

**OWLSMOOR** PRIMARY SCHOOL



PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027



# Owlsmoor – ‘Where everyone matters’

## Inclusive – Determined – Safe – Kind - Respect

At Owlsmoor Primary School we have a vision where achieving excellence is at the heart of everything we do. Where children are eager to learn and are supported to reach their full potential. Where every individual is recognised for who they are and who they can be, with no limits to their aspirations.

The Owlsmoor curriculum, true to our children and locality, will excite and inspire every single child so that they develop a thirst for learning and curiosity within safe learning spaces. Where they are confident to make mistakes in an environment where children can be children.

Where the whole school community supports and includes all of its members and helps them to grow. Where Owlsmoor Primary School is recognised as a hub of excellence which has a thriving relationship with its community and is the school of choice.

Where children are fully prepared for the next step of their learning journey to become independent global citizens and make a positive contribution to the world.

### **RRS**

Owlsmoor Primary School is a rights respecting school, which means we teach our pupils about children's rights and work hard to model and discuss 'rights' and 'respect' in all aspects of school life. This is achieved through curriculum areas, focused key stage assemblies, the school council, school policies, daily practices and the relationships between teachers/adults and children. When discussing children's rights, we refer to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The five main rights that we focus on in school are:

- The right to learn (Article 28)
- The right to be safe (Articles 11, 17, 19, 32, 33, 34, 35)
- The right to be healthy (Article 24)
- The right to be heard (Articles 12 and 13)
- The right to play (Article 31)

Children from Years 1 to 6 are voted to be Rights Respecting Champions to ensure the school is meeting these five rights. More information can be found on the school's website, where you can also meet the RRS Champions.

### **Safeguarding**

Owlsmoor Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We have a number of policies and procedures in place that contribute to our safeguarding commitment, including our Child Protection Policy which can be viewed in the Policies section of our website.

Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will try to ensure that all significant concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe that such a move would be contrary to the child's welfare.

We actively support the Government's Prevent Agenda to counter radicalism and extremism.

Our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are Mr. Cope (Headteacher) Our Deputy DSL's are Mr Smith (Deputy Headteacher), Mrs. Shepherd (Family Support Advisor) and Mrs. Toal (Nursery Teacher).

## **The School Day**

### **Getting to school**

Due of the size of the school and the constraints of space, we ask parents to observe the following when bringing their children to school:

- ★ Families will bring the children into school and round to their relevant outside classroom doors.
- ★ You can enter the school site through either:
  - Front main pedestrian gate.
  - Double Nursery Gates,
  - The back gate.
- ★ Gates will be open in the morning at 8:30am and will have a member of staff there to greet you in the morning. The school day starts at **8:45am**.
- ★ Parking – please do not park in the school car park when dropping off or collecting at the end of the school day. If you are dropping off or collecting from the Breakfast or After School Club the easiest entrance to use is the small pedestrian gate on Cambridge Rd. If you have a valid disability badge, are collecting a sick child or collecting after school hours then the school car park can be used.
- ★ Bicycles and scooters – we encourage children to come into school on bicycles and scooters. We have several bike shelters around school for storage. For safety reasons, bikes and scooters are not to be used on school grounds; the children are required to dismount before entering the school gates. We encourage all children who are cycling and scootering to wear helmets which can be stored in the children's lockers. Bicycles and scooters are brought to school at the owner's risk - our insurance does not cover the personal property of children. During the summer term, children in Year 5 are invited to take part in 'Bikeability' - a Cycling Training Scheme run by Bracknell Forest.

### **Going home**

Children in EYFS and KS1 are dismissed from the classroom by the class teacher or teaching assistant. The children will only be allowed to go if the member of staff can see the adult collecting them. Children in KS2 are allowed to leave the classroom independently and it is up to individual families to decide where to meet their child. The gates are opened for parents at 3.00pm; you can then wait in one of the playgrounds until the bell rings at 3.15pm The very last day of the autumn, spring and summer terms ends at 2.00pm.

## **Dogs**

We follow the strict Bracknell Forest rule of not allowing any dogs other than guide dogs on the school site and ask parents to abide by this. If you walk your dog when bringing and collecting your child, the dog must remain outside the school.

