



NEWSLETTER

1ST SEPTEMBER 2025



A very warm welcome back to Didcot Primary Academy, especially for those children and families who are joining us for the first time.

This newsletter will be longer than most as it aims to provide you with key information for the year. Do also check our website regularly.

The school newsletter is emailed out once a fortnight, usually on a Monday. It includes important information and an updated diary for the year.

The staff team have worked hard over the summer to prepare for another year of enriching learning and exciting trips and visits. They are a phenomenal team and everything they do has your child at the heart of it.

How to help your child to be successful and enjoy school

We want every child to enjoy school and will work with you to try to achieve that. There are simple things that you can do to support this and give your child every chance of success.

- Sensible bed time free of devices.
- Ensure your child attends school every day unless they are too ill to attend. Avoid routine appointments with dentists etc during the school day.
- Ensure your child is brought to school **on time every day and they are picked up on time.**
- Ensure that they eat breakfast before coming to school
- Ensure your child attends school in the correct uniform every day with everything they need - water bottle, reading books
- Keep toys, jewellery and other things that are special to the child at home.
- Read to your child, with your child and talk about the books building up vocabulary
- Talk to the staff in your class team if you have concerns as soon as they arise so that they can be dealt with as soon as possible
- Check texts, apps, and access to the internet and limit this where it is not suitable. Make sure you check your child's phone regularly

The next two weeks

1st September	INSET day school closed to children
2nd September	INSET day school closed to children
3rd September	Years 1-6 start at 8:40am Reception EITHER 8:40-11:10 or 1pm -3:25pm your slots will be already allocated. NO NURSERY SESSIONS
4th September	Years 1-6 start at 8:40am Reception EITHER 8:40-11:10 or 1pm -3:25pm your slots will be already allocated NO NURSERY SESSIONS
5th September	Reception - Yr 6 in full time 8:40 am - 3:25pm NO NURSERY SESSIONS
8th September	Nursery children start
9 th September	
10 th September	Aureus School talk for prospective parents 3:30pm Oak classroom Choir starts today - please note change of days to Wednesdays
11 th September	St Birinus and DGS talk for prospective parents and children 5pm
12 th September	



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www.didcotprimaryacademy.org



office@didcotprimaryacademy.org

Your School Team

School Office	
Please speak to our friendly office team if you need to see a member of staff, have an issue with Arbor, or to check any queries or questions.	Roza Kozłowska (Office Manager) Annie Hobbs Jo Douglas
Executive Principal	
I am very proud to be the Executive Principal. I have led the school since it opened in 2016. I also lead Sires Hill Primary Academy and spend time at both schools over the week	Alison Ashcroft
Vice Principal	
Lianne is the Vice Principal at DPA and also the SENCO at Sires Hill on a Monday. We work in partnership to lead the school to provide your child with the best possible education.	Lianne Vickers Designated Safeguarding Lead
Assistant Principals	
The Assistant Principals work alongside Lianne and myself to lead the school.	Chris Lamming (Behaviour lead) Andrea Brown (Curriculum)
Special Education Needs Coordinator Mon-Thurs	
The SENCO is responsible for co-ordinating and leading the school approach to ensuring that children with special educational needs are receiving the best support	Claire Middlemore
Pastoral Team	
Family Support Worker: will work directly with families to improve attendance, behaviours and other issues. Learning Behaviour Mentor supports children and families with more challenging behaviours	Alex Wright (Family Support) Cathy Venes (Behaviour Learning Support Mentor)
Phase Leaders	
The phase leaders are responsible for developing the teaching and learning within their phase of responsibility.	Emma Clements - Early Years - Pre School and Reception Ben Hyde - KS1 Year 1 and 2 Ed Helliwell- KS2 Years 3,4,5 and 6
Caretaker	
Our caretaker works hard to ensure our school is safe and ready for learning.	Rafal Kozłowski (until end of September)

