

# WILLOW DENE NEWS



FRIDAY 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018

Willow Dene  
SCHOOL

## Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome back! We are very excited to begin the school year 2018 - 2019 and we hope you all had a lovely summer break. We are very much looking forward to working with all of our children and families in the year to come. Thank you to all of you who have told us about what your family did in the holidays. It has been a lot of fun looking at your photographs, postcards and souvenirs. In this newsletter you can see the photograph that Daniel and his Mum sent us from their trip to Disneyland Paris!

During the holiday we had a very successful Willow Dene Play scheme for children aged 5-11 years old. The play scheme ran for two weeks and included lots of opportunities for our children to visit local places of interest including Greenwich Park and Planetarium, Greenwich Picture House and Danson Park. The group also used Willow Dene swimming pool and visited Godstone Farm in Kent. We have had a lot of positive feedback from families. At Willow Dene, Oakmere Road we hosted two weeks of Play scheme for secondary aged children including some of the children moving from Swingate Lane to Oakmere Road this year. We worked closely with We Live CIC who organised and ran the play scheme to make sure they got to know the children before the holidays. You will see some of their Tweets on our Twitter feed.

During the holiday the sloped walkway at Swingate Lane which runs between the ground floor and the first floor was transformed into a tropical trek! Each part of the walkway now has something to interest children and help them understand where they are on their journey between floors. There are canopies, trees, bamboos, windmills and mirrors! Children and adults are very much enjoying this new adventure! Pop in and try it out for yourself.

We began the year with training for all staff in areas which are mandatory and which allow us to keep our children safe. These areas include first aid, medical competencies, asthma and epilepsy awareness, safeguarding and positive handling. It means that we start the year with the vast majority of this crucial training in place. On the first day of term at least one person from each class attended the very first Compass Conference which was entitled 'Seeing Possibilities, Realising Dreams' (borrowed from Willow Dene!). This inspirational morning brought delegates from all Compass Schools together to acknowledge the importance of high aspirations, overcoming barriers to learning and positivity in schools. We were honoured to listen to

remarkable speakers including the most medalled British Paralympian in history and Simon Tobin's perspective on living with autism.

We were very happy to see children arriving on Thursday and Friday and are really proud of how quickly they have settled back into routine with smiling faces and a lot of excitement. Out topic this half term is 'Mould and Make'. Classes have lots of exciting opportunities planned which involve creation, construction (and demolition!). There are some examples of class topic descriptors on Twitter. These show you how each class is approaching areas of our curriculum through the topic and they also give a good overview of the books we are reading!



We are looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming events. We have already had our first Speakeasy of the year which focused on how we use massage and yoga techniques in school and how these can benefit our children. City Lit are also running a sensory mascot making course on Thursdays beginning September 20<sup>th</sup>.

If your child is in year 10, we will be holding an early Parents' Evening following on from Options Evening in the summer term. This will give you more detail about how your child will be focusing on their accredited learning as well as the chance to talk about other areas of school life. This will be taking place between 4-6pm on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> September and invitations will be on their way soon. Parents evening for all other children will take place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November between 4-7pm. We will

also be asking you to complete our annual Parent Satisfaction Survey during this week so that we know what you are happy with and where you think we could improve.

If you are already planning holiday dates we will be holding our final Inset day of the year on Friday January 4<sup>th</sup>. This is in response to changes made by the government to safeguarding legislation and will be used to update the safeguarding training of all staff. Children will now return to school on Monday January 7<sup>th</sup>. This will be updated on the school website immediately and we will be sending a letter out to everyone in addition to the reminder in this newsletter.

We would like to extend a really warm welcome to all of you who are new to Willow Dene. We hope your child will have a positive and successful experience at our school.

**Rachel Harrison**  
Head Teacher

## SWAN CLASS

The beginning of the year is always very exciting in Swan class, as in the Foundation building we welcome lots of new children to Willow Dene for the first time.

With new children come new experiences and it's been incredible just how much they've done in even just the first week. From exploring new environments such as the sensory garden and our outside play area to taking part in their first swim, music session or drama games, it's been a hugely eventful start to term. It's also been lovely to have a number of parents in with their children on the first day.



And just as the children are learning about their new school, so the staff are getting to know the children; discovering who likes to help make play dough, who loves puzzles, who's fond of dolls and little people. We've been focusing on number songs like Five Green Bottles and Three Little Speckled Frogs, with lots of opportunities for early counting and number work. Plus we've celebrated our first birthday of the year already! It's been a lovely start to what is always an exciting year in the Foundation building.

## SENSORY PROCESSING

Starling and Chaffinch Class have loved being back enjoying the sensory sessions, exploring the proprioceptive system through fun and motivating activities stretching, pulling, pushing and reaching, providing them with lots of sensory input and body awareness, helping to support self-regulation and wellbeing!



## TOUCAN NEWS

We started the term in Toucan by inviting families who left us in July to share a birthday celebration. It was lovely to catch up on news from the summer and just to spend time together. Families in Toucan get to know each other through the year they spend with us because they see each other regularly when dropping and collecting children and spending time in the class. We have seen many examples of friendships developing and of support for each other both in a practical and emotional way.

We have also been visiting our new families at home and planning their start to Toucan. From this term we are able to admit children from their second birthday rather than a term later. We are looking forward to working with all our new families and welcoming them to Toucan.

Karen Fleming

## TWEET IN SPOTLIGHT



Our walkway has had a makeover! To see more like this, stay up to date with what is happening as it happens and get useful information and links, follow us on twitter @willowdenesch To join, simply go to [www.twitter.co.uk](http://www.twitter.co.uk), click 'Sign Up' and follow the prompts on screen.



## WILLOW DENE SCHOOL TERM DATES 2018/2019

### AUTUMN TERM 2018

### OTHER SCHOOL CLOSURES

Term Time	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> October	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> September – Staff INSET Day Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> September – Staff INSET Day Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> September – Staff INSET Day
Half Term	<i>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October</i>	
Term Time	Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> October Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	
Christmas Holiday	<i>Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2019</i>	

### SPRING TERM 2019

### OTHER SCHOOL CLOSURES

Term Time	Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> February	Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January – Staff INSET Day Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> January – Staff INSET Day  Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> January – Pupils Return
Half Term	<i>Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February – Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February</i>	
Term Time	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> February Friday 5 <sup>th</sup> April	
Easter Holiday	<i>Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April – Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> April</i>	

### SUMMER TERM 2019

### OTHER SCHOOL CLOSURES

Term Time	Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> April Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> May	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday
Half Term	<i>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May – Friday 31<sup>st</sup> May</i>	
Term Time	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> July	