## **Mobile Phones**

Children who bring mobile phones to school are asked to give them to their class teacher for the day and mustn't leave them in the children's lockers. The use of mobile phones by adults is not allowed on the school premises.

## **Smoking**

Owlsmoor is strictly a 'No Smoking' school. The rule applies to everyone who uses the school buildings and grounds and parents are asked not to smoke, or vape, on the premises – including the playgrounds.

## **Absence**

If your child is absent, please let us know. A telephone message (by 9.15am please) We need to be informed of the reason for every absence - failure to let us know will count as an "unauthorised absence" or truancy. The school is required by law to publish attendance rates each year. If we have not heard from you by 9.15, we will contact you as it is imperative to know from a safeguarding perspective, if your child was sent to school but has not yet arrived!

If your child is suffering from a stomach upset or has diarrhoea, please do not send them back to school until **48 hours** after the last bout of sickness as stomach bugs can spread very quickly throughout a class.

## **Breaktimes and lunchtimes**

All the children in KS1 and KS2 have a 20 minute break mid-morning and a one hour break at lunchtime.

It is important that all the children get some fresh air and have a run about at breaktimes. Normally children will be kept indoors at breaktime only if they have a serious medical condition or it is pouring with rain. The medical opinion is that for the normal range of minor coughs and colds, it is much better for the children to be outside in the fresh air! There are several water fountains around the school for use at breaktimes, but all children should bring in a named water bottle daily. We only allow children to have water at breaktimes rather than flavoured waters or squash. They may have juice in their lunchbox however. Breaktime snacks are allowed but should only consist of fruit or vegetables; fruit-based biscuits, bars etc are only allowed at lunchtime as part of their packed lunch.

Due to the number of children we stagger lunchtimes. Nursery pupils have lunch in their classroom between 12.00 and 1.00pm. Reception and Years 1 and 2 have lunchtime between 11.45am and 12.45pm; KS2 have lunch between 12.15pm and 1.15pm. All children except for those in Nursery have their lunch in the school hall.

## **Lunch**

School meals are available for the children in Reception – Year 6. The meals are cooked on the premises by a private contractor, and all meals form part of a healthy and balanced menu. The menu is available in the office or on-line.

We prefer children to pay for meals termly. However, we operate a flexible system where the children may alternate between a school lunch and a packed lunch. Currently all children in Reception and Year 1 and 2 automatically receive free school meals. Families in receipt of Income Support may qualify for free school meals for children in KS2. Full details may be obtained from the School Office.

Some parents prefer their children to have a packed lunch. This should be brought to school in a clearly named lunch box. Drinks containers should be watertight (no cans or glass bottles please). Children should not have sweets in their packed lunches.

## **Uniform**

We expect all the children to be smartly turned out and to wear uniform to school. A uniform list is given in the appendix and a link to our supplier Brenda's can be found on the school website.

Long hair should be tied up, and we ask that any hair accessories are small, practical and discreet – overly large bow, flowers etc. will be asked to be removed. Earrings should be silver or gold studs and, for safety reasons, must be able to be removed by the child for PE. We ask that if children are getting their ears pierced this is done at the beginning of the summer holidays so that by September, the earrings can be easily taken out for PE sessions. Nail varnish or make-up of any sort should not be worn.

## **PE and Swimming**

Children undertake 2 sessions of PE every week. One of these sessions is taught by Mr Methven, a professional sports coach, and the other is taught by the class teacher. We go outside throughout the year so children need to ensure that they have suitable clothing for all weather – tracksuits and trainers for the winter and hats in the summer. Tights should not be worn in PE; girls need to ensure they have a pair of socks in their PE bag if they have worn tights to school.

Due to the requirements of the National Curriculum, the school funds all children in Year 4 to go swimming; this is usually in the autumn term. The swimming lessons are done on the site at Owlsmoor Primary School The lessons are matched to the ability and confidence of the child.

## **Breakfast and After School Club**

The school runs a Breakfast Club from 8.00am to 8.45am and an After School Club from 3.15pm – 6pm for all children from Reception to Year 6. It is managed by Mrs Helen Toal.

