



**Mrs Louise Wood BA (Hons) PGCE NPQH
Headteacher**

Thursday 7th November 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you had a lovely half term break. I am writing to provide you with a few important updates and reminders for this half term.

Staffing update

Mrs Hannah Genco left us to go on maternity leave last Friday and we send her our best wishes for this exciting time ahead. Miss Marianne Wilson's last day before her maternity leave is this Friday (8th) so we extend our good wishes to her too. As you will know from previous correspondence, Miss Wilson is one of our Assistant Headteachers and therefore key responsibilities that she holds have been redistributed. I am delighted to confirm that Miss Becky Cheetham has been appointed as Assistant Headteacher on a temporary basis, covering Miss Wilson. This means that she will also lead on English in Miss Wilson's absence. We are confident that our high quality teaching and learning of this subject will continue under Miss Cheetham's leadership.

Results of our Parent Survey (July 2019)

Last half term we updated our website to show the results of our last annual survey to parents (found in the Parents – Annual Survey Results tab). I have included the results at the end of this letter for those of you who have not seen them.

Communication and Deadlines

We are aware that the high volume of different letters, forms, flyers, etc. sent to parents is part and parcel of being a large, busy primary school that prides itself on offering a wide range of opportunities and experiences for the children. We find that we get very mixed feedback about the number of Parent Mails we send out. Many of you tell us that you find this way of communicating works well, others would like even more communication, with some of you reporting that you find the amount of emails overwhelming. I therefore wanted to share with you our own perspective on this form of communication in the hope that we can work together, ultimately ensuring that the children have a very positive experience at Barrow Hedges.



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Following parental feedback last academic year, we took the decision to send out any 'marketing' type emails, e.g. posters for local events, holiday clubs, etc. on a Friday and send these to parents all in the one Parent Mail. The aim was to ensure that letters and messages sent by the school would not 'get lost' amongst other emails.

This year I have been considering how to further improve communication and for this reason I will be sending more letters such as this, with general updates, for example, those related to staffing as well as other important information and reminders. I will aim to send these on Mondays to Thursdays. I trust that you will find this beneficial.

Hedgelines is written on a half termly basis, sent either on the last day of one half term or the first day of the new half term. Either way this will provide you with a wealth of information about the children's learning as well as other reminders. Hopefully you will also have seen two new features in 'Hedgelines' - 'Monthly Magpies' and 'Online Safety News' – Miss Campbell and Mrs Rawlinson, in their capacity as History/Geography and E-Safety Leaders, have introduced these items so that we can provide useful tips and suggestions for parents which will support the children's learning and personal development. As its title suggests, 'Monthly Magpies' will be sent monthly so you will find this both within Hedgelines and also as a separate document – we want to provide plenty of ideas for families to enjoy! November's edition is attached in the same Parent Mail as this letter.

One issue we do have, however, is the fact that we are increasingly finding that some parents don't read any of our communication. While we recognise that we all have busy lives, it is disappointing to think that some parents, and as a result, children, may be missing out on key opportunities and information provided. Another issue is that, increasingly, deadlines set, e.g. for permissions or payments, are ignored. Please be advised that in order to offer such a wide variety of activities and experiences, we have to be organised and have a schedule; often we are governed by others' timescales and deadlines. For this reason, I ask for your support in meeting deadlines so that we can make arrangements in a timely fashion and ensure that the events run smoothly. Thank you.



Quality Mark for History

I am delighted to share with you the excellent news that following an assessment on 7th October, we have been awarded the Quality Mark for History Silver Award.

On the day of the visit, the assessor observed one Year 2 lesson, spoke to a selection of pupils across the key stages both in lessons and in a dedicated pupil voice session, discussed the importance of history in the curriculum with Mrs Duncan and spent time with Miss Campbell, the Subject Leader, evaluating data and looking at the work of children in their books.

At Barrow Hedges we place high value on all curriculum subjects and we are pleased that the report received not only validates this, but also exemplifies how middle leaders (i.e. those teachers responsible for individual subjects and projects) work extremely hard to continually raise standards. We were especially pleased to see that within the report the enrichment for history was assessed as 'gold' thus exemplifying how we do our very best to provide valuable and memorable learning opportunities.

School Fund

Thank you to those parents who have made their contribution via Parent Pay. This really is appreciated. Every year we invite each family in school to make a voluntary contribution towards the School Fund over and above the cost of trips provided. The suggested amount is £20 per family. A few parents have asked us if they can contribute more to School Fund and the answer is 'yes, thank you!' This is set up on Parent Pay. We would be grateful if you would complete and return the Gift Aid Declaration which was previously sent out. Alternatively pop into the office to collect one. You may be wondering why we ask for this contribution. The answer is that this fund enables us to enrich the curriculum throughout the year to add interest and excitement to *lessons*. Examples of this include the purchase of ingredients for Design Technology lessons, materials for Science lessons and specialist media for Art. The fund also pays for some of the transportation used for external sports events and competitions. PTA funded events could be considered as "*optional extras*" ("the icing on the cake") whereas the School Fund resources described here enable us to make lessons more memorable and help us to make them even more engaging and practical. The costs for such resources are beyond the essentials met through our delegated budgets. You will be aware of the extreme pressures on school budgets across the country and I am sorry to confirm that this is no less the case for Barrow Hedges. The support and generosity shown by families in previous years' School Fund contribution certainly has made a difference.

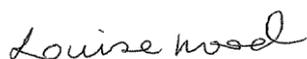
Changes to calendar dates

It has been necessary to make a change to our School Calendar so I want to ensure that you are aware of this well in advance:

Summer Fete – this will now be held on **Saturday 11th July 2020** (*originally scheduled for Saturday 4th July*).

As always, do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or feedback.

Kind regards,



Mrs Louise Wood
Headteacher

Our last parent/carer survey was conducted in July 2019. 145 separate responses were received (some parents complete separate questionnaires for each of their children while others respond on one questionnaire for more than one child).

We are delighted with the very positive feedback and, that in the case of the vast majority of questions asked, there was an increase in the number of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing (compared to the last survey undertaken in July 2018.)

Of particular note is the 10% increase in the proportion of parents who strongly agree that their child makes good progress at Barrow Hedges (from 57% to 67%); the 9% increase in the proportion of parents who strongly agree that their child is well looked after at Barrow Hedges (from 64% to 73%); the 7% increase in the proportion of parents who strongly agree that their child feels safe at Barrow Hedges (from 70% to 77%) and the 11% increase in the proportion of parents who strongly agree that their child is happy at our school (from 66% to 77%).

The results of the July 2019 survey are as follows:

My child is happy at Barrow Hedges - 99% of parents agree, with 77% strongly agreeing

My child feels safe at Barrow Hedges - 99% of parents agree, with 77% strongly agreeing

My child makes good progress at Barrow Hedges - 98% of parents agree, with 67% strongly agreeing

My child is well looked after at Barrow Hedges - 99% of parents agree, with 64% strongly agreeing

My child is taught well at Barrow Hedges - 99% of parents agree, with 68% of parents strongly agreeing

My child receives appropriate homework for their age - 97% of parents agree or strongly agree

The school makes sure its pupils are well behaved - 97% of parents agree or strongly agree

The school deals effectively with bullying - 99% of parents agree or strongly agree which includes approximately 37% saying that they do not know thus indicating that they have not experienced bullying

The school is well led and managed - 96% of parents agree or strongly agree

The school responds well to any other concern or question I raise - 96% of parents agree or strongly agree

I receive valuable information from the school about my child's progress - 94% of parents agree or strongly agree

Would you recommend another school to another parent? 99% of parents said 'yes'