



## Back to School Newsletter September 2023

We are looking forward to welcoming the children back to school.

The children's first day back will be **Tuesday 5th September**. This may be earlier than other local schools because our children will have a two week half term holiday in October while most schools have just one week.

The changes to our school times begin this term.

**8.00am** Breakfast club begins (to book a place please contact the school office)

**8.40am** School gate opens

**8.50am** School Day begins *\*please note the earlier time the gate closes*

**9.00am** West Down preschool children start

**3.00pm** Reception children and West Down preschool children finish

**3.20pm** school finishes (Reception children may stay until 3.20 - please speak to the class teacher.

*\*please note the later time school finishes*

### Lessons during the first weeks

We will continue our timetable with some teachers moving around different classes in the afternoons to teach 'their' subject from Monday 12th September. Until then we will have a more flexible timetable to enable teachers to settle the children back into class, establish strong routines and clear expectations. We will also be thinking about our school vision and values and what it means to be part of a supportive community. On Thursday 7th September - all children in Y1-Y6 will be going to Collard Bridge for a day in nature building a strong team. Please ensure you have completed the forms in Parentmail letting us know what your child wants for lunch and also to let us know when KS2 children will be going home.

**West Berry Federation**

### Vision and Values

*"Streams today, oceans tomorrow"*

**Our Vision**  
Being the best that we can be;  
committed to making a difference.

A holistic curriculum which engages and excites through creativity and curiosity, opening windows onto the world

Develop independent, collaborative, motivated, self-reflective learners, through excellent teaching and learning

Give every child the opportunity to become self-assured, confident and compassionate; able to have a fulfilled life

The West Berry family - working together  
to broaden horizons and constantly improve the outcomes for each of our children

### Our Values

<b>Truth</b> Freedom Honesty Justice	<b>Respect</b> Responsibility Integrity co-operation	<b>Courage</b> Questioning Bravery Self-assurance	<b>Endurance</b> Hope Determination Perseverance	<b>Compassion</b> Forgiveness Humility Patience	<b>Confidence</b> Calm Inner Strength Flourish	<b>Curiosity</b> Questioning Reasoning Growth Mindset
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## **Talking to Teachers**

Lots of things can change in five weeks and you may have important information to share with your child's teacher. The first morning back is extremely busy and it is important that teachers can give their full attention to the children. If you have an urgent message for your child's teacher, you may find it easier to write it down or email us in advance to [parents@westberryfederation.org.uk](mailto:parents@westberryfederation.org.uk). Brief messages can also be left with the member of staff on the gate. Teachers will be available at the end of the day or please make an appointment to meet properly to discuss more complicated issues.

## **Morning gate at West Down**

We are aware that children have been arriving in good time to school which is wonderful to see. To make the mornings safer, children can wait with their parent just inside the school gate to the right. Children will be allowed onto the playground and will be supervised by a member of staff from 8.40am. Please stay with your child until 8.40am or book them into breakfast club if you need an earlier drop off time.

## **Change of classes at West Down - where to collect your child**

We moved the classrooms around at the end of term. A member of staff will be on the gate at the end of the school day to show you where to go to collect Maple and Cherry children.

Willow and Oak children will be dismissed from their classroom and should arrange an appropriate meeting point unless they are walking home alone. Children will be reminded to come back into class if they can't find the adult who is due to collect them.

## **End of day routine at West Down**

Preschool children finish at 3pm. YR children finish school at 3pm but can stay until 3.20pm - please speak to your child's teacher if your children will be collected at 3.20pm. All other pupils finish school at 3.20pm. Cherry and Maple children will be dismissed from their classrooms at 3.10pm when the staff see the child's parent. Please let the teacher know if someone other than the child's parent will be collecting your child.

## **End of day routine at Berrynarbor**

YR children finish school at 3pm but can stay until 3.20pm - please speak to your child's teacher if your children will be collected at 3.20pm. All other pupils will finish school at 3.20pm.

Mulberry and Aspen children will be dismissed from the gate closest to the church when a member of staff sees the child's parent. Please let the teacher know if someone other than the child's parent will be collecting your child.

Pine and Alder children will be dismissed from the second gate furthest from the church. To support the children to leave school safely, a member of staff will allow the children to leave one at a time or in small groups when they can see the child's parent or if they know the child walks home or to another meeting point. If the member of staff can see an adult waiting they will try and call the child forward but please be patient as it takes a while to get all the children out of school safely. If your child is walking home alone or meeting you out of sight of the school gate please let us know. Controlling the numbers of children passing through the gate avoids overcrowding the road and makes the area outside of school safer for children and drivers.