Early Years Early Years Leader: Emma Clements			
Pre-school Team Oak Class Emily Holden and Samantha Duckett, Hannah Brett, Rachel Ridley and Jayden Dwight		Reception Team Hazel Class: Louise McMaster, Emily Holden and Zuzi Ziman Cherry Class: Bella Mills, Hayley Gage Working across reception: Julia Watkins	
Key Stage 1 Key Stage 1 leader: Ben Hyde			
Year 1 Maple Class: Emma Clements, Olivia Elliot Beech Class: Rea McMordie, Angharad Evans		Year 2 Rowan Class: Claudia Challis, Salina Chalise, Margaret Xavier Willow Class: Elle Paterson, Di Bradley	
Key Stage 2 Key Stage 2 Leader: Ed Helliwell			
Year 3 Sycamore Class: Charlotte White and Amelia Eve, Lucy Wilson Chestnut Class: Hannah Mason, Kelly Marshall	Year 4 Birch Class: Andrea Brown, Chris Lamming, Gemma Smith Elm Class: Ella Hemery, Lucy Taylor Elsie Waligo will work across Year 4	Year 5 Ash Class: Ben Little and Tina Bone Alder Class: Caroline O'Brien, Michelle Sagoo Mrs Farhat will work across Year 5	Year 6 Oak Class: Ben Hyde, Sally Foster, Daisy McDonald Cedar Class: Ed Helliwell, Kate Smith,
PPA Cover Teachers			
All teachers are entitled to 10% of the timetable for planning, preparation and assessment (known as PPA). In our school this is usually covered by specialist teachers.		Cara Sullivan: Music Molly Chalmers: Computing	

Safeguarding at Didcot Primary Academy

Safeguarding is everyone's business. The staff team at Didcot Primary Academy are all trained in Safeguarding and have to be curious. All concerns are noted on our system and the majority of these will be discussed with parents and carers before contacting social services. The only time when there will not have been an initial discussion is when it is felt by professionals that a child could be put in danger.

If a member of staff has a concern about your child they have to report it on our safeguarding system. The Designated Safeguarding Leaders: Mrs Vickers, Mrs Ashcroft, Mrs Wright, Mr Lamming and Mrs Brown will all be able to view this concern -but no other member of staff. They will then make a decision about what happens next: to monitor, to discuss with yourself or your child, or to seek further support. If further information is needed you will then be contacted by a member of the team. You may be asked for information to complete a Strength and Needs form as this is usually requested by social services. The main aim of any of this is to help your child and to support your family. If a referral to social services is made they will then carry out an assessment to determine what happens next. This could be nothing and the case could close, you may be offered family help or, for more serious cases, it could progress to a Initial Child Protection Conference where professionals will decide if a child should be placed on a Child Protection Plan. The school will continue to work with you to support your child throughout the process.

Please help us to help you. If your child has been upset about something that has happened at home or has sustained an injury at home, please let your child's teacher know (or email the office) as soon as possible.

UNIFORM

PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD WEARS THE SCHOOL UNIFORM EVERY DAY.

PRE-SCHOOL

- White polo shirt (with or without logo)
 - Purple sweatshirt with logo
 - Own choice of leg wear
 - trainers/shoes
- Do not send your child into school in crocs, wellies or sandals

RECEPTION - YEAR 4

- White polo shirt (with or without logo)
- Purple sweatshirt with logo
- Dark grey shorts, trousers (not leggings), pinafore, skirt
- Grey, white or purple socks/tights
- Black school shoes or plain black trainers

YEAR 5 and 6

- Same as above with the option of wearing white shirt (tucked in) with school tie.

PE Uniform

You will be told which days are PE days and this is when the PE uniform will be worn. Children do not get changed at school and must come to school in their PE kits on these days.

- House colour top with logo
- Plain black hoodie, school sweatshirt or Omnia hoodie
- Black shorts, tracksuit bottoms or leggings
- trainers (any colour)

Long hair (past shoulder length) must be fully tied back every day. Small purple/black accessories may be worn. No animal headbands.

No jewellery (exception of small studs but not on PE days)

No make up

BIRTHDAYS

When it is your child's birthday on a school day, this will be celebrated in school with the class singing to them. Due to the number of serious allergies in school please **do not bring sweets or other treats in to share with the class.** Please note that having a day off for a birthday is not permitted and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.



