

Alison Higgins & Jo Duhig  
Co-Headteachers  
Email: office@barham.kent.sch.uk



Barham CE Primary School  
Valley Road  
Barham, Canterbury  
Kent  
CT4 6NX  
Tel: 01227 831312  
Fax: 01227 831096

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Dear Parents/Carers,

There has been a lovely atmosphere at school over the last couple of weeks. It is always a joy to see the older children welcoming and playing with the younger children at playtimes. Our youngest pupils are now in school full time and they have settled well. We hope you all found the 'Meet the Teacher' sessions useful last week. If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to speak to your child's teacher or catch one of us on the gate in the morning.

### Communication Apps

Thank you to all of you who have signed up for ParentPay and Arbor. We completely understand the frustration of having so many websites/apps, especially for those of you who have children at other schools as well. When we started using Arbor at the end of last year, we were hoping to stop using ParentPay and have all payments/communication in one place, however, our new caterers only work with ParentPay. Just to clarify the difference: ParentPay is only used for school dinners; Arbor is used for attendance, clubs and trips.

Please activate your Arbor accounts as soon as possible to ensure you receive all the school communication and are able to book parents evening appointments when the time comes. 90% of parents have logged on to Arbor – we hope you have found it useful. All school communications emails/newsletters/letters will be sent via Arbor and we do not want any parents to miss out. If you have any issues activating your account, please speak to Mrs Taylor, in the office. All letters and newsletters are also on the school website here:

Letters: <https://barham.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/letters>

Newsletters: <https://barham.kent.sch.uk/news-and-events/newsletters>

Class Page for Overviews: <https://barham.kent.sch.uk/parents/class-pages>

### School Dinners

Some parents are ordering school dinners as well as sending their child in with a packed lunch. Please be aware that if your child is in Key Stage 2 (Robins, Puffins, Eagles or Hawks), you will be charged for the dinner, even if it is not eaten, unless your child is in receipt of pupil premium funding. Please can a booked school dinner be cancelled if it is not needed and mark your child as "Home Packed Lunch" instead. If you have any issues accessing your ParentPay account, please speak to Mrs Taylor, in the office



## Swimming

We are so lucky to have our own swimming pool and we are passionate about ensuring as many children as possible can swim at least 25m before they leave school. As swimming is a part of the National Curriculum and an essential life skill, it is important that children take part. If children cannot participate, they will still go to the swimming pool to observe the lesson and complete a recorded task linked to the lesson. This is to ensure that they do not miss out and know what to do when they can swim the following week.

## Raffi

Your children have been fantastic with Raffi and she has been a delight to have around school. Whilst she is very gentle when stroked, she cannot resist joining in with any football game. There is overwhelming evidence of the positive impact school dogs can have, whether it's helping pupils who are struggling, easing anxiety, boosting reading confidence (through reading sessions with the dog) or simply being a calming presence. We are very grateful to the professional advice and support given by Annabelle's mum from Robins about school dogs and when the time is right, Raffi will be undertaking formal assessments to achieve full therapy dog certification. In the meantime, she will spend her days being socialised within the school environment and play football whenever she can.

## Staff Absences

Mrs Hughes (TA in Eagles) broke her ankle in the holidays and is still recovering but we hope to see her back in school again before long. Mrs Duhig will also be off for a few weeks to recover from a medical procedure. We wish both Mrs Hughes and Mrs Duhig a speedy recovery. Please ensure Mrs Higgins is copied in to any emails sent to Mrs Duhig so that any issues can be dealt with. Thank you.

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The first signature on the left is 'Al Higgins' and the second signature on the right is 'Jo Duhig'.

Alison Higgins  
Co-headteacher

Jo Duhig  
Co-headteacher