



# Back to School Newsletter September 2024

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

The children's first day back will be **Thursday 5th September**.

## Our school day

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

**8.40am** School gate opens

**8.50am** School Day begins (*gate closed*)

**9.00am** West Down preschool children start

**12.20-12.20** Lunch

**3.00pm** Preschool finishes

**3.20pm** 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 in KS2 from Monday 16th 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 12th September - all children in YR-Y2 will be doing team building activities at West Down School and children in Y3-Y6 will be going to Collard Bridge for two days in nature building a strong team. Please ensure you have completed the forms in Parentmail.

**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

Truth	Respect	Courage	Endurance	Compassion	Confidence	Curiosity
Freedom Honesty Justice	Responsibility Integrity co-operation	Questioning Bravery Self-assurance	Hope Determination Perseverance	Forgiveness Humility Patience	Calm Inner Strength Flourish	Questioning Reasoning Growth Mindset

**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@westberryyfederation.org.uk](mailto:parents@westberryyfederation.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. Thanks to those parents who have already been in touch giving us important information to help us to support their child.

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

Preschool children finish at 3pm. All other pupils finish school at 3.20pm

Cherry and Maple children will be dismissed from their classrooms at 3.20pm when the staff see the child's adult. Please let the teacher know if someone other than the child's parent will be collecting your child. Children in Willow and Oak class will be dismissed from their classroom to find their adult independently. Please make sure your child knows who is collecting them and where to meet their adult. Children should be reminded that they should return to their teacher or the school office if they are unable to find the adult who is taking them home.

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

All pupils will finish school at 3.20pm

Beech children (YR-Y2) will be dismissed from the gate closest to the church when a member of staff sees the child's adult. 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.

### **Driving and parking**

Please park responsibly and respectfully and drive carefully around the village. Please avoid parking next to road crossing points and driving past the school entrances while the children are arriving and leaving our schools. The staff carpark at West Down is for staff use only unless an alternative arrangement has been made for individuals. Please avoid reversing when the children are moving around the area by arriving in good time and parking so that you are able to drive out of a parking space without the need to reverse when the children are around. Please pass this information on to others who may collect your child.

### **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.

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 (including Crocs) 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, Beech, Maple)
- A book bag or drawstring bag (Willow and Pine class) - please no rucksack due to very limited space in the cloakrooms.
- Pencil case and stationery from list (Willow, Oak, Pine and Alder Class)
- Small rucksack (Oak, and Alder Class ) space is very limited!

Children in Willow, Pine, Oak and Alder may bring a snack for morning playtime. Cherry, Beech 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. Please avoid sending items in single use packaging.

### **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. This term's menu (Summer 24) is attached to this newsletter.

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 do not send your child with nuts and nut products.

### **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. We are trying hard to establish an afterschool club at West Down School

### **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.

### **Preschool Provision**

We are delighted with the success of our new Cherry Class last year - our youngest children now have an even more fabulous, engaging and accessible learning environment. Please book places early as numbers are limited.

Berrynarbor Preschool is our main feeder preschool and is just next to the Manor Hall. We work closely with the Berrynarbor Preschool Team to ensure that children have a smooth start to school. <https://www.berrynarborpreschool.org/>

### **Music lessons, choir and now brass instrumental lessons are 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. In particular we always have a need for recorders and good quality ukuleles.

### **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**