Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new school year. We hope you had a lovely summer break. We have received very positive feedback about Willow Dene summer play scheme from parents and the local authority. Children and staff thoroughly enjoyed the two weeks. We have returned to school feeling re-charged and excited about the year to come.

Our staff started the year with mandatory training to ensure that we can open safely and smoothly. This included medical, safeguarding and safe handling training. We were very excited to welcome Heather Epps from AquaEpps to host our first swimming pool training which taught our staff about the benefits of water on posture and tone. A huge thank you to the parents who brought their children in for the session. We hope to keep working with Heather in the year to come.

We have also had some training from the Sensory Service to remind us of best practice when working with children with a visual impairment. This area is one of our seven school priorities for 2016/17. Others include development of our secondary school, emotional well-being for children with ASD and the use of music to enhance learning. If you would like to know more about our school priorities please let us know.

This will be a landmark year for Willow Dene with so many important events unfolding. We were very excited to finally open Willow Dene Oakmere Road for our secondary age children on Monday. The children have quickly settled in their new environment and it is exciting to see the school continuing to develop rapidly. It already looks and feels like an inviting and exciting place to be. This week our highlights have included the installation of our new gym equipment and the dark room eye gaze technology. Willow Dene Oakmere Road is being staffed by a team of familiar and friendly faces so please pop in to visit us if you are interested.

We are welcoming many new children and families to Willow Dene this September. Over the last four years our total number of children has grown from 160 to more than 220 as we have expanded. We would like to welcome all our new families. We are very much looking forward to working with you and your child. Feel free to visit us as often as you like and don’t forget our Friday parent Speakeasy where you can meet other parents.

John Camp
Executive Headteacher
of the Compass Partnership
Rachel Harrison
Co-Headteachers

Nursing Team News

We welcome all the children back to the schools and hope everyone had a lovely summer break.

We have now settled into the new site at Oakmere Road, and the nursing team are currently working across both sites.

We would like to advise all parents that the nursing team will continue to offer clinics with the community paediatrician, community dietitian, ophthalmologist, continence and dental services.

All the children were sent home with a nursing information pack in July which contained the new consent forms for this school year. We thank all the parents who have already returned them, but have not yet received all copies back. These are important consent forms for the nursing team to be able to administer medications and paracetamol and for us to obtain copies of your child’s prescription from the GP electronically. We would be grateful if these could be returned as soon as possible, but if anyone needs a new pack, please write in the home contact book, and we will send one home.

Staff Nurse Andrew Flanagan is no longer working at the school, and we wish him luck in the future. I have taken over the role of the school nurse and will be based at Willow Dene – Swingate Lane.

Tara Sissons – Team Leader for the nursing team.
Sensory Processing

So lovely to see the children back at school ready to experience, explore and engage in sensory activities. Favour and Victor are working hard in the Sensory Circuit as part of their daily routine to help them feel great and ready to learn.

Victor is having to organise his body position and then use his strength to push and pull. Favour really likes the deep pressure when rolling across the top of the stream roller and then the feedback that she receives when pushing through her hands, arms and shoulders.

WELL DONE!

Heron Class News

Hi Everyone and welcome back!

Heron Class have started this Autumn term in full swing. We have all enjoyed our summer holidays and are ready to explore the new classroom environment. For our new topic ‘Now that’s what I call music’ we are focusing on Brazil and in particular Carnival. We will be looking at where people live and how artists use stencils to make their art. During this term we will be cooking street food such as Pão de Queijo and Brigadeiro. In our dance sessions we are looking at different movements you might find at a carnival and following the rhythm of music. We will be trying new percussion instruments and focusing on drumming as part of a group. We look forward to a culmination of activities where we can have a mini carnival procession and visit different classes, sharing music and offering some of the authentic food we have made.

Pão de Queijo

Making Brigadeiro’s