



High Firs Primary School

NEWSLETTER

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Visit our school website at www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk

25th August 2022

Message from Mr Kilbride

Hello everyone – I hope you have been enjoying the summer holidays and that you are all raring to go for the new academic year that begins in little over one week. I apologise for disturbing the back end of your holidays, but I wanted to share a number of news items with you that should ensure a well-informed start to the new year.

Building and decorating work

If any of you have walked along Court Crescent over the holidays, you will have noticed some fairly significant redevelopment of the land in front of the school building taking place. School has been a hive of activity over the summer as various contractors are carrying out the following exciting developments.

Y1 and Y6 classrooms are swapping and much of the land in front of school is being made into an astroturf and tarmac play space, especially for the use of Y1 children. Bike and scooter storage for all children will also be installed in front of school and the main pedestrian gate into school is moving about 10 metres to the left (when facing school) in order to bypass the new Y1 play space.

The main toilets in school and the toilets serving Reception and Y1 have been completely renewed and redecorated, providing facilities that the children can proud of.

Y1, Y6, Y4 and Y5 classrooms have been completely redecorated, including new carpets in Y4 and Y5.

The building work is on track to be complete in time for the start of term, but some of the installations, such as the scooter racks, will follow in due course. Watch this space for an announcement permitting the use of the new bike and scooter storage facilities in the future.

Morning drop-off and afternoon collection

As mentioned with the building work, the main pedestrian school gate will be 10 metres to the left of its July location. Drop off routines will be very similar to before – dropping at the main school gate between 8.45 and 8.55am. Children will walk through the gate, towards the main school building, following the path right and then left to go on as before, in between the two buildings and onto the playground. Y1 children are an exception, as once they have entered the main school gate, they will turn right and walk through a new gate in the fence that marks their play area, across the play space and in through their classroom fire exit door.

For collection this year, we will no longer be asking you to walk a lap of the school site. You will come in through the main pedestrian gate, walk to collect your child from the designated area for their class (see below) and return back down the path used for entry.

Designated areas for collection:

- Reception – outside Reception garden gate
- Y1 – inside new play space using gate just inside school entrance
- Y2/3/6 – playground by classrooms and Activity Area door
- Y4 – classroom fire exit
- Y5 – Computer room exit door (at front of main building)

Meet the Teacher sessions

These sessions will last for approximately 30 minutes and will enable you to put faces to names and get a better understanding of some of the routines and curriculum areas for the year ahead in each particular class. Reception parents do not have a session due to the other starting school events already in place (see below).

	9.00-9.30am	2.30-3.00pm
Monday 5th September	Year 6	Year 5
Tuesday 6th September	Year 3	Year 4
Wednesday 7th September	Year 2	Year 1



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New Reception arrangements

Hopefully all parents of new Reception children have managed to receive the following information via their Admissions Packs or from attending one of our Stay and Play sessions held in July. Just to reiterate the plans for September - Home visits are taking place Friday 2nd, Monday 5th and Tuesday 6th. If you did not complete the form indicating preferred slots or you have not yet heard back from us with your appointment time, please email office@high-firs.kent.sch.uk.

First day is Wednesday 7th September – drop off at 9.15am and collection at 12pm. Please stay for “Tea and Tissues” in the hall after drop off for a chance to meet other parents and share experiences of first day drop off!

Drop off Thursday 8th at usual time (8.45-8.55am) and collect at 12pm.

Friday 9th is normal drop off, but collection at 1.30pm, meaning children will stay in school to have lunch.

From Monday 12th September, children are in school full time, meaning they are to be collected at 3.15pm.

A further date for your diary is Friday 23rd September, where parents/carers are invited to “Pop in and Play” at 2.15pm.

Walking Bus proposal

We are planning to operate a Walking Bus this year in an effort to promote healthy lifestyles and to alleviate congestion around the school site at drop off and collection times. Plans are still being finalised regarding the exact drop-off and collection point, but it will be staffed by two members of staff every day and will operate primarily as a park and stride service – exactly as in ‘Walk to School Week’. The ‘bus’ will leave for school at 8.40 each morning and will arrive at the collection point at 3.20 each afternoon. We look forward to confirming this arrangement and a location very soon into the Autumn Term.