## **Parent Information Evening**

Please come along to our Parent Information Evening and hear about our plans for the year ahead, meet some of the staff team and explore our school. The meetings are open to federation families and will be repeated at each school so please attend either school

**Berrynarbor 5.30-6.30 on Thursday 21st September**  
**West Down 5.30-6.30 on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September**

## **Uniform, Equipment for school and belongings**

Please refer to the Parent Information sheet for each school found in the Parent Helpdesk on our website for details of uniform and stationery that children will need as well as what children don't need and so shouldn't bring to school. We haven't changed this information - it is the same as previous years.

We are aware that some coloured polo shirts are proving tricky to find this year. Pedlars in Ilfracombe may be able to source our school colours and their polo shirts, though slightly more expensive than the supermarkets, are excellent quality and wash well. Polo shirts are also available online from school uniform retailers like yourschooluniform.com, myschoolstyle.com or direct from the manufacturers like trutex.com Please pass on or sell outgrown uniform items to reduce waste and save money - the parent facebook pages can be used to advertise school uniform items for sale and our PTFAs will continue to run uniform pop up shops to sell any donated items.

Shoes for school can be of any colour but should be suitable for the season (waterproof in autumn and winter), safe for running around in and comfortable for sitting on the floor. Shoes with heels, slip on shoes and open toed sandals are not suitable. Trainers are a good option.

While the weather is fine please make sure that your child has all day sun cream applied before school and a sun hat. As the weather becomes more unsettled please ensure that your child has a warm and waterproof coat in school when needed. Unfortunately, some fashion coats are only water resistant and seem to soak water into the outer layer making them cold and damp after they've been hanging on a peg for a few hours.

Children Y1-Y6 will need a PE kit for lessons when they will get very sweaty or wet and muddy - PE kit should include plain white polo, plain black shorts/leggings or joggers, spare trainers (they may get wet or muddy), spare socks and pants in case your child gets wet.

Please make sure the children have (all items are labelled individually with your child's name):

- PE kit in a drawstring bag (spare clothes for younger children can be stored in these bags too)
- Book bags (Cherry, Mulberry, Aspen, Maple and Pine class)
- Pencil case and stationery from list (Willow, Oak, Pine and Alder Class)
- Small rucksack (Willow, Oak, and Alder Class) space is very limited!

Children in Willow, Pine, Oak and Alder may bring a snack for morning playtime. Cherry, Mulberry, Aspen and Maple children are provided with a fruit snack during the morning and so do not usually need to bring a snack from home. Snacks should be healthy whole foods (fresh fruit or veg, boiled eggs etc). Please do not send sweetened breads, cakes, cereal bars, confectionery, dried fruit, biscuits, fruit leather (eg fruit yoyo bears or similar) or nuts.

### **Lunch and Free Meals**

All children in YR, Y1 and Y2 can order a free meal each day as part of the Universal Infant Free School Meals entitlement. These meals are ordered during registration each day.

Preschool children and children in KS2 can order a school meal during registration and parents should pay for this on Parentmail.

Some families may be eligible for Free School Meals - please apply if you think you might be eligible even if your child gets a free Infant Meal because the Free School Meal entitlement also unlocks additional funding for school and your family.

Children may bring a packed lunch to school. Packed lunch should be healthy and not contain sweets or chocolate bars (chocolate biscuits are fine as a treat). Please avoid nuts and nut products.

### **School Dinners West Down**

Charlotte has moved into a new role as part of the Cherry Class team so we have recruited a new Kitchen Manager who will be supported by Kirsten. Our new kitchen manager is Hilary and we are thrilled that she is joining our team.

### **Attendance**

Children starting in YR sometimes need a phased start to school to help them adapt to school life. This should be discussed with the class teacher with the aim to support the child to attend school full time as soon as possible.

Children should attend school everyday unless they are unwell or there is another exceptional reason for absence from school that has been agreed by the school in advance.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school on time everyday. Schools are only allowed by law, to authorise non-medical absences if requested in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides. A school can only authorise such a request if they are satisfied that there are "exceptional circumstances" which apply. However, even if there are exceptional circumstances, schools can still consider any other relevant factors such as previous attendance rates; the ability of the pupil to catch-up on missed work; the wider impact of missing the specified period of time. Requests for holiday absence will not usually be authorised.

