



ESHER CHURCH SCHOOL

Christ at the Centre; Life to the Full

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ECSnews

'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,
for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go. .' *Joshua 1:9*

Friday 11th September

Dear Parents

It has been brilliant to have all the children back in school with us over the last 7 days. They have returned to school with great enthusiasm, smiling faces and eager to learn. Thank you for bearing with us as we try to get the best possible arrangements in place for drop off and pick up—especially the latter which is quite a puzzle to organise. I think we are almost there but we really do appreciate your patience and understanding as we try to turn our 'on paper' plans into reality.

The teachers are in the process of producing a letter outlining everything you need to know about your child's new class, including their timetable and the learning your child will be covering this term. These will be with you early next week and I hope will answer all your questions about your child's new class.

We are also working on developing our remote learning strategy so that we have robust plans in place should we be subject to local lockdown or need to close any of our classes. Now that we have Microsoft Teams in place we will be in a good position to offer more face to face teaching remotely so that the children's learning can continue uninterrupted.

On that note, we are working really hard to ensure that we can keep the school open - you are likely to be aware of several local schools who have already had to close some classes and so I ask for your support with the following:

- Please do not bring your child to school if they are unwell. I appreciate that any illness is unlikely to be a symptom of Covid—but it could be. If we are concerned in school we will just send your child home which takes valuable staff time. You may be interested to read [this piece of research](#) based on the Covid symptom study app which highlights the symptoms displayed by children with Covid-19

Our Vision:

*To be a safe, happy, loving community where excellent teaching inspires children to learn and explore,
care for each other and believe that they can make a difference.*

- Please try to observe social distancing as best you can. I have had several concerns raised this week about lack of social distancing, particularly on the narrow path at the back of the school. If you are unable to maintain a 2m social distance please ensure you keep at a distance of 1m and take extra precautions by wearing a face covering. This path is too narrow for people to safely pass in different directions—if you need to leave the school via the back path please wait until the path clears of a queue before heading back along the path. Remember that you can walk through the school and leave via the Milbourne Lane exit if that is more convenient for you.

Thank you again for all your support and encouragement—it is very much appreciated.

Enjoy the weekend



Cathy Bell
Headteacher

Welcome to ECS! A big Esher Church School welcome goes out to our new joiners this term. They are Elise in Donaldson Class, Abigail in Butterworth Class, Charlie and Hettie in Blyton Class, Luke in Dahl Class, Peyton in Rosen Class, Bella, Kayla and Luke in Morpurgo Class, Cammi and Isabelle in Lewis Class and Sophia in Horowitz Class. They have all settled in beautifully and are making new friends. We are delighted to have you with us.

Our Reception children have met their teachers and begun their settling in sessions this week and Hargreaves and Inkpen Classes will begin filling up properly next week—they look so smart in their school uniforms and already seem ready to get stuck in to some serious learning.

And more welcomes We have also welcomed a few new faces to our staff team this term. We are delighted to have Miss Hunnable working with us as a Learning Support Assistant, Mrs Carleton who has joined us as a Year 6 class teacher, working alongside Mrs Skingle and Mrs Warner and Mrs Morris who have joined our admin team. You are all very welcome and we look forward to working with you.

Swimming We are looking forward to beginning swimming lessons from Tuesday next week. Parents of children in years 1-6 will have received a letter with timings and payment details earlier in the week. We omitted to mention that, if it makes it easier for your child to change, they may wear their ECS PE kit to school on swimming days—remember though that if your child normally wears a summer dress, that is probably easier still.

Jewellery A reminder to parents that our uniform policy stipulates that no jewellery (including earrings) can be worn by children in school. Thank you.

Exciting Changes Those of you that use the back gate will have noticed some large scale improvements going on in our EYFS outdoor area—and they are not finished yet as a lovely new surface will be laid next week. This work has been made possible thanks to contributions parents have made to the Governors' Buildings Fund, for which we are most grateful. I am also grateful to Helen Vernon, our School Business Manager, who spent much of her summer holiday in school overseeing the project. I am sure you will agree it will transform the outdoor learning environment for our youngest children.



We rely on contributions to the Governors' Buildings Fund to enable us to make these improvements. I have attached a letter from the Chair of our Governors' Finance Committee to give you more information about the fund and our future plans along with the forms you need to make a contribution if you don't already do so and would like to.

I look forward to sharing photos of our children enjoying their new space over the coming weeks.

Free School Meal Support Please have a look at the information on the next page to check whether you are eligible for free school meal support. This support goes beyond the provision of a school lunch and allows us to direct additional resources to your child's education as well as boosting our school funding. If you think you might be eligible please contact the school office.

Free School Meal Eligibility—Have your circumstances changed?

If you think you might be entitled to free school meals please get in touch with our office staff urgently. We can check your eligibility quickly with just your name and National Insurance Number. You may be eligible for free school meals if you are now eligible for any of the following:

- Income Support
 - income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
 - income-related Employment and Support Allowance
 - support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
 - Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
 - Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get).

During the outbreak the government are also temporarily extending free school meal eligibility to include some groups (subject to household income) that have no recourse to public funds, including:

- children of Zambrano carers
- children of families with no recourse to public funds with a right to remain in the UK on grounds of private and family life under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- children of families receiving support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 **who are also** subject to a no recourse to public funds restriction
- children of a subset of failed asylum seekers supported under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

If you think you might be eligible for free school meals please contact the school immediately. It is easy for us to check and we will be able to get vouchers to you if your child is at home during the school closure. Furthermore the school will receive additional funding to further support your child's education which can be used to support extra curricular activities, trips etc too.

Support from school and church

If you, or your child, are finding life a bit of a struggle at the moment and need some extra support please do get in touch with us. Our Home School Link Worker and ELSA support is still available by phone and we have had many parents and staff volunteer to reach out to anyone in need and offer any support they can. The staff teams at our local churches are also very happy to offer pastoral support. So whether you need something practical or just to have a chat with someone do please let us know. We will be really happy to help.