School Dog

We are pleased to announce that we will be introducing our own school dog and we will be joining The Dog Mentor Programme. The Dog Mentor programme has built upon the benefits of the human-animal bond by providing children positive experiences with dogs that can help them educationally, developmentally, emotionally and socially. Over the last 10 years The Dog Mentor programme has been proven to have a positive impact on children in all areas including self-esteem, behaviour, peer relationships and better engagement skills. These improvements then result in improved academic achievement.

Mr Kilbride will be bringing his dog Tilly into school from Monday 5th September. We envisage that The Dog Mentor Programme will bring a positive influence into the school environment as a whole and look forward to the impact The Dog Mentor programme will have on our children. Full training will be given to both Tilly and select staff who will work with Tilly to ensure that the welfare of everyone involved is maintained as a top priority.

Please feel free to visit The Dog Mentor’s website and Facebook page for more details and to see some of the schools that have introduced their dogs into school:

www.thedogmentor.co.uk

www.facebook.com/thedogmentor

We hope that you share our excitement, please feel free to contact Mr Kilbride via the school office with any questions you may have.

Our general rules regarding no dogs on school site and keeping dogs under control and clear of the school gate remain – we thank you for your co-operation with this.

Other exciting new things to look out for

We have purchased 15 balance bikes for use by Y1 and Y2 children. Staff will be trained in how to deliver sessions teaching the children to ride these bikes and in using the bikes as a fun vehicle through which to access the curriculum. They are due to arrive at some point in September.

Last year’s efforts saw us awarded the Eco Flag for schools, which we will be proudly displayed upon its arrival. This is testament to the hard work, drive and vision of Miss Selby and her Eco Club who really excelled last year.

We will shortly be taking delivery of a class set of Chromebooks. These touch screen devices will live in a laptop charging trolley and will be available for use by all classes – enabling us to move computing lessons into the classroom and around the school site, rather than being confined to the ICT suite – a prior necessity before mobile computers and wifi. This will enable the IT suite to become a useable, general purpose teaching space for interventions and meetings – something which has been hitherto in short supply.

The money raised by our Friends of High Firs (FHF) Fun Day in June will fund the purchase of new fixed outdoor play equipment – expected during the Autumn Term. This will replace the train, which we sadly had to say goodbye to last year, as the wood was beyond repair.



Achieving more together



Friends of High Firs Primary School Association

Supporting Our Children's Education

Registered Charity No. 1137633

Notice of Annual General Meeting

to be held on Monday 19th September at 7pm

All parents/guardians and staff are very welcome to attend – please come along!

I hereby give notice of the AGM of the Friends of High Firs Primary School to be held on Monday 19th September at 7pm.

Agenda:

- Annual Report
- Accounts
- Election of committee members - (... would you like to join us?)
- Appointments
- Future planning for 2022-23
- Any Other Business

Class emails

Class emails are available for you to use to contact your child's teacher. These are monitored regularly but please bear in mind that our teachers have a full-day teaching commitment and so they may not be checked at set times or seen before school each day so the contact book is a better method of communication if your message is time-restricted. Due to safeguarding measures emails should only be sent from a parent's email address rather than the child's own if they have one. Our class email addresses are:

Reception – reception@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Year 1 – yearone@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Year 2 – yeartwo@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Year 3 – yearthree@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Year 4 – yearfour@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Year 5 – yearfive@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Year 6 – yearsix@high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Please continue to use the office email office@high-firs.kent.sch.uk for any admin queries.

Breakfast Club and After School Club

Breakfast club runs from 8.00am to 8.45am and is £3.00 per session.

After School Club will continue to 6.00pm and the cost is £10 per session.

Further information and booking links can be found here

<http://www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk/breakfast-club-after-school-provision/>



INSET DAYS

No children in school

Thurs 1st Sept 2022

Mon 31st Oct 2022

Tues 3rd Jan 2023

Fri 26th May 2023

Thurs 1st Sept – INSET day: staff only in school

Friday 2nd Sept – Yrs 1 to 6 start school
Breakfast Club & After School Club start

Weds 7th Sept – Reception start school

Thursday 8th September – Kent Test (11+) for registered Y6 pupils

Week beginning Monday 12th September – extra-curricular clubs begin

Monday 19th September – FHF AGM in school at 7pm



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