## **School Activity Clubs**

Children have the opportunity to join a number of clubs that are held either at lunchtime or after school run by our staff – usually from 3.15pm to 4.00pm. After school clubs will require parental consent. On occasion clubs will ask for a contribution towards resources e.g. science clubs. Information about clubs is given in newsletters, and letters about all clubs are sent out termly.

We also have a number of external providers, providing a range of clubs both after school and before school. These are chargeable and information can be found via the school office.

## **Holiday Camps**

We are fortunate enough to be able to offer holiday camps here at Owlsmoor Primary School. The camps are run by In2Sport and are very popular. The camps cater for 5yrs – 11yrs. The camps run through most of the main holidays.

## **Emergency Procedures**

**Emergency Closures** - Very occasionally the school has to close at short notice - in cases of extreme snow conditions, breakdown of the heating system or water systems. We have arrangements with local radio stations who will broadcast emergency closure announcements when the school is closed. If there is an exceptionally heavy fall of snow, please listen to: Heart Thames Valley (97 or 102.9 MHz VHF) or BBC Radio Berkshire (94.6, 95.4, 104.1 or 104.4 MHz VHF) for announcements. We will also put a message out on our school website and will send a text message out to parents. If a closure is not mentioned through any of these communication channels, school is open as usual!

## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Classes**

We are a 2 form entry school, with a maximum of 60-64 children per year group. All our classes are named after birds, themed according to the year group.

Nursery – Puffins

Reception - garden birds: Wagtails, Robins and Blackbirds

Year 1 - woodland birds: Woodpeckers, Chaffinches and Nuthatches

Year 2 - birds from the Southern Hemisphere: Parakeets, Penguins and Kookaburras

Year 3 – water birds: Swans and Pelicans

Year 4 – tropical birds: Flamingos, Toucans and Hummingbirds

Year 5 – flightless birds: Emus, Ostriches and Kiwis

Year 6 – birds of prey: Eagles, Falcons and Kites

We take a lot of time to ensure that our classes are as balanced as possible, in terms of gender, ability and personality! At the end of the academic year we make the decision about whether or not the classes should be mixed for the following year, or whether they should move up as they are. If they are going to be mixed up, in the summer term the children are asked to write a list naming 6 people with whom they would like to be in a class. When deciding upon classes we use these friendship lists and ensure that every child gets at least one person from their list in their class.

## Curriculum

We are proud of the curriculum that we offer at Owlsmoor. Our curriculum comprises of all the learning and other experiences that we plan, to meet the needs and interests of our pupils. It constantly evolves in order to ensure that we are developing the skills needed for our children to become successful citizens of modern Britain and empower them to achieve success in the future.

Our curriculum intentions are:

- To deliver an ambitious and knowledge-rich curriculum that is broad and balanced
- To ensure pupils develop the behaviours, attitudes and habits to become effective learners
- To develop pupils' character and cultural capital
- To develop pupils' understanding of how to keep physically and mentally healthy, and how to keep themselves safe
- To provide for pupils' broader development and equip them for future success

At Owlsmoor we work hard to teach in a cross-curricular way when possible; this means that in most terms there will be a theme or topic that links most lessons. Information about what each year group is learning in each of the subject areas is put onto the school website at the start of each term. As a state funded school we are required by law to follow the National Curriculum which sets out statutory elements to be taught in the following subjects: English, maths and science (often called the 'core' curriculum), and computing, geography, history, art and design, design technology, PE (including swimming), music and, in KS2, a foreign language (the 'foundation' subjects). We also teach PSHE (personal, social, health education) and RE.

**RE** - We have a legal requirement to teach RE to all the children unless their parents have specifically requested that they be excluded from all or part of a lesson (Education Acts 1944, 1988 and 1993). We follow the agreed syllabus which is set by the local authority; our RE lessons adopt a very broad approach. Parents are welcome to see the syllabus on request.

