

02/11/2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you managed to enjoy some time with your families over the half-term break in spite of the weather and news.

We had all hoped for a far more optimistic end to this year and the recent news regarding the national lockdown, from Thursday, will be devastating for many. As a school, we will continue to follow the Department for Education requirements and remain open for all pupils.

This is a worrying time for everyone, for whatever reason, and I am well aware of different views in the wider community: as well as opposition to the spreading of the virus, there is also opposition to the restrictions. No matter what our own views are, we cannot ignore the risk posed by the spread of this virus. Now, more than ever, it is important that we do not become complacent. All of the staff at Barrow 1618 want to be in school to teach and care for the children with minimal risk to themselves and their own families.

With regard to this half-term's arrangements during collection times, signage will be put up this week to reinforce procedures for entering and exiting the playground adjacent to the car-park through different gates and support regulations for social distancing when on the school site. If you are on school property please remain at least two metres from anyone who is not a member of your household. If you wish to speak to a member of staff on duty at the gate or on the playground, you should wear a face-mask. Non urgent appointments should take place over the phone, or via an online platform, such as Zoom or MS Teams. Staff will continue to communicate with parent/carers through email and phone-calls.

Here is a reminder about drop-off and collection times to take effect from today.

Classes	Drop-off	Collect
Ash & Oak	8:30 – 8:45	15:30
Yew & Elm	8:45 – 9:00	15:15

Some parents/carers had questions about siblings or alternative arrangements that were previously agreed. I can reassure you that with regard to these, nothing has changed. It would, however, make sense that if you have a child in Yew Tree or Elm and another in Ash or Oak, both are dropped off at 8:45. We just need to avoid congestion and keep each other safe. All plans and procedures are constantly reviewed and if they don't work, they will be changed.

Over this half-term parents/carers will be able to arrange meetings with teachers by appointment. The purpose of these will be to discuss how your child has settled into school this term, with particular emphasis on their emotional health and well-being enabling them to make progress with their learning. These meetings will take place over the phone or virtually, via Microsoft Teams. We will be in touch this week with further details about how to go about booking an appointment with your child's teacher.

Also, look out for our Christmas plans. They won't be quite the same this year but we will do our very best to ensure that a festive spirit prevails and a good time is had by all.

The children who took part in 'Bikeability' training thoroughly enjoyed themselves and showed a good deal of perseverance on a wet October day. It was great to have the opportunity to involve them in an extra curricular activity!

To extend our meal choices, Deli options will be available to order as from tomorrow – see the attached menu. Please note that a packed lunch will no longer be available to be pre-ordered but will be on the Deli menu on Wednesdays. To pay for school lunches, ParentPay accounts should now be activated. If you are experiencing any problems, please get in touch with the school office.

Staff at Barrow 1618 really value the relationship we have with our parents/carers and we are determined to keep the lines of communication flowing despite the restrictions we continue to face. Keep sharing your thoughts, feelings and ideas with us. We will keep you well-informed about any changes to our circumstances in school and we are here – as always - to help answer your questions.

In the event of school closure due to an outbreak of Coronavirus or possible isolation of classes/groups, a contingency plan will be available to download from our website outlining how teaching and learning will continue to take place remotely. Please let us know if your child has no access to online devices.

Furthermore, the school's COVID-19 Risk Assessment is under constant review, and updates are shared on a monthly basis on the school website. Links to relevant government and health documents are also provided.

Finally, I apologise to our two Year 6 pupils who had written the letter on behalf of Oak Class requesting some voluntary help with football at lunchtimes. Our network and internet is now operational and we are – at last - able to circulate it! Who could resist such a well-articulated plea?

Keep safe and keep smiling!

Yours sincerely,

Sian Stephenson

(Headteacher)

