








Monday 16th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

A warm welcome back to Southwood! We hope you all managed to enjoy some relaxed family time over the Summer holiday. It has been a very positive start to the academic year in school, and the transition work that started last term, has definitely helped the children settle into their new surroundings. If, for any reason, your child is finding things difficult, please speak to their new teacher or come and find one of our inclusion or leadership team in the playground at the start or end of the day. A big thank you to our Premises Team who worked tirelessly over the holidays to ensure maintenance and improvement work to the school site was completed before the return to school.

We hope that our previous Year 6 cohort are enjoying their start to secondary school life, and wish those former Southwood pupils heading off to sixth form, university or the world of work, all the very best and hope, one day, they come back and let us know how they are getting on.





<p>School Development Priorities</p> 	<p>Our school development priorities for this new academic year very much build on last year's. We continue our work to develop oracy across the school, and this year we are working with the organisation Voice 21 who will provide further resources, training and advice. We also continue our work on developing positive reading habits, with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) providing training for teachers and support staff on our first INSET day when we returned after the Summer break. Our leadership priority is building on the work we did last year on reflective leadership, reviewing our school systems and processes, with a new focus on responsive leadership. As a school we will also be implementing the new national attendance framework, and exploring how we can best do this as a school, working in partnership with our children and families.</p>
<p>Attendance</p> 	<p>Mr O'Byrne has already shared with you, information about the new national attendance framework with thresholds for fines. Families may face fines if a child misses 10 sessions (5 school days) without a valid reason. These would be unauthorised absence and reports go to the Local Authority. I want to reiterate that the changes are being applied to all schools across the country and are in no way the result of any decisions made by Southwood. If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the changes, please contact Mr O'Byrne or Miss Harrington.</p>
<p>Trewern</p> 	<p>We are very pleased to report that our Year 6 children will be visiting Trewern in Wales again this year, during the week beginning 4th November. This is a fantastic opportunity which we encourage as many children as possible to take up. Some of our parents/carers still remember their Year 6 visit to Trewern themselves, so the experience can truly create memories that last a lifetime. The cost of the week is significantly lower than other centres, and the school has agreed a reduced price for children who we received pupil premium funding for. I would highly recommend Year 5 parents/carers attend the information session to be held shortly and if anyone in Year 6 is interested in going but has not put their name down, please speak to Mr Stevens as a matter of urgency.</p>
<p>School Lunch Menu</p> 	<p>The 2-week lunch menu for this half term is available on our school website. Our Winter Menu will be introduced after the October Half Term, following consultation with our Health Ambassadors. Please note we recommend that you choose your child's food with them at home through your ParentPay account. This enables you to support your child in choosing food they like, and also reduces the time taken in class at the start of the day, so the children can make a prompt start to their day.</p>
<p>School Minibus</p> 	<p>We (especially Mr Stevens) are very much looking forward to the delivery of our new Variety Club Sunshine minibus, hopefully by the end of this month!</p>

Headteacher: Scott Halliwell

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<p>Breakfast and After School Club</p> 	<p>Following a review, we have decided to keep Breakfast and After School Club hours the same for this academic year: from 7:30am until the start of the school day and from the end of the school day until 5:00pm. We understand some parents/carers would prefer a later finish time, however, this is not something the school can accommodate at this time.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we are also going to have to increase our prices. From 1st November 2024, Breakfast Club will be £4 per day and After School Club will be £5.60 per day. Following the pandemic, and more recently the cost of living crisis, we have kept our prices as low as possible, compared to other local schools, however we are currently not covering our costs and the school budget does not have the capacity to subsidise our extended schools provision.</p> <p>A reminder that ParentPay should be used to book Breakfast Club and After School Club with payment taken in advance. If you are unable to do so, for any reason, please phone or email the School Office, however we do expect ParentPay accounts to have sufficient credit to be able to cover late bookings in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>A further reminder that we do expect prompt collection from After School Club. Although we understand from time to time, there may be exceptional circumstances, we reserve the right to charge an additional fee where children are picked up much later than 5pm or a child is picked up later than 5pm on multiple occasions.</p>
<p>School Places</p> 	<p>We are really pleased to be able to report that the school continues to be fully subscribed in many year groups, but we still have some spaces available. If you or someone you know is interested, please see the following link: School admissions London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (lbbd.gov.uk).</p> <p>We are currently finalising our Nursery places for this academic year, and will allocate our last few remaining spaces to Rising 3s at the end of the month. If you or someone you know is interested in a place at Southwood Nursery, please contact the School Office.</p>
<p>Start of Day</p> 	<p>Please note our registration period at the start of the day has changed to 8:45am to 8:55am, with the school gates closing promptly at 9:00am. Whilst we understand there may be pressures and challenges in getting to school on time in the morning, it is really important for the children to be in school and ready to learn before their lessons start at 9:00am. Ideally, we would like to see all children in school ready to start the day at 8:45am as they have morning work to do as soon as they enter class. It is also really helpful if you book your child's lunch choices at home via ParentPay, to avoid them having to do so when they get into class or at the School Office if you are running late for any reason.</p>
<p>Term Dates</p> 	<p>Autumn Half Term: Week commencing 28th October 2024 Last day of Autumn Term: Thursday 19th December 2024 First day of Spring Term: Monday 6th January 2025 Spring Half Term: Week commencing 17th February 2025 Last day of Spring Term: Friday 4th April 2025 First day of Summer Term: Tuesday 22nd April 2025 Summer Half Term: Week commencing 26th May 2025 Last day of Summer Term: Friday 18th July 2025</p>

Kind regards,
 Scott Halliwell
 Headteacher

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