**RSHE** – (Relationship and sex education, and health education) is a statutory subject from September 2020, and in our school it is covered within our PSHE curriculum. Our 'Relationship' and 'Health' curriculum content is made available to parents so that they are aware of what is covered in school and how; however, parents do not have the right to withdraw their child from these aspects of the curriculum. 'Sex Education' is covered discretely in year 6 in an age-appropriate way: parents are notified of this near the time and are invited in to find out what will be covered and preview resources – parents do have the right to withdraw their child from this aspect of the curriculum if they wish to. Please note, decisions on the right to withdraw from subjects are made at national level not at school level.

## **EYFS – Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children under the Early Years Foundation Stage – those in Nursery and Reception - follow a programme which focuses on helping them develop basic skills. This leads naturally into the National Curriculum and provides the basis for future learning.

### **Nursery**

We understand that deciding on Nursery provision for your child is a challenging task for many parents, and many factors need to be taken into consideration. We aim to provide the best possible start to each and every child's education: promoting independence and confidence; monitoring and developing key personal and academic skills; celebrating and modelling core values and nurturing a love of learning.

The nursery is led by a fully qualified teacher, and supported by a Nursery Nurse and/or teaching assistants. We are offering flexible provision, comprising sessions in either the morning, the afternoon or all day. Every three year old is entitled to a maximum of 15 hours of fee-funded provision, though parents may request additional sessions and pay a fee for the time over and above the funded hours.

### **Homework**

Currently, all year groups are set homework to varying degrees. All children are expected to read a minimum of 4 times per week, as well as practise times tables (Year 1 upwards) and spellings. More information about the expectation of what children should be doing at home is given at the 'Meet the Teacher' meetings held at the start of each academic year; the Homework Policy and a homework timetable (setting out when homework is given and expected back in class) are both on the school website.

We are looking at how we deliver Home Learning and there will be a brand new Home learning policy launched in September.

### **SEND and Intervention**

All SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) matters are monitored by our Inclusion Manager, Mrs Beth Sneddon, in liaison with class teachers and Mr Cope. SEND encompasses a wide range of needs, from behaviour, physical needs, those children for whom English is an additional language and of course for learning needs. Learning needs might mean children who are not making expected progress, are not able to access the curriculum or those children whose abilities are far beyond the expected level for their age. If you have concerns about any special needs that your child might have, please speak with your child's class teacher in the first instance, who will then refer the matter to Mrs. Sneddon. Intervention groups are run by teachers and teaching assistants.

### **Behaviours**

At Owlsmoor we are very proud of the excellent behaviour of our. We know that children who are respected and actively engaged in the learning process are far more likely to behave well, and we work hard to ensure that this happens. Children are rewarded for making the right choices and for following our values through house points and, at playtimes, by being given a raffle ticket. Each week one raffle ticket for each house in KS1 and KS2 is chosen at random and the winner gets a small prize. We have a code of conduct which all children are expected to follow and a clear protocol that is followed by all staff for when children's behaviour is not quite what it should be. When the

behaviour of a child is consistently not good, or when there is a serious incident, we involve parents and try to tackle the matter jointly. Where positive sanctions have clearly failed, the Headteacher and Governors may exercise their right to suspend a pupil. It is important that the welfare and education of the other children is not disrupted by the inconsiderate behaviour of others.

### **Trips and Visitors**

All year groups go on at least one trip per year; this trip is usually related to the topic that the children have been learning about. We try hard to keep the cost of the trip to a minimum and the cost per child is usually between £25 and £30. Whilst the cost is termed 'a voluntary contribution' (and we ask parents who feel unable to pay to speak with us), trips may be cancelled if not enough funds are received. These trips are entirely funded by the school.



We sometimes organise external speakers or visitors, such as authors and scientists, to come to the school either as part of a termly topic or as part of a themed week.

### **Themed Weeks and Special Days**

In the course of the academic year we plan themed weeks – these are not the same every year, but in the past we have had weeks for science, maths, the arts (dance, music and drama), and PSHE/Anti-bullying. Some of our special days have included French Day, Healthy Mind Day, and Geography Day. We also support raising money for charities such as Comic and Sports Relief, as well as Children In Need.

