



Dear parents and carers,

Welcome back to school! We hope that you enjoyed the Summer holidays? The staff are all delighted to see the children and families again, and to welcome all of the new pupils to our school. The children all look super-smart in their uniform, and seem to have grown so much over the Summer!

Whilst exciting, the first week after the long Summer holidays is always a very busy and tiring one. We all have to get used to waking up early again and getting back into school routines! The teachers feel so proud of the children's achievements this week, as they have settled back into school, and been giving their learning their very best efforts.

This week's assemblies have been focussed on our school learning characters, and the children have been thinking about the skills they would like to develop this term in order to improve their learning. You can find out more about our learning characters on the school website. A new academic year is an opportunity for a fresh start and a time to make resolutions about what we hope to achieve over the forthcoming year. What are your child's hopes and aspirations for this year? We will be holding Pupil Performance Review Meetings for parents and carers towards the end of October, so that you can find out about your child's learning and progress in school and get to know your child's class teacher.

A very warm welcome to all of the lovely new children in our Reception Class! They have started to settle into school routines really well, and have made a very positive start to school life at Sydenham. We are so proud of how well they have all managed this week ...they are absolutely delightful! Our photographer has been in school today, so that you will have a lovely record of your child's first week at school on Monday.

The staff are all looking forward to continuing to work in partnership with all of our parents and carers, to ensure your children have the very best educational experiences. We try very hard to make school life a positive experience for all of the school community, but do come and tell us if you think we aren't getting it right or have any suggestions for improvement!

We were thrilled to receive the nationally recognised E-Safety Award at the end of last term. Many thanks and congratulations to Mrs Banks especially, for the work she put into the school self-evaluation tool. Our shiny, new plaque will be put on display soon.

Next Thursday, we are going to be assessed for the national Artsmark Gold Award. The school has received this prestigious award three times previously, so we're looking forward to sharing our arts portfolio with the assessor next week—fingers crossed for a positive outcome!

Best wishes, Juliette Westwood, Executive Head Teacher



International  
School Award  
2010-2013



Healthy Schools



SILVER  
2008



Extended  
Services  
Warwickshire



## Information for the Forthcoming Year

### School Meals

A reminder that all infant children (Reception, year 1 and year 2) are now entitled to a free hot lunch. School dinners for juniors (years 3, 4, 5 and 6) cost £2.05, payable for the week in advance on Monday mornings.

### Footballs

A polite reminder that children should not be playing football in the infant playground before the school day to prevent other school children, toddlers, babies or parents getting hit by balls. Please help us by closely supervising your child / children in the playground before and after school. Thank you, in anticipation of your usual support. Children may bring soft balls into school to use at playtimes, but no hard, leather balls!

### Year 3 Swimming

Year 3 will begin their swimming lessons at Newbold Comyn leisure centre on Tuesday 9th September. The children will be travelling by coach. Swimming is a compulsory part of the curriculum, so please ensure your child has a swimming costume and towel with them every Tuesday. Lessons will cost £3.50 per week

### Library

For those parents and carers who have children that are new to the school, please note that we have a computerised library system at Sydenham. Staff will be scanning new children's thumb prints so that they can access their library account. Please contact your child's class teacher if you would like any further information about this system.

### Topic Letters

Each class teacher has published a 'Topic Letter' so that you can see what your child will be taught this term. Your child will be given one of these to bring home next Friday. Please do not hesitate to see your child's class teacher if you would like any additional information.

### Early Birds Breakfast Club

A reminder that our school breakfast club runs from 8 O'Clock every morning, and now **costs £3 / session**, whatever time your child arrives. Children are served breakfast, including toast, cereal, croissants, eggs, bacon sandwiches, yogurts, fresh fruit, tea and fruit juice. Last food served at 8.40am. Please see Sarah, Kiran or Deb in the school office if you would like to book your child a place.

