



# Wilden VA Church of England Primary School

High Street  
Wilden  
Bedford  
Bedfordshire  
MK44 2PB

Telephone: 01234 771313

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022

Dear parents and carers

As we are two weeks away from the end of this first half term, I thought it would be helpful to write to all parents to provide an update on what has been happening in school and what is going to be happening in school over the next few weeks and months.

Firstly, as I am sure you are aware, COVID continues to be cause significant issues for many schools locally and nationally. We have been very fortunate to escape the worst of any disruption and I am pleased that we have been able to maintain a relatively normal daily routine this half term. However, the potential for trouble is never far away and I would ask that parents remain vigilant for signs of COVID and take sensible precautions as required.

Secondly, you will hopefully have noticed that over the Christmas holidays, Phase 1 of our playground and Early Years development has been completed. New fencing, astroturf and a piece of climbing equipment have been installed to expand the EYFS outdoor space and to enable the children from Reception and Key Stage 1 to play safely in their own dedicated space at playtimes. We plan to continue to develop the playground over the next few years until it is fully completed in line with our designs.

We intend to hold another Meet the Headteacher and Governors Evening on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February to outline our plans for the school moving forward, particularly in respect to the partnership agreement that we have with Riseley Church of England Primary School. As the Executive Headteacher, my role is to lead both schools but also to fulfil our desire to work together more collaboratively for the benefit of all the children and staff. This is a mammoth task and requires a great deal of planning and consideration. I am pleased to report that plans are now in place and are beginning to be put into action to develop a truly collaborative leadership model across the two schools.

As part of this new structure, we have recently secured the services of Mrs Cremona who will be our new Family Support Worker. She will work across the two schools, supporting children and families both in school and at home if needed. She brings a wealth of experience to both schools and is a very welcome addition to the staff team.

In the near future, the partnership will be looking to employ a Cover Supervisor and Sports Coaches to work across both schools, providing support and expertise ensuring that our teaching assistants are able to deliver the high quality interventions the children need.

You will also be aware that we have organised two residential trips for our children in Year 6 and Years 4 and 5 for the Summer Term. It is fantastic that the children will once again be able to experience these opportunities after almost two years of disruption. Huge thanks to both Mr Starling and Mrs Byrne for organising these trips and communicating with parents.

Our next big project is to further develop our Forest School provision. I'm sure that many of you will have seen the communications on Twitter about our Forest School activities. However, with Mrs Boshoff now starting her Level 3 Forest School Leader Award, we aim to expand this provision to expand the opportunities we provide for outdoor learning in line with the school's curriculum offer.

Over the next few months, the staff and I will be working hard to tweak our curriculum to ensure that it truly offers the learning we want for your children in line with our school vision and values. We believe deeply that education is about far more than just the academic but must also provide opportunities for children to develop their spiritual, moral, emotional, physical and cultural education as well.

This week, the children in Year 6 have been completing their mock SATs and the remaining year groups will be completing their PiXL tests over the next couple of weeks. We plan to offer our second Parents Evening on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March from 3.30pm-7pm. Letters and booking details will be sent out shortly.

As you will be aware, an additional bank holiday has been announced for 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Department for Education (DfE) have laid regulations before parliament to reduce the minimum number of sessions schools are required to meet in the academic year 2021/22 as a result of this additional bank holiday.

Most schools will be on their half term breaks in the week commencing 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022, but where the additional bank holiday falls in term time, the DfE have advised that schools and councils should observe the Bank Holidays on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June and may therefore need to prepare and make any amendments to their published term dates for the academic year 2021/22. In practice this means that where this additional bank holiday falls during half-term week, schools will be able to identify another day of 'holiday' elsewhere in the year on which staff will not be required to work and will be given an equivalent day's paid leave.

To reflect the additional bank holiday, the draft regulations reflect a change in the number of days that teachers must be available to work under their terms and conditions for this academic year. Teachers will be required to be available to work on one less day for the academic year 2021/22, down from 190 to 189 days (plus five INSET days), across 1,258.5 hours as opposed to 1,265 hours of directed time. An extra day of holiday will therefore need to be allocated by individual schools.

As a result, I have chosen Monday 6<sup>th</sup> June as the additional day. This means that the school will be closed, and children will return from the half term holiday on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June.

Finally, just a quick reminder that the last day of this half term is Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February and all children will return to school on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February.

Yours sincerely

Mr Leigh Pointon  
Executive Headteacher