PARKING

- Please be considerate if you have to drive to school to drop your child off and park in a safe place without blocking the driveways of residents.
- **DO NOT USE THE STAFF CARPARK**
- You are able to use the Station Garden car park which is only a few minutes walk away.

CONCERNS AND QUERIES

If you need a longer discussion with your child's teacher, please do speak to the office to make an appointment so that you can be allocated sufficient time. This will be made at a mutually agreeable time and could be a phone call if that is preferable.

BREAKFAST CLUB

School staff run our breakfast club which operates from 7:30am daily. Please note breakfast will not be served after 8:15am. This service needs to be paid for in advance and booked with the school office team. We are not part of the government launch scheme of free breakfast clubs and there is a charge for this service.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS

There is a wrap around service run by 'Get Active' that operates daily at school for those children in reception and above. This operates until 6pm.

There are a few other clubs that happen after school. These are usually for Key Stage 2 and are usually run by external providers and have a charge (with the exception of choir). These other clubs are NOT childcare facilities and will be cancelled if staff are not available.

We run clubs within the school day on a Friday afternoon so that 100% of our school population can benefit from pursuing an interest. Children are expected to commit to their selected club for a half term.

BEFORE SCHOOL....

- The playground outside the school grounds is a public playground. Parents and carers are responsible for their child's behaviour in this space.
- Whilst it is a public space, please could you refrain from smoking (if applicable) and using bad language near the children - especially outside the school gates.
- This is really not the best space for football and we ask that all balls are put away at 8:35am when the area is busy.
- The main gates (by the public playground and by the car park) will open at **8:40am** - please make sure that you allow for both gates to open before you come in.
- The same person (member of SLT) will also open the Cherry Tree Road gates so this will be slightly later.
- The gates will be shut promptly at **8:50am. So please make sure that you have left the grounds by this time. There is sufficient time to do so.**
- Parents and carers remain responsible for their child until they are within the classroom.
- Your child's teacher will be at the classroom door to greet each child as they come in.
- This is not the best time to try to have a discussion with your child's teacher as they will be busy settling children in the classroom and getting ready to teach.
- If you have an urgent message to give to the class team, please speak to the school office.
- Please do not allow your child (or younger children) to use the play equipment or any other equipment that has been set up ready for the day ahead.
- Nursery children will need to be dropped off at the Nursery main entrance.
- Please do not enter the classrooms

AFTER SCHOOL....

- The school gates will open at 3:25pm for you to go and pick your child up.
- Children will only be dismissed to a known adult. If a different person is picking up your child (play date etc) please contact the office to let them know. They will then issue you with a password to give to the adult. The password changes daily. Children will not be handed over to a different adult without the password.
- Year 5 and 6 children are able to walk home independently but you have to give permission first. They are only able to walk home independently if this happens EVERY DAY.
- School play equipment is not to be used after school.
- The gates will shut promptly at 3:35pm
- If you need to speak to your child's teacher quickly, please wait until all children have been dismissed from the class so that staff can continue to dismiss the other children.
- Once the child has been handed over to you, they become your responsibility. Please keep them with you rather than allowing them to run ahead.
- It is highly likely that your child will be hungry at the end of the day- they will have been working hard.

SCHOOL LUNCHES

Please make sure that you have selected your child's lunch on the Fresh Start website in good time to avoid disappointment. We have a fantastic catering team but they need to know in advance so that sufficient ingredients are sourced! Please do discuss the meal choices with your child so that they know what they are expected to eat every day. It is very difficult for the kitchen to offer alternative meals when a child decides that they do not like what has been chosen. We will let you know if your child is not eating their lunch.

PACKED LUNCHES

You are, of course, welcome to send your child in with a packed lunch. These are stored in the classroom. Please make sure that you follow these guidelines:

- We are aiming to be a NUT FREE school. This means that any nut products, or products made with nuts are not permitted. This includes chocolate hazelnut spread.
- No fizzy drinks
- No sweets

KEEPING YOU INFORMED...