### **House System**

All children when they join the school are put into one of four houses – Earth, Wind, Fire or Water. Siblings are put into the same house to avoid family arguments! The children are able to earn house points through good work or behaviour, politeness – such as holding a door open for others or for helping run errands. They can earn single house points or tokens – yellow tokens are worth 5 points and blue tokens are worth 10 points. Children in Year 6 are chosen by their peers to be House Captains and children from Year 5 are likewise chosen to be Vice House Captains. Each week the captains count the number of house points earned and inform the rest of the school, and at the end of each term the house with the highest number of house points earns a treat – usually a film and popcorn. Year 6 compete in house competitions for football, rounders, cricket and netball, and all children compete in their houses on Sports Day.

### **Secondary Schools**

At the end of Year 6 the majority of our pupils transfer to Sandhurst School, (a mixed comprehensive with approximately 1000 children on roll) although some children transfer to Edgbarrow, or schools outside the local area. We enjoy very close links with our feeder schools and collaborate regularly. In the summer term the Year 6 teachers meet with staff from Sandhurst and from other local schools to ensure that the transition from primary to secondary is as smooth as possible. Parents are welcome to discuss any queries and concerns about the choice of secondary school and any particular concerns about transition with the year 6 teachers or with Mr Cope.

### **Involving Parents**

## **Newsletters**

A monthly newsletter is emailed to all parents on the first Friday of the month. This provides general news, requests and reminders, and updates from each year group about what they are up to. Newsletters can be provided on request and are also published on the school website.

## **Facebook**

The school administrates several 'closed group' Facebook pages: there is a general Owlsmoor page for all parents as well as a page for each year group. Essentially these pages are forums for parents to ask each other questions; we will never make announcements on Facebook alone and will generally only respond to direct questions, rather than comment on individual posts made. Parents wishing to join a group should apply through our website [www.owlsmoorprimary.com](http://www.owlsmoorprimary.com). Please read the terms and conditions to avoid inappropriate behaviour/usage; these can be found at the top of each group page. We reserve the right to bar any parent should they make inappropriate comments. We would hope that any parent with a serious concern or complaint would speak directly to Mr. Cop or another member of staff.

## **Parent Helpers**

At Owlsmoor we are very grateful for the many parents who help in the classrooms and with jobs around the school. Some parents come in regularly at a set time each week, others come when they can. Some help with tasks at home. Many of the activities the children currently enjoy would not be possible without this voluntary help. For safeguarding purposes, parents who come in need to complete a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) form.

## **Performances and Class Assemblies**

Certain classes perform a class assembly to share what they have been learning. Certain year groups will also prepare an annual play, and parents are also invited to Harvest and Christmas productions. We request that any photos taken at these events are only of your child(ren) and are not uploaded to any social networking sites.

## **Parent Consultations and Reports**

Formal Parents' Consultations are held twice a year - in the autumn and spring terms. These are held 'Virtually' and on the days the school closes at 12:00pm. These afternoons and evenings give an opportunity to discuss with the teacher the progress made. Children in Years 5 and 6 are invited to attend the meetings with their parents. Written reports are given out in the summer term; should parents wish to discuss this with the teacher they are invited to make an appointment.

Teachers are very happy to see parents at other times; if more time than a quick question after school is needed, then please make an appointment with your class teacher.

In September we invite parents in for a 'Meet the Teacher' meeting. Parents are informed about classroom routines, homework, plans for the year and any other relevant information. We warmly encourage all parents to attend.

## **PTA**

The PTA (Parent Teacher Association) plays a major role in the life of the school.

The Association exists to further the aims of the school by providing a link between home and school and by raising funds to buy much needed resources for the benefit of the children. The equipping of the Library, Studio and the purchase of many of our books, computers, the hall staging and lighting, as well as the pond were funded by the PTA.

### **Family Support Advisors**

Our FSA Mrs Tina Shepherd is an additional source of support for parents and can help with a wide variety of issues, not just those connected with education. She can provide information, help and support in many areas such as health, parenting skills, training, finance, relationship breakdown and employment, as well as starting school or moving to secondary school.

