Ribbon Academy Trust
Barnes Road
Murton
Co Durham
0191 5175900

Mrs A Sheridan (Head teacher)
www.ribbonacademy.co.uk



Wednesday 2nd September 2026

Welcome Back Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

On behalf of Mr Houghton, the staff team and myself, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all our families, both returning and new, as we begin another exciting academic year at Ribbon Academy as we celebrate our school's 20th birthday!

I hope you and your family have enjoyed a restful and enjoyable summer break and are looking forward to the year ahead. We are delighted to welcome our children back to school and are excited about the opportunities, rich experiences and achievements that await them over the coming months.

Ahead of the start of term, please take a few moments to read through this Welcome Back letter. It contains important information to help ensure a smooth and successful start to the new school year.

Summer Developments at Ribbon

One of the many reasons Ribbon Academy continues to thrive is our commitment to continual improvement. Throughout the summer holiday, Mr Murray, Miss Taylor and our Site Team have worked incredibly hard on a number of projects designed to enhance our school environment and further improve the experience we provide for our children.

Over the coming weeks, I will be sharing details of these developments through Class Dojo, and I look forward to showcasing the exciting improvements that have taken place across the school.

General Information

As we begin the new academic year, please take time to read the following information carefully. These arrangements help ensure that school operates safely, efficiently and provides the best possible environment for all children to learn, achieve and thrive.

School Day

Entry and Exit Arrangements

To support the safe arrival and departure of our pupils, we operate three designated gates. This helps us manage the large number of children accessing the site each day and ensures smooth transitions at the beginning and end of the school day.

Gate 1 (Bottom of Toft Crescent)
Years 1, 2 and 3

Gate 2 (Adjacent to Murton Library)
Day Care, Nursery and Reception

Gate 3 (Opposite Main Reception)
Years 4, 5 and 6

Morning Drop-Off

• All gates open at 8.45am.
• Older siblings may enter through the same gate as their younger sibling.
• Parents and carers should continue to say goodbye at the gate, allowing children to enter independently and make a prompt start to their learning.
• Children arriving after 9.00am must enter school via Gate 2 and be signed in at Main Reception.
• In line with Department for Education guidance, registers close after 30 minutes. Any child arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as absent for the morning session.

End of Day Collection

• Gate 2 opens at 3.15pm for Nursery and Reception children.
• Gates 1 and 3 open at 3.25pm for the collection of children in Years 1 to 6, who finish school at 3.30pm.
• Parents and carers are invited to collect children from the playground outside their classroom doors.
• Children in Years 4, 5 and 6 may walk home independently where written parental consent has been provided. To request this permission, please complete the relevant Google Form.
• Families with children in multiple year groups will continue to benefit from our sibling collection arrangements, with older children joining younger siblings where appropriate.

Reporting Absence or Lateness

If your child is unable to attend school or is going to be late, please notify us before 9.00am by:

• Telephoning Main Reception on 0191 5175900; or
• Sending a direct message to the Ribbon Attendance group via Class Dojo.

For safeguarding reasons, please do not send absence messages directly to class teachers, as these cannot be monitored during teaching time.

Attendance

Excellent attendance plays a vital role in your child's educational progress and wellbeing. Every day in school matters, and regular attendance supports children to achieve their full potential.

If your child is absent due to illness, please contact school each day of absence. Where the reason for absence is unknown, our Attendance Team will make contact to establish the circumstances.

Please also remember that children who have experienced sickness or diarrhoea must remain at home for 48 hours after the last episode before returning to school. This helps us maintain a healthy environment for all children and staff.

Thank you for your continued support in promoting excellent attendance and positive habits from the very start of the school year.

Bicycles and Scooters

Children who travel to school by bicycle or scooter are welcome to leave them on site during the school day. All bicycles and scooters must be stored securely in the designated shelters located near the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 playgrounds.

Please note that bicycles and scooters are left on school premises at the owner's risk, and the school cannot accept responsibility for any loss or damage. For health and safety reasons, bicycles and scooters must not be stored in or around Main Reception.

Breakfast Club

Our Breakfast Club operates daily from 8.00am to 8.45am. Please note that children cannot be admitted before 8.00am.

Places can be booked online via SCOPAY at a cost of £2.00 per session. Bookings are only confirmed once payment has been received. ARBOR (the new payment system) will go 'live' next week.

To ensure we comply with health and safety requirements, places are limited to 100 children per day. We therefore encourage families to book in advance, ideally during the preceding week. Places may be reserved as far ahead as required, provided your account remains in credit.

Children enjoy a selection of breakfast items followed by a range of supervised games and activities, ensuring a positive and settled start to the school day.

Celebration Assemblies

Our weekly Celebration Assembly takes place every Friday at 9.15am.

Parents and carers of children selected as Star of the Week will receive an invitation via Class Dojo during the week leading up to the assembly. These special occasions provide an opportunity to

celebrate success, effort and achievement, and we greatly appreciate the support of families who attend.

Contact Information

It is essential that the school holds up-to-date contact information for every family. Accurate contact details enable us to communicate important information and contact you quickly should your child become unwell or an emergency arise during the school day.

