



MAPLE RIDGE NEWS

What's going on in school and in our community?

01256 323639 www.mapleridge.hants.sch.uk

A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER...

Dear Parents / Carers,

It has been great to see everyone back for the start of the new academic year and, although the weather is definitely feeling quite autumnal already, I do hope you all had a super summer.

We were informed by the Local Authority at the end of the school holiday that we will need to allow them to replace our modular classrooms as soon as possible. On the advice of their surveyors, and taking a very cautious approach, they have indicated a need to start work in term time, later this term and to likely continue through into next term, based on our most recent conversation. We have been given assurance that it is safe to continue to use the modular classrooms until that time, other than in the unlikely event of a severe weather warning such as for extreme winds or snow settling. In those circumstances, we would have to close the classrooms for the duration of the weather warning.

We do not yet have firm dates from the Local Authority, but are currently in discussion about the two modular buildings (Modular 1 is Pine and Chestnut, Modular 2 is Ash and Elder) being replaced one after the other, meaning that only two classes at a time would be in need of temporary accommodation. If this can be done then we believe that, with some adjustment to activities across school, we can make use of our therapeutic and meeting room spaces to enable classes to remain on site at Maple Ridge whilst work is completed. We believe this would be in the children's best interest.

There will be an impact on some of the events and activities that we run in school and we may need to do things a bit differently while the building work is taking place. We have effectively and safely managed building works on school premises in term time before and will be able to do so again, I am sure.

I will be in touch with a further update when we have a clearer idea of dates for work to commence and a schedule that we can share. In the meantime, please do not share this information with the children as we will be unable to tell them exactly what is happening yet and cannot prepare visuals and other supporting resources until we have more detailed information.

Kind regards,

Vicki

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

10 October 2024: Parents' Sessions - Communication

24 October 2024: Parents' Evening - Maple Class, Team 2 and Team 3

28 October – 1 November 2024: Half Term

29 November 2024: Inset Day

October 2024/November 2024: Year 1 Annual Reviews

November 2024/December 2024: Year 2 Annual Reviews

FUN HOUSE DONATION

We were fortunate to be the lucky recipients of a Fun House, donated by o3e, a company that co-ordinates charitable initiatives.

The house is located in our Year R class and the children are loving having a house in their classroom. The teacher is using the space as both a roleplay area and an area where the children can take a book and read "in their house".



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We have done Tesco and we are now waiting to hear how we performed. We will keep you updated and hopefully we have secured the £1,500.00 to invest in our Sensory Garden.

We now hope that you will turn your attention to ASDA and help support Maple Ridge through their recently launched *Cashpot for Schools* campaign.

All you have to do is opt in through the Asda Rewards app, choose our school and shop and scan in store or shop online at Asda.com, between 2nd September and 30th November 2024.

ATTENDANCE

As per information shared in our April 2024 Newsletter, the DfE document https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf became statutory on August 19th.



Our school Attendance Policy has been updated in light of this and remains available on our school website for you to read. One of the key bits of information for parents to be aware of in the DfE document is the section on granting leaves of absence (p.17):

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so.

All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

With regard to medical and dental appointments (p.81):

319. Schools should encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

320. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can only grant leave of absence for this under regulation 11(11), where an application is made in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence), and the school is satisfied that, based on the individual facts of the case, there are exceptional circumstances which justify the leave.

We are a local authority maintained special school and are required to follow these regulations. At Maple Ridge School, the only person authorised to grant leaves of absence is the Headteacher.

Please make sure that all absence requests are completed on the correct form and sent in to school well ahead of the requested date so that the request can be given consideration. Exceptional Absence Request Forms are available from the school office.

GOVERNOR VACANCY

We currently have a vacancy for a Co-opted Governor. This is not a Parent Governor role that would be ultimately voted on by parents if there was more than one candidate, but is instead a role where anyone, including the parent of a child at Maple Ridge, can apply to be a governor with us, and the existing Governing Body will consider applications and make the final decision about appointment.

School Governors are volunteers (although expenses such as childcare for attending meetings are paid). They have responsibility for raising school standards through their three key roles of setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluating school performance.

You can find out more about the governors' role and volunteering opportunities by visiting the Hampshire County Council Website. If you are interested in this role or you would like more information, please email: enquiries@mapleridge.hants.sch.uk.

SCHOOL MEALS

The cost of a school meal is now £3.20. There will be new menus after half term.

JOIN TASK FORCE

At Maple Ridge we use lots of visuals and PECS symbols to encourage our children's communication skills and to support their learning. As you can imagine this takes a lot of preparation and time because we often need large numbers of everything!



So, if you feel you can spare some time on a Thursday morning between 09:30-12:00, please do come along. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided! If you have any questions about Task Force, feel free to write a message in your home/school book, or call the school and ask for Jane.

