



West Dean Church of England Primary School
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We do our best in all we do, with God's love.
'Love one another. As I have loved you, so must you love one another.'
John 13

Newsletter 1 - 09.09.2022



Dear God

We, the community of West Dean CE Primary School give thanks for the long life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and for all the ways she loved and served those in her care.

We bring you our sadness for what we have lost;
Our gratitude for what we remember and cherish;
And our wondering about what is to yet to come.

Thank you for the comfort, peace and hope that you bring us.
Amen

Dear Parents and Carers,

The events of the past 24 hours and the sad news of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has clearly and understandably brought the first week of the new autumn term to an unexpectedly sombre end. An event of this magnitude clearly has an impact on our communities at all levels, from our West Dean community to the global community and I shall say more about how we are and will continue to respond as a school slightly later in this letter.

However, it is important to stress that prior to yesterday's sad news, everything about the first week of term and the excellent start your children have made had been entirely positive. I sincerely hope that you enjoyed fun and relaxation during the summer with your families; rest assured that all of your children have returned refreshed and ready to go, with a renewed enthusiasm for learning and being at school with their friends. In assemblies this week we have been reminding ourselves of how we try to behave towards each other and have been discussing the idea of 'Think positive, Talk positive, Feel positive', which the children seem to have fully understood and immediately put into practice I am pleased to say.

I must take this opportunity to again thank you for your very generous end of year thank you gifts. I know I speak on behalf of the whole West Dean Team when I say we were overwhelmed by your kindness. Gifts are never expected, but are very much appreciated, so sincerely, thank you!

With the appointment of a new Prime Minister at the beginning of this week, who then herself met with the Queen just three days ago, I do not think anyone could have predicted how this week would end. The sense of collective shock and sadness is immense and we have had to think very carefully, but quickly too, about how to respond to Her Majesty's death respectfully and responsibly in the context of a primary school. Your children may well feel sadness themselves, or they may pick up on the sadness of adults, or at the very least they will have questions about what happens next.

As I explained in my communication to you earlier this morning, we felt it respectful to make some changes to our usual Friday collective worship. Instead of Acorn Assembly (which will happen on Monday instead) we gathered in the school hall for a short period of explanation, prayer and reflection led by myself and Rev Sarah. The children watched a sequence of pictures of the Queen's life whilst listening to music and considering their own thoughts and prayers. The children were then given the

opportunity to ask questions and discuss their own thinking with their teacher back in class, before continuing with normal lessons. As usual, your children have responded calmly, sensibly and with a great sense of care towards children and adults alike around them.

Our focus today was on remembering and showing gratitude for the Queen's life. Next week, we will begin to explore and explain what happens next, with the formal accession of King Charles III happening over this weekend. We know that there will not be any school closures during the national period of mourning, but I get a sense that it is a strong possibility that the day of the Queen's funeral could be declared a public holiday. I would expect confirmation of this to come fairly soon. A book of condolence has been opened on a table just inside the front door by the school office. Do please leave a message inside if you wish. The children will all be given the option to do so over the coming week.

In brighter, more positive news I am happy to announce that we will soon be welcoming a new school dog in to work with us. Monty, my own dog, is a one year old working cocker spaniel and will soon be coming into school on most, but not all days and will be based in my office. Please be assured that Monty has had the suitability of his temperament approved by a professional and is fully insured as a working school dog. There is wide research on the benefits of having animals, particularly dogs, in school and the positive impact this can have on the emotional wellbeing of children. The aim is that as Monty settles into life at West Dean the children will increasingly be able to interact with him, perhaps by reading to him or by simply stroking him, which can be calming and help children to manage their emotions. Please be assured that the dog will always be supervised by an adult. Our governors have discussed the proposal and are fully supportive of welcoming Monty to West Dean. If you have any concerns at all, including if you are aware that your child has any pet / dog related allergies, please do come and talk to me.



Beginning of term curriculum information

Please look out for the Curriculum Letter and Curriculum Overview Grid from your child's teacher, which will be sent out on Monday 12th September.

Parent information meetings with your child's class teacher will take place as follows:

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| Tuesday 13th September | 2.30 Beech Class Parent Information Session |
| Wednesday 14th September | 2.30, Apple and Maple Parent Information Session |
| Thursday 15th September | 2.30, Chestnut Class Parent Information Session |

Car Parking

Thank you to all who respect our policy and routines on car parking. We know that this is by no means easy, but we really appreciate your cooperation. A reminder please that the school car park is strictly for the parents of children in Apple and Maple Class only, during drop-off and pick-up. All other parents should seek parking elsewhere and we are grateful for the continued support of Nicky and her team at the pub, in allowing us to use their car park. Please park sensibly at the pub in a way that is respectful to other users.

Clubs and Carebears:

Clubs will begin w/c 19th September for 5 weeks, information will be available next week.

Our Care Bears facility is now open and available Monday to Thursday, 3.00-4.00 and can be pre-booked on-line at schoolmoney.co.uk.

Undoubtedly the next few days will feel strange, as we adjust to recent sad news and gradually learn of what happens next, but I wish you a peaceful and relaxing weekend with your families.

Chris Williams

Diary Dates 2022/23



2022/23 INSET Days

Thursday 1st & Friday 2nd September 2022

Monday 20th February 2023

Friday 31st March 2023

One final INSET day on a Monday/Friday in June or July — date TBC in early 2023

Autumn Term 2022 - Monday 5th September—Friday 16th December

Half Term—Monday 24th October—Friday 28th October

Spring Term 2023 - Tuesday 3rd January—Thursday 30th March

Easter Holiday—Monday 3rd April—Friday 14th April

Summer Term 2023 - Monday 17th April - Friday 21st July

Half Term: Monday 29th May—Friday 2nd June



Autumn Term 2022

Monday 12th September	First day of Autumn Term for Year R
Tuesday 13th September	2.30 Beech Class Parent Information Session
Wednesday 14th September	2.30, Apple and Maple Parent Information Session
Thursday 15th September	2.30, Chestnut Class Parent Information Session
Wednesday 28th September	Christ's Hospital Maths Challenge (Selected Year 5)
Tuesday 4th October	Bookfest visiting Author in school for Beech and Chestnut
Thursday 6th October	Flu Vaccination programme
Friday 7th October	8.45, Harvest Festival Assembly at West Dean Church
Thursday 13th October	Whole School Arboretum Day at West Dean Gardens
Monday 17th October	Hugo Van Driel Assembly
Friday 11th November	10.45, Remembrance Assembly
Monday 14th November	World Kindness Day
Thursday 17th November	8.45, Beech Class Assembly
Friday 18th November	Children in Need
Thursday 24th November	8.45, Chestnut Class Assembly
Monday 28th November	Hugo Van Driel Assembly
Thursday 1st December	8.45, Maple Class Assembly
Thursday 8th December	8.45, Apple Class Assembly