

ST. BEDE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Mrs S Clarke
Headteacher



Dear Parent/Carer,

Welcome back to school! The children have had a wonderful first week back and we have loved to see so many smiling faces and see how much they've grown over the holidays!

New starters

We welcome our new Reception cohort to our Bede's family and look forward to seeing them grow and learn as they move through their academic journey! They have been settled in so well this week – we hope this continues as we move through the term. We will establish time that they can spend with their respective buddies in Year 6 over the next couple of weeks. We welcome Miss Harrison to our team this year, as she starts her teacher training year with us. She will be placed across school over the forthcoming year and may be teaching your child(ren) under the guidance of our experienced staff. I know you will give her a very warm welcome if and when you meet her and we wish her all the best as she starts this journey with us.

Class 4 – walking home unaccompanied

A form has already been issued to parents of children in Class 4 – so you can let us know whether you consent for your child to walk home unaccompanied each day. Forms must be returned to school by **Monday 11th September**. No child will be allowed to leave the site unless we have a new consent form even if they had this last year.

Mobile phones (Class 4) & Smart watches

Similarly – a proforma regarding mobile phones has also been sent out to parents in Class 4. Any child bringing their phone to school should turn it off and hand it directly to the school office as and when they arrive at school. These can be collected at the end of the school day.

For children in all classes, smart watches should also be kept at home. Whilst we appreciate these are useful and quite commonplace – some of them have the capacity to take photos and this is not allowed for privacy reasons.

Warm weather

While we continue to enjoy this spell of warm weather, please can you ensure that your child brings a water bottle with their name on to school every day.

School Uniform

It is lovely to see everyone looking so smart and proud of their school uniforms as we start the new school year. Please can we remind parents to label ALL sweatshirts and cardigans to ensure that they can be returned to their rightful owners. It is also a good opportunity for you to reinforce how important it is for your child to take care of their own belongings and respect others property.

British Values

This term we are focusing on 'Democracy'. Elections for the School Council will be taking place on Monday so children have time over the weekend to consider the qualities that would make them a good representative. Please encourage your child to create a poster and practise a short presentation stating why they would be a suitable candidate, as they will share these with their classmates. Our school council was extremely active last

'Shine Brightly for all with Christ as Our Guide...'

year in working with our local MP Kevan Jones and Joy Allen, the Durham Police and Crime Commissioner, to look at traffic calming measures outside of school. Several of the points raised are with Durham County Council for consideration and we will keep you updated on any further progress. We look forward to this year's School Council being involved in continuing this campaign.

We will also be announcing the winners of our House/Vice Captain elections on Friday next week. House/Vice Captains are held by children in Year 6 – and they will have to present themselves to the school on Friday next week! Good luck to everyone involved. There are opportunities for other areas of responsibilities including Playground Leaders, IT ambassadors, PE ambassadors and many more!

What's On Notice

Please see the What's on notice (separate letter) for details of all the events that we have going on in school right up until Christmas. Our aim is to give you as families as much advanced notice as possible. Please note that the list is not exhaustive and could be subject to change if further opportunities come along as we move through the term.

Meet the teacher

We would also like to invite you to an informal meet the teacher session on Tuesday 26th September from 3:30-4:00pm. This is 'drop-in' and an opportunity for you to see your child(rens) classroom and ask any questions you may have at the start of term.

Term dates

We have had several parents asking about the dates for half term as these differ this year from those of the other school in County Durham. Our holiday dates are set by and are the same for all Catholic Schools across the Diocese. These dates were shared with you as soon as they were published last year and are available on our school website here: [School Holidays for St. Bede's 2023-24](#).

Government regulations since 2013 state that Head teachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

If you do need to take your child of school due to extraordinary circumstances – please complete the form on the website and return it to school before the absence. [Application for leave of absence during term time](#)

Attendance

Attendance continues to be a priority in school, and we appreciate children will, at times, be sick. Please could we remind parents that if your child is off school for any reason you will need to let the school office know on the first day of sickness and for any other reason in advance. This can be done by ringing school on 0191 3710272 and leaving a message before 8:30 am or speaking to staff after 8:30 am or contacting us through our WEDUC app. Please note that if you do not inform school, the office will contact you as part of our safeguarding procedures and a welfare visit may be carried out if we do not have contact.

Across school this week our attendance has been as follows:

Whole school attendance: 97.07%

	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
4 th to 8 th September	95%	96.67%	96.43%	93.75%	100%	100%	98.08%

Parental details

If any details (such as mobile numbers or email addresses) have changed over the holidays, please can you ensure you update the School Office as soon as possible. It is vital that we hold the correct information to contact you.

Hopefully, you will all be able to make the most of this late summer weather that we are enjoying this weekend.

Best wishes as always,

Mrs Holtham

Acting Headteacher