We aim to work with you, in partnership, to keep you informed about your child's progress and curriculum - both academic and pastoral. There are a number of ways that we do this:

1. **Curriculum Information** - you will receive information, each full term, about your child's curriculum for that term. This is a summary of the content that will be taught to your child so that you can have informed discussions about this at home. This leaflet will also be available on the school website.
2. **Meetings with the class teacher** - we call these 'Learning Reviews' and they are held twice a year - in October and again in February. These ten minute appointments are an opportunity to hear and talk about how your child is doing. These will be held in person or via the telephone. You will also be able to view their books.
3. **Progress Reports:** You will receive a report in February with your child's latest assessment against areas of the curriculum. In July you will receive a more detailed annual report. These will be emailed to you.
4. **Meetings/Workshops:** We will be running a series of meetings/workshops during the year which will start at 9am. The PowerPoints will be available to those that are unable to make it during the school working day.
5. **Newsletters** - This newsletter is sent out at least once a fortnight - usually on a Monday. There will be information about things that have happened/will be happening in school as well as an updated diary.
6. **Website** - Our website holds a huge amount of information which is updated. You can find information about your child's curriculum and year group (including timetable) on the Curriculum tab of our school website: Curriculum Information by Year group
7. **School App** - our website has an app attached to it - TheSchoolApp, download this and select our school to get instant access to the diary, newsletters and other information.
8. **Emails** - Our school office team endeavour to keep you informed and reminded through emails. They might not be able to remind you about every single event - so make sure you put the dates in the diary
9. **Responding to your queries:** If you send an email into school this will be dealt with as soon as feasibly possible. If you have not had a response within 48 hours, please do contact the office again to ensure that we have received it.
10. **Facebook:** We have an official school Facebook account where we post various information and celebrations - do follow us to keep up to date.

TOILETS

Please note, we are not able to admit any child (apart from those in breakfast club) to use the toilets within school, prior to 8:40am when the gates open.

We are also not able to allow children back into school once they have been dismissed at the end of the day to use the toilets. Please encourage your child to use the toilet before they leave the school grounds. If your child needs the toilet whilst they are playing in the public playground at the front of the school, you will need to use toilets elsewhere e.g. Costa, Asda etc

VOLUNTEERING FOR TRIPS

We do often ask for volunteers to attend trips. You will be allocated a group (which will most likely not include your child) and will be briefed on what to expect. This is not an opportunity for a day out with your child.

PAYMENTS FOR TRIPS AND EVENTS

As per our 'Charging Policy' curriculum trips and events (with some exclusions) do not carry a payment but in order for the trip to go ahead we will ask for a 'parental contribution'. So whilst the payment looks optional, we would politely ask that if you are able to pay the 'contribution' in full that you do. This is purely the cost of the trip divided by the number of children as the school does not make any profit on any trip. The bulk of the cost is usually transport as the coach costs are enormous. The office staff work hard to keep these as low as possible. We would never leave a child behind because they have not paid, however, should insufficient funds be collected, the whole trip could be cancelled as there is not sufficient money within the school budget to fund this.

There are some trips, such as residential and extra curricular trips, such as Young Voices, where a payment in full is essential to secure your child's place.

ATTENDANCE

In line with the DfE Statutory Guidance (in force from 19th August 2024) we offer a supportive, stepped, attendance approach. We will offer a welcoming ethos with high expectations for all. We will assess data to identify absence trends & use preventative discussions/meetings with families to listen, understand & support to remove barriers. Where needed, we will formalise support to nurture improvement with Attendance Contracts and as a last resort we will consider intensifying support &/or enforce legal sanctions.

STEP 1 - Identify, Assess & Prevent

Our daily actions & processes aim to promote relationship building with children & families to prevent absence. This involves monitoring data trends & absence patterns to inform our conversations with you (& your child where age allows). The trigger for conversations is where absence is at risk of reaching the new National Threshold (**10 sessions (10 half days/5 days) within a 10 week rolling period**). Other daily actions involve promoting attendance positively, using praise & incentives, swift absence follow up, email &/or letter communication to raise your awareness of emerging concerns, processing requested or unrequested 'Term Time Exceptional Absence' & doing Home Visits to meet our safeguarding duties as required.

