



Chestnut's Newsletter Autumn 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

Firstly, a big welcome to all of you! We hope that your child is settling into school and the new routines. They will probably be very tired to begin with.

Miss Tucker will be teaching Monday to Thursday and will be supported by Sarah Hill. Mrs Byers teaches on a Friday and is supported by Mrs Sam Valdmane. Mrs Sam Hill teaches at the end of the day on a Wednesday so she will dismiss the children on a Wednesday. If sending a Dojo message please try to message the correct teacher for that day.

On **Thursday 17th September, at 2:45pm**, you are invited to a '**Meet the Teacher**' session in class. This is an opportunity for you to see the classroom while we share some information about the year with you. You will then have the opportunity to ask any questions. We hope you will be able to attend.

To begin with we will collect the children at the school gates at 8:45am and all walk in together. Once children have settled they will be able to walk in by themselves. Please say goodbye to your child at the gates. If your child is upset when leaving you in the mornings please be assured that within a few minutes of being in the classroom the children have usually settled. Feel free to telephone the school later or send us a Dojo message if you are concerned. At the end of the day the children will be brought to the playground at 3:25pm to be collected from the gates. Please be on time, so children do not become anxious and also to enable staff to see to the bus children or run after school clubs. The children will line up and be dismissed one at a time. As your child reaches the front of the line please give us a wave and step forward to receive them. The school gates are very busy at the end of the day.

Our topic for this first half of term is 'Me and my family'. For this, please send in, or attach on their Dojo profile, a photograph of your child as a baby **and** a toddler. We would like these before 28th September please. We will take a photocopy and send the original home or print from Dojo.

During the first 6 weeks we will be carrying out the Statutory Baseline Assessment, which is an activity based assessment of pupils' starting points in language and communication, literacy and mathematics. These are completed on a 1:1 basis with the teacher, and results are collated by the Government. We will also be making our own initial assessments, which will inform our planning and resourcing.

After half term we will be learning about 'People who help us'. If you have a suitable job and

would be willing to come and talk about it to the class, we would be very grateful. Please let us know.

Please ensure your child brings their book bag to school every day. In your child's book bag there are some 'Wow' sheets for you to record any moment you say 'Wow' about something your child has done or said at home. We then celebrate these achievements together at school. Please let us know when you need more 'Wow' sheets. We try to encourage everyone to complete at least one every half term.

As a school, in Reception and KS1 we follow the phonics scheme 'Little Wandle'. We teach letter sounds (phonemes) in a set order, and tricky words (that can't be sounded out), as well as blending/segmenting these sounds to read/spell words. Each week, sounds learnt and tricky words will be stuck in their pink Sound Book. Please help your child to learn and practice these, using the book to support your child in the way that best helps them to learn. 'Little and often' is most effective. Please ensure these books are kept in book bags when not being used as we update them weekly.

We will be running a phonics workshop for parents on **Thursday 24th September at 2:30pm**. We hope you will be able to attend.

There will also be a maths workshop soon. More information to follow.

As part of Little Wandle, children will read a book three times at school, with an adult, before you receive it at home. Initially these will be picture books, which encourage rich language, until children have secured the first set of sounds. Please record your child's reading in their reading diary. Children who regularly engage with their reading at home make much quicker progress. Children who read at home 4 times a week and have it recorded in their reading diary will receive a certificate each week.

Children will also bring home a sharing book each week. This is a book that the child has chosen themselves from our book corner that they want to bring home and share with their family. **Your child will not be able to read this independently.** Please keep these in book bags when you are not reading them to enable us to change them weekly (usually on a Thursday). Please keep all books in the plastic wallet provided in order to protect them. Please do not allow children to transport their drinks in book bags.

You will receive login details for Times Tables Rock Stars/ Numbots. This is a great mathematics activity for children to access at home beginning with Numbots, then progressing to Times Tables Rockstars further into their school life. It is important that your child accesses this as **independently** as possible. Please take a break when your child is not able to access the tasks independently. Please ask if you need any support with this.

Although Chestnuts do not receive weekly homework, we do encourage them to read their Little Wandle books at least 4 times a week, read their sharing book, practice the sounds and tricky words in their pink book and access Numbots regularly.

Children in Reception are all entitled to a free school meal, which can be booked on the school system. Lunches are eaten in the dining room, supervised by a mealtime assistant, who

encourages the children to be independent with cutting and using cutlery. Some children choose to bring a packed lunch instead. We are a **nut free** school so please be careful when filling lunch boxes. The children all sit together to eat, regardless of whether they are having a school dinner or packed lunch.

We ask all children to bring in a drink in a **named** bottle. We have a box where drinks are kept so children always have access to them and are reminded to drink regularly throughout the day. Children are also offered a free piece of fruit and a milk drink at snack time. If your child cannot have milk please contact us as soon as possible.



Please ensure that **ALL** items of clothing, including shoes and coats, are clearly named so that your child is able to recognise his/her name on their own clothing and to avoid losing things.

Children will not be changing into PE clothes as we do exercise most days and the time spent changing takes too long. The children will be required to change into PE shoes. Trainers can be left under their peg or brought in their school bag **every day**.

Please send your child with a waterproof coat as we go outside every day. It may also be useful to have a pair of wellies in school as we like to use the woodland area when possible. We are planning to utilise the woodland area on a Friday. We do have some spare welly boots in school but not enough for everyone. On a Friday please ensure your child has their wellies and wet weather gear as we will be going out in all weathers.

We subscribe to the Government funded Supervised Tooth Brushing programme. Children are taught the importance of oral hygiene and how to brush their teeth effectively. They brush their teeth in school after lunch every day, using the dry brushing method. Children are provided with a toothbrush and toothpaste. Please return permission forms if you have not yet done so.

We will be using Class Dojo as a platform for sharing learning and communicating with parents. By joining Class Dojo you are giving permission for your child to have their photograph shared with all parents within the class. Please ask if you have any questions.

Finally, do not hesitate to ask if you have any queries or problems. The start of school can be an anxious time, especially for parents. The end of the day is the best time to catch us or we would be happy to make an appointment to talk to you should more time be needed.

Alternatively drop us an email at year0@hatherleigh-pri.devon.sch.uk.

Yours sincerely

Kim Tucker and Joanne Byers