

Gorsemoor Primary School

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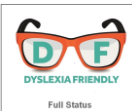
Dear Parents / Carers

I would like to thank you for your ongoing support and the welcome you have continued to extend to me during my first half term here at Gorsemoor. It has been great to meet more of you and I have appreciated the polite, yet constructive, communication from you that we can use to further improve the school.

In particular, thank you once again for your patience and willingness in cooperating with us as we address areas that we need to improve to keep your children safe. Schools have a Health and Safety Audit and follow-up monitoring every few years and some of the changes we are making are in response to recommendations made to the school this year as well as ensuring we are meeting statutory safeguarding expectations that do change over time. In line with this, I do need to respectfully request that dogs are no longer brought onto the school site through any of the gates at any time. This is due to health reasons as we have already this term needed to clean the playground where a dog has fouled. Also for safety reasons due to the busy nature of the start and end of the school day, with the number of parents and children in one area, we want to minimise any potential risk to injury. I realise that for some of you, walking your dog to school is part of your routine and that you may need to make alternative arrangements and so we will introduce this policy from after half term in case you need time to put these in place.

I understand that keeping our gates locked until 8.45am has been a particular challenge for some of you as it has meant altering your morning routines. I would like to provide more context to this. Our school day starts at 8.55am and, like many other schools, we open the gates at 8.45am to stagger entry to the premises from the different entrances. Because the gates have previously been opened earlier than this, people have arrived earlier. Over time, this has meant that pupils have arrived increasingly early, sometimes without parents and sometimes unknown to the school. Support staff do not start work until the start of the school day and teachers are preparing for the day and so there are no staff to supervise anyone on the premises until 8.45am. The premises has its own potential hazards with easy access to the car park, back out of the gates and to equipment. To address this, we have also now placed adults on each of the gates to ensure no pupils get back out once being dropped off. These members of staff are also there for you to pass any messages onto, ensuring these reach the correct teacher. In particular, this may be of help to those of you who wish to continue walking your dog to the gate to drop your child there to walk the rest of the way into school, but you wish to send a quick message to their teacher.

I am aware of the continuing parking issues outside school and I would like to thank those of you who are able to and who have altered your routine such as parking further away and walking down to school at either end of the day. I am liaising with our local PCSOs and Cannock Chase Council and in the meantime, we would all appreciate people being responsible and alert to this situation and the safety of our children and families.



You will soon see further improvements we are making to the premises of the school. For example, we have arranged for new fencing to be installed between the playground and the path alongside the car park to protect the children from this hazard. I will also be meeting with representatives from the local authority about the possibility of creating a 'waiting area' just inside the small front pedestrian gate for the mornings. However, this may take some time and I will keep you informed.

At the end of the school day we will be locking all external gates once people have left the site. This is to secure the premises for all staff and any children taking part in extra-curricular activities after school. Pick-up from clubs will be at the front entrance or the pedestrian gate to the car park if it has been an outside club. If there are any specific arrangements for individual clubs or when we are hosting matches on our school site we will inform those of you who are involved.

Locking the doors and gates at 8.55am has been very successful, due to your support with this. The children are now in school promptly and as a result are ready to learn more quickly. We are also looking closely at other parts of the school day to ensure that we are maximising the time we have available for their learning. I have been spending time in the classrooms observing teaching and learning and in future communication to you I will keep you updated with what we are working on through our School Improvement Plan. You may have noticed the skip outside school as we are having a good sort out! Please accept our apologies for some areas of the school that are going through this process, in particular the Reception classrooms that are being prepared for redecoration during half term.

One of the key areas I started to work with the teachers on, prior to me starting, was Assessment. We have established a new whole school system that is being trialled this term. Once we are assured it is finalised we will send it out to you with a clear explanation. The focus of the new system is for it to be used by teachers to plan learning that will meet the different needs of the children. We will not be currently sending out Tracking Reports, but instead inviting you in to see your child's progress in their work. This will be through:

Progress Review Evening – Monday 16 October 3.45pm – 6.45pm

This is an informal open evening for your children to show you around their classroom and share their work with you to see the progress they are making. Teachers will be available for a quick chat but there won't be one-to-one consultation times on this occasion.

Learning Review Evenings – week beginning 4 December (further details to follow)

These will be one-to-one consultation evenings held towards the end of term for you to meet with the class teacher to discuss your child's learning, progress and overall achievement during the Autumn Term. The class teacher will also support you with how to help your child with their next steps in learning ready for the Spring Term.

In addition to these specified evenings, please be assured that you are welcome to speak to teachers at any time. Should you ever have any concerns please contact the school office to make an appointment to meet with them or for them to phone you back at a mutually convenient time. We are here to help so do feel comfortable to ask any member of staff for support or advice. If you ever have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at headteacher@gorsemoor.staffordshire.gov.uk or by contacting the school office to speak to me by telephone or to arrange a meeting.

Your children are amazing and together with the committed staff team and in partnership with yourselves, I know we can all achieve great things that will secure a successful future for them all.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C Evans
Headteacher