STEP 2 - Early Absence Support

We move to this step if the National Threshold for absence is met (authorised or unauthorised) to prevent further absence occurring. Discussions & meetings will be offered to identify if early support or reasonable adjustments are needed. This will be done using discussions &/or meetings to create a supportive action plan. An Early Help Assessment (EHA) may be required for some support to be accessed along with a Team Around the Family (TAF) Meeting Process

STEP 3 - Formalised Support

Where absence continues & initial support needs to be increased an Attendance Contract (AC) will be offered to formalise support. This is a 3-6 month nurturing plan of improvement to prevent further escalation. Achievable & individual targets will be set & reviewed regularly. Medical &/or other information will be actively sought at this point if required to work collaboratively with you & other agencies. An AC can run alongside other meetings e.g., TAF meeting.

STEP 4 - Warnings - Concerns Remain

Where STEP 2 or STEP 3 support has been unsuccessful &/or declined, a 'Formal Warning' if AC has failed, or a 'Notice to Improve' Letter if no AC appropriate, will be issued to reinforce the need for immediate improvement. A Family Court Order such as an Education Supervision Order will also be considered as an alternative to prosecution.

STEP 5 - Legal Action - No Improvement

Legal action (Penalty Notice or Prosecution) MAY be requested from the Local Authority (LA) if Unauthorised Term Time Absence is taken, or if overall absence continues to occur & reaches or exceeds the National Threshold for absence, despite STEPS 1-4 being attempted. Statutory Guidance States a Referral to Children's Social Care for children with 'Severe Absence' (less than 50%) should be considered to obtain 'Intense Support'.

PENALTY NOTICES & LEGAL ACTION

1st Offence (after 19th August 2024) of Term Time Leave &/or Irregular Attendance (10 sessions of Unauthorised Absence or more) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. If paid within 21 days fine is reduced to £80 per parent, per child.

2nd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) = Fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days, no reduction available.

3rd Offence within 3 years (from 19th August 2024) NO PENALTY NOTICE considered. The case will be presented to **Magistrates' Court** under s444(1) or (1a) of the Education Act. If found guilty, a fine of up to £2500 per parent, per child can be issued. Convictions for s444(1a) offences will show on DBS record.

Term dates 2025-6

First Day of term	Wednesday 3 rd September 2025
Half term	27 th October – 31 st October 2025
Last day of term	Thursday 18 th December at 12 noon (nursery sessions finish on Wednesday 17 th December)
Winter Holidays	19 th December -2 nd January
Further information	Wednesday 3 rd September 2025 and Thursday 4 th September 2025 half days for Reception children, allocated as either morning or afternoon. 5 th September in full time. 8 th September Pre-school children start on allocated days INSET DAYS Monday 1 st September and Tuesday 2 nd September Friday 10 th October 2024
Spring Term	
First day of term	Tuesday 6 th January 2026
Half term	16 th February 2026 – 20 th Feb 2026
Last day of term	Pre school – Thursday 26 th March 2026 Rest of school Friday 27 th March (school finishes at 12 noon, gates will open at 11:50am)
Easter/Spring holidays	30 th March till 10 th April 2026
Further information	Inset Days. Monday 5 th January Inset Day school closed to children
Summer term	
First day of term	Monday 13 th April 2026
Half term	25 th – 29 th May 2026
Last day of term	Pre school: Thursday 16 th July Rest of school: Friday 17 th July at 12 noon. Gates will open at 11:50am.
Further information	INSET DAYS Friday 12 th June, school closed to children

2024-25 Autumn 1

Dates and events are subject to changes. Correct at time of writing.

Date	Who	What
1 st September	whole school	Inset day: school closed to children
2 nd September	whole school	Inset day: school closed to children
3 rd September	Reception children	half day: 8:40am till 11:10am or 1 - 3:25pm
4 th September	Reception children	half day: 8:40am till 11:10am or 1 - 3:25pm
5 th September	Pre school parents	1:1 meetings
8 th September	Pre school children	Pre school starts
10 th September	Parent/carers in Year 5 and 6	Aureus School Information 3:30pm Oak Classroom
10 th September	choir	Choir starts - please not change of day to WEDNESDAY 3:25pm - 4:30pm Year 3 upwards
11 th September	Parent/carers in year 5/6	St Birinus and Didcot Girls school information 5pm
15 th September	children in Year 6	Kilvrough Residential trip 15 th September till 19 th September
23 rd September	Year 4	Visit to River and Rowing museum
23 rd September	Pre School	Didcot Fire Station due to visit
30 th September	Year 1	Toys and games of the past workshop
7 th October	Year 5	Greek workshop in the hall
15 th October	Year 2	Visit to Didcot Railway Centre
17 th October	whole school	Wear red for Show Racism the Red Card day