The key role of the FSA is to work with families to help overcome any barriers to children's learning by providing advice and support in those difficult times, when it can be hard to know where to turn. Please ask the office for a leaflet if you would like to know more.

## **Day to Day Information**

### **Attendance**

Regular attendance is essential if the children are going to make progress at school. Holidays should not be booked for term time as this may incur a fine. You may also receive letters, or be invited in for a meeting, if your child's attendance falls below an acceptable level. The school will involve the EWO (Education Welfare Officer), who works for the Local Authority, where necessary. At the end of the academic year parents will be sent a computer-generated attendance report.

### **INSET days**

Every year there are five INSET (in-service training) days, usually at the beginning of a term or half term. These are important training days for staff and children do not attend school on these days. The dates of the INSET days can be found on the school website and, for the new academic year, at the back of this handbook; term dates are also included on this page.

### **Medical matters**

Please ensure that you have clearly stated on the admission form if your child has a medical condition about which we should know. We will also need to know if they need to take any regular medication in school; a letter from their GP will need to be provided.

If your child suffers from a "life threatening" condition, it is essential that this is discussed fully with the Headteacher at the time of admission. Short term medicine will only be administered if:

- a) A green or Lilac medication forms, available from the office, must be completed by the parent or guardian;
- b) Parents understand that the school will not be held liable for any missed doses.

For those children suffering from asthma, we keep their inhaler in the classroom for use as required.

First Aid - The school is well equipped to administer immediate first aid. All staff have received basic first aid training and a number of the staff are qualified first aiders. We also have some staff who are trained to use the school's defibrillator.

When a child has received first aid treatment this is recorded in our first aid logbook and a white slip is sent home for any head injuries. As well the white slips children are given red head bump bands that are placed on their wrists so that everyone is aware they have had a bump to their heads. If the injury is to the head or is bordering on the serious we telephone the parents. If there is any doubt, an ambulance will be called.

The Headteacher reserves the right to act in "loco parentis" and authorise emergency treatment if it is not possible to contact a parent.

### **Pupil Premium**

Children whose parents receive support payments such as Income Support, Child or Universal Credit or Jobseeker's Allowance may be entitled to receive free school meals (FSM). The school receives money – a Pupil Premium Grant – for each child who is eligible for FSM, is 'looked after' or whose family is in military service, and the money is spent in a variety of ways that ensure that these children are able to access the curriculum fully and make as much progress as possible. Even though children in Reception and KS1 automatically receive free school meals, we encourage parents who think they would qualify to apply as there are other benefits. For example the school meets the cost of school trips – including the Year 6 residential trip - and extra-curricular clubs. Children who have been in receipt of FSM, even for a limited time, are still entitled to this support for six years afterwards. Further details about how we spend the Pupil Premium money can be found on the website. Also to apply for FSM/Pupil premium please go on this link

<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/school-meals/how-do-i-apply-free-school-meals>

### **Personal data**

The school maintains on computer a database which contains information about each child. The information includes personal details (as given by parents on registration) and information concerning academic achievements. Parents are welcome to inspect the data we hold and should note that the school is a registered data user under the terms of the Data Protection Act.

We ask parents to complete a form to agree to the use of photos or videos on the school website, in displays around school or off site (for example at the library) or in the school prospectus or other printed materials. We follow strict guidelines in order to keep the children safe, for example not using the children's full names.



It is extremely important that we are informed if any of the information (i.e. address or telephone number) changes.

### **Keeping children safe online**

Children at Owlsmoor use the internet frequently to support their learning. They have regular e-safety lessons teaching them to use the internet safely and how to stay safe online. This is done at an appropriate level for their age; older year groups for example learn about cyber-bullying and privacy settings on social media sites.

### **Lost property**

Named items are returned to the children as soon as possible. Every so often we will display all un-named items in the playground and any uncollected clothing or items are disposed of. We strongly encourage parents to name all items clearly, with either woven/printed nametapes or permanent pen. All unnamed lost property is kept in a cupboard in the link corridor near the library.

### **Photographs**

Twice a year we are visited by the school photographer. In the autumn term, the children have individual and sibling photos taken; in the summer term class photos are taken. The prints are available to parents at a reasonable cost.