If any of your contact details change, please notify Main Reception as soon as possible. Parents and carers can now also update contact information directly through the Arbor App.

If you do not currently have access to Arbor, please contact Main Reception, who will be happy to assist.

Educational Visits

Educational visits are an important part of the Ribbon curriculum and enrich children's learning by providing real-life experiences linked to classroom topics.

Where possible, children will participate in one educational visit per half term, providing a wide range of opportunities to enhance learning, broaden experiences and create lasting memories throughout the academic year.

Information Sharing

As part of our commitment to reducing paper use and promoting environmental responsibility, the majority of school communications are shared electronically through Class Dojo, our school website and our Facebook page.

Please ensure you regularly check these platforms to stay informed about school events, important updates and key information. If you experience any difficulties accessing these services, please contact Main Reception.

Jewellery, Acrylic Nails and Hairstyles

In line with our Uniform Policy and for health and safety reasons, children must not wear jewellery, including earrings, or acrylic nails whilst attending school.

Please note that staff are not permitted to remove earrings or cover them with plasters.

Children should also avoid hairstyles that fall outside our school expectations, including:

• Patterns or lines shaved into the hair.
• Extreme hairstyles, including the use of brightly coloured or inappropriate hair dye.

We appreciate your support in helping us maintain a safe, smart and consistent appearance across the school.

Mobile Phones

We discourage children from bringing mobile phones into school wherever possible. However, we recognise that some pupils may require a mobile phone for their journey to and from school.

Any child bringing a mobile phone onto the school site must switch it off immediately upon arrival and hand it to their class teacher for safe storage. Phones will be returned to children at the end of the school day.

Online Payments

Our online payment platform, SCOPAY, provides a secure and convenient way to pay for school meals, educational visits, Breakfast Club and after-school clubs. The system also provides an instant record of payments for parents and carers.

Families who have not yet activated their account will receive information shortly to enable them to create their secure online profile.

Please note that the school will be moving to Arbor Payments in the near future. Further information and guidance will be shared with families in due course.

Physical Education (P.E.)

Physical activity remains a key part of life at Ribbon Academy, and every child takes part in weekly P.E. lessons.

Please ensure your child comes to school each Monday with a full P.E. kit and appropriate clothing for the weather conditions. P.E. kits will be sent home on Fridays to be washed and returned ready for the following week.

Throughout the year, children may also have opportunities to participate in sporting festivals, competitions and events. Information about these activities will be shared with families as required.

Pencil Cases and Stationery

There is no need for children to bring pencil cases or stationery from home. We provide all the resources and equipment required for learning in school.

School Meals

Ribbon Academy is proud to have an on-site kitchen that has achieved a 5-star food hygiene rating.

Menus are available on our website and can also be obtained from Main Reception.

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 continue to receive free school meals through the Government's Universal Infant Free School Meals programme.

For children in Years 3 to 6, school meals cost £2.80 per day and must be paid for in advance. Parents wishing to move between packed lunches and school meals should provide at least 24 hours' notice.

As part of our commitment to safeguarding pupils, staff and visitors with severe allergies, Ribbon Academy is a nut-free school. Please ensure that any food sent into school does not contain nuts.

Snacks

Children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 receive a free piece of fruit daily through the Government's fruit scheme.

Children in Years 3 to 6 are welcome to bring a healthy snack from home or purchase one from school. Available options include fruit, raisins, cheese and bottled water, with all items priced at 50p.

Uniform

We have high expectations regarding school uniform and expect all children to attend school wearing the correct uniform each day.

Please remember that our uniform policy requires children to wear black school shoes rather than trainers.

Uniform can be purchased from S&N Workwear via the school website. We also maintain a substantial stock of high-quality pre-loved uniform available free of charge or at a minimal cost. Families requiring support should contact Kathryn Maddison for assistance.

To access uniform information:

- Visit the Ribbon Academy website (www,ribbonacademy.org.uk)
- Select Parents.
- Click School Uniform.
- Follow the link to the S&N Workwear ordering page.

Contacting Staff

We are committed to maintaining positive and effective communication with families and operate a clear pathway for addressing questions or concerns.

In the first instance, parents and carers should contact their child's class teacher after the school day has ended.

Where further support is required, the following Assistant Headteachers are available:

- **Early Years (Nursery and Reception):** Mrs Robson / Mrs Childs
- **Lower School (Years 1-3):** Mrs Callan
- **Upper School (Years 4-6):** Miss Thorne
- **SEND and Inclusion:** Mrs Flower

All Assistant Headteachers teach full-time, with the exception of Mrs Flower, who is available each morning between 9.00am and 12.00pm.

If a matter requires urgent attention, please contact Main Reception, who will arrange an appointment with Mr Houghton (Deputy Headteacher) or myself.

School life promises to be as busy and exciting as ever this year. We are looking forward to a fantastic programme of events, including Harvest celebrations, parent workshops, educational visits, performances, sporting events, seasonal celebrations and much more.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership. By working together, we can ensure that Ribbon Academy remains a safe, happy and successful school where every child is able to flourish.

Should you require any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Main Reception.

Warmest regards,

Mrs A Sheridan