2024-25 Autumn 1 continued

Dates and events are subject to changes. Correct at time of writing.

20 th October	whole school	Learning reviews 3:45pm - 7pm
22 nd October	whole school	Learning reviews 3:45pm - 7pm
27 th October - 31 st October	Whole school	School closed Get Active will be running holiday camp

2024-25 Autumn 2

Date	Who	What...
4 th November	Year 6	Milestones Museum trip
10 th November	whole school	Odd socks day - Anti bullying week
11 th November	Year 4	Lego workshop
12 th November	Year 5	Lego workshop
14 th November	whole school	Individual photographs. If your child is not present in school they will not have their photograph taken.
9 th December	Year 1 Beech Class	Christmas craft afternoon 2:15pm
10 th December	Year 1 Maple Class	Christmas craft afternoon 2:15pm
11 th December	Year 2	Year 2 Christmas performance at 2:30pm. Please note that children under 5 will not be admitted.
11 th December	Year 2	Year 2 Christmas performance at 5:30pm. Please note that children under 5 will not be admitted.
15 th December	Reception	Reception Christmas performance. Please note that children under 5 will not be admitted into the audience.
16 th December	Pre-school	Nursery Christmas craft and sing along
17 th December	Year 3-6	Christmas Concert Red and Yellow house at 9:15am Blue and Green house at 2pm choir will be performing at both concerts
17 th December	pre school	last day of term
Thursday 18 th December	whole school	no pre-school sessions. School closes at 12 noon. Gates open at 11:50am.

2026 Spring 1

When	who	What
Tuesday 6th January	whole school	Term starts at 8:40am
8 th January	Chestnut class Year 3	Swimming starts
16 th January	years 3,4 and 6	Virtual reality sessions: Year 3 - volcanoes Year 4: Vikings Year 6: The arctic
20 th January	Year 5	Trip to Winchester Science Museum
23 rd January	choir going to Young Voices	Young Voices concert at the O2 London. We will leave school at 9:15am and return at around midnight.
9 th February	whole school	learning reviews
11 th February	whole school	learning reviews
16 th - 20 th February	whole school	half term.

2025 Spring 2

When	Who	What...
23rd February	whole school	Spring 2 starts
3rd March	Whole school	Roving bookshop in school
2 nd - 6 th March	whole school	Book week events
27 th March	pre-school	No nursery sessions
27 th March	Whole school	End of term at 12 noon. Gates open at 11:50am

2026 Summer 1

When	Who	What...
13 th April	Whole school	Summer 1 starts at 8:40am
16 th April	Year 3 Sycamore class	Sycamore class start swimming
22 nd - 24 th April	Year 4	Residential trip to PGL
4 th May	whole school	Bank holiday
5 th May	Year 1	Victorian school workshop at Oxfordshire Museum
11 th May to 14 th May	Year 6	SAT's Week
19 th May	pre-school and reception	Early Years sports afternoon at 2pm
22 nd May	Year 1-6	Sports day and picnic Year 1-3 am Year 4-6pm

2026 Summer 2

When	Who	What...
1 st June	Whole school	school starts at 8:40am
12 th June	whole school	Inset day. School closed to children
18 th June	selected team	swimming gala
10 th July	whole school	Annual reports will be emailed out to you
14 th July	Year 6	Year 6 party till 5:30pm
16 th July	Year 6	Year 6 performance at 2:15pm and 6pm
16 th July	pre school	Last day in pre school
17 th July	Year 6	Year 6 Prize presentation and assembly at 10:15am
17 th July	whole school	No pre school sessions School closes at 12noon. Gates will open at 11:50am