note you will be required to wear a face covering (unless exempt) on any school tour. It is anticipated that that presentations will be over by 9:40am, but depending on numbers tours may go beyond this point. I will include a booking form in next week's letter for you to secure your place.

We are also at this point planning onsite tours for the 2022-23 Reception cohort. Further details about when these are and how to book can be found on the prospective parent section on the new school website.

Please note that the viability of these school tours will continue to be assessed in light of case numbers and local/national guidance.

Guitar and Keyboard/ Piano Lessons at Aldryngton

Guitar Lessons for complete beginners will now be available from September both in school hours on Friday afternoons and after school on Thursdays. Tuition is provided by Aldryngton parent James Holt who is a professional guitar teacher with over 30 years of playing and teaching experience. His lessons will focus on building up a solid understanding of the fundamentals of music in a fun, interactive and collaborative way. Group tuition will be available for pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 at a cost of £15 per 40 minute lesson. Interested parents are encouraged to contact James directly by email at james.holt@hotmail.co.uk or by leaving a phone message on (0118) 966 7579 before Wednesday September 15. Further general information about guitar lessons can be found at www.guitarteacherreading.co.uk

In addition, Catherine Holt is offering small group keyboard and piano lessons after school on Wednesdays. Catherine has been teaching piano for over 20 years and is excited to offer lessons within the school in addition to her private teaching practice. She will teach all aspects of music reading and general musicianship as well as improvisation and composition, which is great fun in a group. The keyboard lessons will be more pop music based, as this is the nature of the instrument. The lessons are also 40 minutes and at a cost of £15.

To register your interest in either keyboard or piano lessons please email Catherine directly at catlikestoplay@gmail.com or 07968 863197. Her website can be found at : <https://www.pianotuitionreading.co.uk>

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Wieder". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Mark Wieder
Headteacher