

School Newsletter Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the midpoint of the academic year, we would like to share several important updates regarding school transport, drop-off and pick-up arrangements, and forthcoming Ofsted inspection changes.

Updates to Transport, Drop-Off & Pick-Up Procedures

The local authority has been reviewing school transport due to inefficiencies within the current system. As transport is arranged directly between families and the local authority, the school has limited influence over these decisions. However, we continue to work closely with the Transport Teams to ensure all pupils can attend school regularly and safely.

To support improvements in the transport network, new morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up procedures will be introduced from **Monday, 23 February**. These changes will align our school more closely with other special schools in the area.

Parents and carers who enter the turning circle will be required to follow the same system as the school buses. Unless early collection has been pre-arranged with the Head and Safeguarding and Attendance Lead, parents/carers should join the bus queue and not come onto site until after 2.45pm. Families who park offsite will not be affected.

Buses/taxis will arrive as usual. They will be allowed on site from 8.45am. Once the turning circle is full, engines will be required to be turned off, **the main gates will then be closed** until all vehicles are empty of pupils and ready to leave. Gates will open and, once all vehicles have left, the remaining buses/taxis will be allowed onto the turning circle where the same process will be repeated.

In the afternoon, buses/taxis will be allowed on site from 2.45pm. Once the turning circle is full, **the main gates will be closed** until all vehicles are full of pupils and ready to leave. This will be repeated.

Buses will not wait for pupils reluctant to leave the buses beyond **9.30am** in the morning and will not wait for pupils reluctant to leave school, beyond **3.30pm** in the afternoon. Parents/carers impacted by this will be contacted by their respective Local Authorities.

After a successful trial of having the main school gate closed during the school day, we are proposing that access for vehicles delivering or dropping off pupils during the school day will continue to be limited.

These adjustments are being made to enhance pupil safety, and we kindly ask for your full cooperation. There will always be exceptions allowed but these are just that and will not be permitted without consultation with the Head.

Ofsted: What to Expect from the New Inspection Framework

Ofsted has implemented a revised inspection process, replacing the previous single-judgment model. Schools will now receive a detailed report card outlining performance across multiple areas.

We anticipate a judgment of “expected standard”, which is where most schools are expected to be placed. Inspectors may also highlight areas of strength or areas requiring additional development.

Family views will be gathered as part of the inspection, and we hope these reflect issues we are already aware of and working on.

Despite national funding pressures and staffing constraints, we remain confident that we can demonstrate strong achievement across the expected standards.

More information will follow once inspection dates are confirmed.

We're delighted to welcome **Michelle Wallis** as our new Deputy Head after half term. She'll be taking over the leadership of the Primary phase from **Sara Avenell**, and we know you will join us in helping her feel at home as she settles into her new role. We'll keep you updated with any changes her arrival brings.

Next half term is a short one, but we have plenty we're excited to get started on! One of our key priorities is getting the **Pool** fully up and running again. Thank you for your patience while we wait for the final parts to arrive and be fitted. For pupils who have swimming included in their EHCP, we'll arrange local alternative sessions wherever possible. We'll let you know as soon as the pool is ready to use again.

Look out for news on Careers Week, Book Week & Red Nose Day. The Half term will fly by!

I hope that you all have a wonderful half-term break and look forward to welcoming all pupils back on the 23rd of February.

Thank you for your continued support in keeping our pupils safe and helping our school community thrive.

Warm regards,

Catherine Bernie

Headteacher