

Orchards' Newsletter

Dear Orchards' families

What a first half term we have had. It has been lovely getting to know the children (and parents/carers) old and new over the past 8 weeks.

It always wanted to use the first half term to come back and see how things were going. To take a controlled approach to the school and ensure that decisions were made in the best interest of the school and its community and that when it came to teaching and learning, that the approach taken would be one which is backed up by the evidence and research.

I will continue to say that I have been so impressed by what I see in school.

The new reception children have come to school and have settled into their daily life and routines straight away – already the impact of our phonics programme is again shining through as the children are able to start to read decodable books (as well as hold mini-phonics lessons during their continuous provision). Year 6 have shown a level of maturity and perseverance and aiming high by already completing a round of mock SATs ahead of May 2026 – already some of the progress seen is wonderful to see and a credit to the hard work of the children and staff.

This next half term is the count-down to Christmas but before then, we will have plenty of other exciting events such as Outdoor learning day to look forward to – and hopefully we will be able to start to include some pictures of what life at Orchards is like into these news-letters.

Taking time to observe the goings on in school has highlighted some areas where I need to draw attention to and ask for your continued support from home.

- **School uniform and PE kit**
- **Attendance and punctuality**
 - **Behaviour**

*Be kind
Work hard
Aim high*

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School uniform and PE kit:

Thank you to all of the families who are sending children into school with the correct school uniform and PE kit – you are by far the majority of our families and your support is very much appreciated.

School uniform is a key part of helping the children to feel like they belong to our school community which is really important for children to be able to feel safe and secure. It removes barriers over who has the best designer label and it helps to keep costs down and non-branded items are readily available from supermarkets. It also prepares the older children for secondary school where expectations around school uniform are even higher than at primary school.

Unfortunately, there are a growing number of children who are attending school in incorrect uniform especially when it comes to PE kit. I have included the details from our website below which outlines the expectations for what children are required to wear to school. I have also sent a separate attachment to help clarify what our uniform expectations are.

**School uniform: Grey or black skirt/skort/pinafore/trousers
red polo shirt, green cardigan/jumper /sweatshirt*.**

Grey or black tights or white socks (ankle or knee length), to be worn with a skirt, skort or pinafore.

Jeans, jogging bottoms and sports shorts are not acceptable as part of the main school uniform

PE kit: Black/green shorts, leggings or jogging bottoms, plain black/white/green t-shirt or polo shirt (no sleeveless vests) and plain, black/green coloured fleece; trainers.

Please ensure that from next half term, your child is dressed appropriately for school at all times – including school shoes.

From next half term, we will start to send reminders and letter home for children who regularly wear the incorrect uniform. We will also look to provide children in incorrect uniform with a suitable alternative for the day. Children who are unable to dress in the correct PE kit will be asked to come to school in school uniform and will have to get changed before and after their PE lesson.

We understand that for a very small portion of our school community, extra needs such as increased sensory needs may make the wearing of the full school uniform incredibly difficult. As a school, we want to support all children to thrive and achieve and are able to make adjustments based on the individual child. This needs to be done in collaboration with Mrs Horlock our SENCo.

Attendance and punctuality:

Your child's attendance at school is extremely important. We are still well below our target of 96%. The current figure for the school is 92.5%. We are also seeing a lot of children arriving late in the morning. Please ensure that your child is in school by 8:30 every morning. The gates open at 8:20, class doors open at 8:25 and the school gates are closed at 8:35.

Attendance by class for the first half term			
1S	96.6	1K	88.9
2E	93.0	2W	95.8
3C	92.4	3W	94.6
4E	91.6	4S	90.4
5B	93.8	5S	92.6
6R	95.2	6C	88.3

Well done 1S who have the best overall attendance are over the 96% target!

Well done 1S (KS1) and 6R (KS2) for having the best attendance this half term!

Behaviour:

As a school, we want to be able to say that all of our children are able to succeed and that our school environment is a calm, safe and productive space where all children are supported to learn. To help achieve this and allow every child to be the best, we have a number of routines and structures which help to support the children to learn.

Over the course of this half term we are looking to adjust and refine our behavior curriculum to ensure that maximum time is spent by all children, learning and applying their knowledge whilst reducing distractions. Our new behavior policy will be uploaded to our website very soon.

Playtimes are also a game of two halves in school. A large number of children are able to play nicely with their peers. It is a joy to watch them creating games and playing with the equipment in a creative manner. However rough play and inappropriate language feature far too regularly on both playgrounds and this has to stop. After the half term we are going to be tackling both rough play and inappropriate language so that all children are able to have enjoyable playtimes at Orchards.

Be kind
Work hard
Aim high

Bikes around the school site:

Please can we make sure that bikes aren't ridden within the school site. We have had a few near-misses and we don't want any injuries or accidents.

At Orchards our school rules are

Be kind, Work hard and Aim high!

Through the actions that we are taking in school, I hope you can see that we are striving to create the best conditions to allow for all children to truly thrive. For this to be as successful as possible, we ask for your continued support and encouragement.

The future of each and every child is incredibly important to us and we want all of our children to feel proud to be a member of the Orchards' community.

I wish you all a restful half term – for those who are going trick or treating, don't eat too many sweets!!!

We look forward to seeing you all back on Monday 3rd November.

Regards

Dr Homden

Dates for the diary:

Friday 24th October: School closed for teacher training day

Monday 27th October – Friday 31st October: Half term

Monday 3rd November: Children back to school for start of autumn 2 half term

Friday 19th December: Last day of term

Monday 22nd December – Friday 2nd January 2026 Christmas holidays

Monday 5th January 2026: School closed for staff training

Tuesday 6th January 2026: First day of spring term

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