### Lining Up in the Playground

We appreciate that the infants' playground has been especially busy this week due to all of the additional adults supporting the new Reception children. Staff will be out early on the playground on Monday to show children new lining up position to help ease the 'traffic'!

### Lateness and Absence

Please note that all children should be lined up in the school playground at 8.55am for the start of the school day. Please remember lateness causes disruption to all the children's learning, and can cause children to feel upset and anxious. If you do arrive late, please note that children must come into school via the main reception / office area, and be signed in by an adult.

### Emergency Contact Details / Text Alert Service

It is **vital** that the school has up-to-date contact details for all parents and carers in case of an emergency situation. We also need your current mobile phone number so that you don't miss out on our text alert service. Please ensure you have informed the school office of any changes to your address or telephone numbers. Thank you.

## Parking

Owing to the potential danger occasioned by the numbers of children and families using the school gates and the additional site traffic, you are reminded that it is absolutely crucial that parents and carers do not use the school car park to drop off / collect their children at the start and end of the day. As pedestrians use this entrance / exit, it is highly dangerous for cars to be trying to use it as children are entering or leaving our site. Please park legally and responsibly to ensure the safety of all our children, with due consideration for our neighbours. Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

## Home Learning and Book Bags

Research over a number of years in this and other countries has shown that home learning can make an important contribution to pupils' progress at school. An OFSTED Report published in 1995 confirmed that many pupils and their parents saw learning done at home as a valuable and essential part of school work.

The Government believes that there is enormous advantage in children spending regular periods of time on different learning activities devised by schools, as part of a home learning programme which supports the work they do in class.

Your child should already have received a new home learning book and a piece of sticky-back plastic (very Blue Peter!) to cover it. Class teachers will stick homework into your child's book each week. We will try hard to give your child several suggested activities related to their learning in school, so that everyone feels able to achieve something. You may choose to do one or two of the suggested activities, or may find that you have time to do all of them! Please talk to your child's class teacher if you have any difficulties or concerns, or need to be able to access resources such as the internet in school. Home learning books will be sent home on Thursdays and must be returned by Tuesday.

Children will still be required to read regularly at home with you and given regular spellings to learn. Please make sure that your child brings his / her book bag to school every day. Please see your child's class teacher if you have any further queries or concerns about home learning. We appreciate that home learning can present difficulties for some families, and that children sometimes need access to a computer, the internet and books.

There will be a 'home learning club' running this term, starting next Thursday 11th September, to try to alleviate some of these potential barriers to home learning.

## Medical Appointments

Please try to make medical / dental appointments out of school hours, so that your child does not miss out on any of her / his learning. Thank you, in anticipation of your support.

## Term dates

### Autumn term 2014

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

### Spring term 2015

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]

### Summer term 2015

- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]
- [Redacted]



## Clubs

Please see the separate letter coming home this evening about this half term's after-school clubs, including kayaking, dance, football, drama, handwriting, netball, computing, drawing and multi-media. There will be new Bhangra and Boys' Reading clubs starting after half term. Please return club request forms on Monday.

## A Message from the PTA (Parent Teachers Association)

Sydenham PTA would like to wish all old and new parents a big welcome back to a new and exciting school year. We would love to see some new faces at our next AGM on Wednesday 15th October at 5.45pm. Help us to raise money for enjoyable, educational extras for all the children, whilst having fun yourself and making new friends. May we also take this opportunity to ask for any jumble you no longer need for our planned forthcoming jumble sale on Saturday 11th October.

## Staff changes

Welcome to our new class teachers: Mr Jon Lee, Mr Chris Goodwin and Mrs Jennifer Rowan-Lancaster and Mrs Jane Van der Sterren; and to our new teaching assistants: Mrs Angela Leon, Miss Josie Lloyd, Miss Josie Martin and Mrs Chantelle Daly.

Congratulations to Mr Jamie Lees on securing a teacher training place; we wish him every success on his journey to becoming a teacher.

## Sydenham Super Stars!