Parents should ensure that they know whether the absence will be authorised or not as an **unauthorised absence may result in a penalty notice or court summons being issued to each parent for each pupil affected**. It is therefore recommended that parents complete the S2 absence request form (available on the school website or from the school office) **at least three school weeks** before the requested absence.

### **Reporting absence**

If your child is not able to attend school, please telephone the school before 9.30am to let us know. If you are leaving a message, please tell us:

- Child's name
- Reason for the absence
- Expected length of the absence

*If your child is absent from school and we haven't heard why, we have to consider them as missing. In this event we do what we can to find out where your child is contacting all of the child's parents and using all of their emergency contacts. If we are not able to confirm that your child is safe we may do a home visit or refer our concerns to the police or Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. This procedure is to ensure the safety of all children.*

### **Data Collection and Consent Forms**

Data collection sheets will be sent home with your child on the first day of term. This sheet is a print out of the information that is currently held on our information management system in relation to your child. Please check the details and make changes if needed then sign and return so we know everything has stayed the same. **Please sign and return the form even if no changes are needed.** All parents are entitled to receive information about their child's time in school but we can only do this if we have their contact details. When parents are separated we will send information to the parents with whom the child usually lives and any other parent of the child who gives us their contact details.

Consent forms are on parentmail. Please check that you have completed this for your child for this year.

### **Breakfast and Afterschool club**

We run a breakfast club at West Down and Berrynarbor and an afterschool club at Berrynarbor. Please book places on Parentmail if needed. Pre-booking club sessions is a cheaper option because it allows us to plan staffing and so run more efficiently.

### **Medication and Asthma**

We are able to administer prescription and some non-prescription medication in school if your child needs it during the school day. The full policy and consent forms are available on our website and from the school office.

If your child suffers from Asthma, please contact the school office to ensure that we hold the up to date information on an Asthma card. Please make sure appropriate medication is returned to school at the beginning of term and any old medication is removed from school if you haven't already done so.

### **Communication**

Effective communication between school staff and parents is important..

Policies can be found on the website that outline what happens during situations where communication is considered aggressive or threatening. Our priority is that our schools are safe places for children, staff and parents.



### **Social Media**

If you haven't already - please send a friend request to be able to access the Federation Facebook page. This page is a source of information, celebration and a way for parents to network. Our children are learning about social media from a young age and it is important that we work together to teach them and show them courteous online behaviour or netiquette (net etiquette). We will sometimes post reminders on facebook but the primary channel of

communication is newsletters and parentmail. There is also lots of information on our website.

Both schools have facebook accounts run by parents as a way of parents connecting - please send a friend request to 'Berry Parents' or 'West Down School Buddies' to join the group.

It is everyone's interest that our schools are promoted positively online – it helps to create a happy community that we can all be proud to be a part of. Please celebrate our schools online but be sure that information is accurate before sharing – once information is out there it is very difficult to alter.

### **Funded Preschool Provision**

We are delighted that more families are now eligible for fully funded preschool provision. The roll out of more funded provision for younger children is expected in the coming years. Please see the letter attached that explains what parents need to do to secure this funding for their preschool child.

### **Music lessons, choir and now brass instrumental lessons available too!**

*If your child is interested in music lessons in any of the following instruments next term please email [barrowc@westberryfederation.org.uk](mailto:barrowc@westberryfederation.org.uk)*

Piano, Keyboard, Recorder, Oboe, Saxophone, Clarinet, Singing, Guitar, Ukulele and Music Theory with Christina Barrow

We also have brass lessons available with Emma Nottage in Cornet, Trumpet, Euphonium and French Horn. Lessons in Guitar and Ukulele are also offered by Joe Steer.

Book now for choir sessions in the Autumn Term and for lessons in September

If you have any instruments which you would like to donate to the school we would be very grateful. We desperately need more recorders and thought we would ask before we order any from our very small budget.

### **If your child is starting school with us for the first time...**

Starting school is a big and exciting step for you and your child. It is common for children and parents to feel a little anxious before quickly settling into school life. We want your child's time with us to be fun and productive, and for you and your child to feel safe. If you have any questions or concerns, however big or small, or however last minute – please get in touch. We will do what we can to make your child's time in our school positive. Emails to the [parents@westberryfederation.org.uk](mailto:parents@westberryfederation.org.uk) address will be read by Mrs Carey or Mrs Poynter and sent on to the appropriate member of staff.

**We hope you have all had a wonderful Summer and we look forward to welcoming you back to school soon!**

**Kind regards**

**Su, Faye and the Staff Team**