



Back to School Newsletter September 2025



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

The children's first day back will be **Wednesday 3rd 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 15th 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. This year we will have a particular focus on listening, attention and stillness at appropriate times. We'll continue to use Be Kind as the foundation for all expectations around behaviour and conduct.





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

Freedom
Honesty
Justice

Respect

Responsibility
Integrity
Co-operation

Courage

Questioning
Bravery
Self-assurance

Endurance

Hope
Determination
Perseverance

Compassion

Forgiveness
Humility
Patience

Confidence

Calm
Inner Strength
Flourish

Curiosity

Questioning
Reasoning
Growth Mindset

Team Building

On Thursday 4th 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. Please refer to the letters sent out last term for full details but in brief:

Cherry and Maple (West Down YR-Y2) class children – arrive in school as usual on Thursday 4th. Normal pick-up and lunch arrangements (different menu). Children should wear school uniform tops with trousers suitable for outdoor learning. Children will need welly boots if wet and a waterproof coat. Normal day on Friday.

Beech (Berrynarbor YR-Y2) class children – parents to drop off at WEST DOWN SCHOOL for 9.15am drop off please on Thursday 4th. Normal collection time of 3.20pm from West Down. Normal lunch arrangements (different menu). Children should wear school uniform tops with trousers suitable for outdoor learning. Children will need welly boots if wet and a waterproof coat. Normal day on Friday.

Willow and Oak class children (West Down Y3-Y6) - Parents to drop off at Collard Bridge Scout Camp – Snapper at 9am. Packed lunch needed unless entitled to free school meals. Refer to letter for kit needed. Please complete forms to select pick up and meal options. Children can be collected from the campsite at 3.30pm or 9.30pm on Thursday if not camping and should attend school as normal on Friday. Campers will be bused back to school on Friday in time for lunch and can be collected from school at the end of the school day or after 1.30pm if you'd prefer to collect them early.

Pine and Alder class children (Berrynarbor Y3-Y6) - Parents to drop off at Collard Bridge Scout Camp – Snapper at 9.30am. Packed lunch needed unless entitled to free school meals. Refer to letter for kit needed. Please complete forms to select pick up and meal options. Children can be collected from the campsite at 3.30pm or 9.30pm on Thursday if not camping and should attend school as normal on Friday. Campers will be bused back to school on Friday in time for lunch and can be collected from school at the end of the school day or after 1.30pm if you'd prefer to collect them early.

If you have children at both events and need to collect our younger child early to enable you to get to Snapper for 3.30pm of Thursday please let us know.

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 westberryparents@thsp.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. If your child is moving into Y3, please talk to them about where you will meet them afterschool as this will be a change in routine for them.

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.

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 are happy to allow some flexibility with book bags as Pedlars have very few left in stock. Book bags can be of any colour and design but should be of standard size (larger than A4 but not as big as A3 – book bags should allow children to carry books to and from school keeping them flat, dry and in good condition.

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 PTAs 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 or draw string bag (Oak, and Alder Class) space is very limited!

Children in Willow, Pine, Oak and Alder may bring a healthy 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. We will continue with our popular Summer Menu until October half term. The menu can be viewed on our website [Lunch | westberryfederation](#)

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 at the start 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. We will be readvertising for staff soon – please let us know if you know anybody suitable for the role.

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.



Class Dojo

Teachers use Class Dojo to share information about the class are doing and things that the children need. Staff also award points on Class Dojo and you'll be able to see the points and celebrate your child's achievement at home. If your child is moving to a new class we will move them to a new Class Dojo group. If you are not yet using Class Dojo or would like to add another family member, please speak to your child's class teacher.

Please remember that teachers do not read messages sent in Class Dojo. This policy is in place to ensure that all parent communications are received and responded to even when a member of staff is absent from work. It also protects the workload of our staff team. All parent communications should be sent via westberryparents@thsp.org.uk. This email account is monitored by Su and Faye and messages passed on to other members of staff as needed. Messages are checked daily but sometimes not until after the school day – for this reason we suggest that you call the school office for urgent messages that need to get to the teacher the same day.

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.

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

Cherry Class preschool provision continues to be a popular and successful. 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@westberrypfederation.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 westberryparents@thsp.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