



Isbourne Valley School

Didbrook, Cheltenham, GL54 5PF

Tel: 01242 621341

Headteacher Mr. J Godding

*Learning together inside
and outside the
classroom*

04 September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome back to school and, if you are joining Isbourne Valley for the first time this year, a special welcome to our school community. It has been lovely to meet our new families and catch up with returning children and parents over the past few days. I hope you all enjoyed a relaxing summer break and made the most of the beautiful warm weather. The change to cooler, wetter conditions this week has certainly reminded us that autumn is on its way! For those of you new to the school run, if it's going to rain it will always do so around 3.00 – 3.30pm! Despite the rain, the new term has got off to a fantastic start, with children quickly settling back into routines and classrooms buzzing with enthusiasm for the year ahead. This is the first of my termly letters for the 2026 -2027 academic year, and I have included some general housekeeping information at the beginning to cover the practical details.

Communication and General School Information

We try to keep communication as clear and straightforward as possible. We use:

- My termly letters to give you an overview of what is happening in school and details of as many diary dates as possible;
- The weekly newsletter to celebrate the children's achievements and to highlight any 'out of the ordinary' events taking place the next week. We remind you that for data protection and safeguarding reasons you must not share any images of children other than your own on any social media sites;
- Instagram - [instagram.com/isbournevalleyschool/](https://www.instagram.com/isbournevalleyschool/) to share photographs of life in school;
- Specific individual letters to give you details of activities, events, trips and so on. Letters are emailed out to parents and may be sent home in book bags if required. We post copies of letters on the website (<https://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/Documents/Letters/>);
- The website calendar to show all of the diary dates, events etc: (<https://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/News/Calendar/>);
You can link this calendar to the calendar on your phone or other electronic device:
- The office email address to send emails between home and school (admin@isbournevalleyschool.com);
- A specific email address for communication about emergencies or urgent matters outside school working hours:
urgent@isbournevalleyschool.com;
- The school website to store copies of letters, newsletters, curriculum information, policies, lunch menus, and all sorts of other useful documents and information;
- Text messages for brief reminders or more urgent messages;
- A 'note on the gate' system to pass quick messages to teachers in the morning (e.g. if there is something you think the teacher should know that day);
- The note on the gate or a message to the office if someone other than you is collecting your child – we cannot allow children to go home with other people (grandparents, older siblings, friends etc) without express permission in advance; and
- Curriculum overviews to give you an outline of what your child is learning each term.

If you can't find a letter or are unsure about anything please have a look on the website or contact the school office.

Each class has its own page on the school website with information that will be of help in supporting your child with their learning and home and knowing what they need for school on which day:

<https://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/School/Classes/> .

Our school policies can also be found on the school website:

<http://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/policies/>.

Please ensure the office has up-to-date contact telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for correspondence and let us know straight away if your details change.

Emergencies

As a small rural school, our staff team is limited, and our priority in any emergency situation will always be the safety and wellbeing of the children. Should an incident occur during the school day that requires an urgent response, we will act swiftly and appropriately based on the circumstances. While we will always aim to keep parents informed, please understand that immediate communication (such as texts or emails) may not be possible in the moment. We will update you as soon as we are able to. I would also like to kindly remind everyone to be mindful of our location and to help keep the road outside school clear, ensuring that emergency services can access the site without delay if needed.

Financial Pressure

There is still a lot of pressure on our incomes and we are aware of the media talk over the summer about rising food costs and energy prices. The rising cost of day-to-day living continues to be a challenge for many families, and we remain conscious of the impact this can have. As we plan trips, visitors and wider enrichment opportunities, we always consider affordability carefully and aim to provide high-quality experiences while keeping costs to families as low as possible. Should you ever find yourself worried about the financial implications of a school activity or event, please do get in touch. We are always happy to discuss concerns confidentially and work together to find a solution wherever we can.

I would encourage all families to check whether they may be entitled to Free School Meals. In addition to providing a free lunch each day, eligibility brings valuable additional funding into school, allowing us to further support children's learning and wellbeing. Even if your child is in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 and already benefits from Universal Infant Free School Meals, it is still important to apply if you are eligible, as the additional funding can make a significant difference. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/free-school-meals/>

Alternatively, please speak to me or a member of the office team, who will be happy to help.

Parking and 'Voluntary' One Way System

With our location and school access we ask all parents and carers to follow a few simple "rules" to keep everyone safe and to maintain good relations with our neighbours. Please:

- follow the voluntary one way system through the village - entering from the Broadway Road, passing school on your left and leaving at the Stanway monument crossroads;
- do not stop or park on the yellow zigzags or in the KEEP CLEAR area outside the school. This area must be kept clear at all times to ensure access for emergency services, the school bus and those with disabilities who may need to park close to the school entrance;
- do not turn around in the road outside of the school;
- do not park across driveways to neighbouring properties;
- close the school gates behind you.

It really helps if we all stick to these guidelines and ask friends and relatives to do the same.

As you have probably noticed, there are no pavements so take care when walking along the road. Please be mindful that the one way system is voluntary and other traffic is not aware of it. Please remember to look both ways and be alert to other, non-school, vehicles which might be “going the wrong way”.

Uniform

September is always a special time at Isbourne Valley, with classrooms full of enthusiasm and children eager to share stories from their summer holidays. It has been wonderful to welcome our new Reception children as they begin their school journey, along with several other new pupils and families joining us across the school. It has also been lovely to see how much some of the children have grown over the summer break. A couple of year 1s seemed to have doubled in height!!

As we settle into the routines of a new academic year, I would be grateful if parents and carers could take a moment to check our uniform expectations to ensure children are arriving at school with the correct items and wearing them consistently (<https://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/Documents/School-Uniform/>). A gentle reminder that children with hair that reaches their shoulders, or longer, should have it tied back during the school day. This helps to minimise the spread of head lice and also helps make sure that hair does not become a distraction during learning and play.

Punctuality and Attendance

Good attendance and punctuality are among the most important factors in helping children thrive at school. A positive start to the day helps children feel settled, confident and ready to learn, which is why we place such importance on arriving at school on time.

Our doors open at 8.40am, giving children time to come into class, organise themselves and begin a short morning task. This may include reading, responding to teacher feedback, completing previous learning or taking part in an activity designed to prepare them for the day ahead. By 8.50am, all children should be in their classrooms and ready to start lessons.

Late arrivals can be unsettling for children and may result in them missing important instructions or learning opportunities at the start of the day. Regular attendance is equally important. Even small amounts of missed learning can add up over time, making it harder for children to keep pace with their peers. National research shows a strong link between high attendance and academic success, with pupils who attend school regularly significantly more likely to achieve expected standards by the end of primary school. We greatly appreciate your support in ensuring that children attend school every day whenever possible and arrive ready to learn.

Wraparound Care

This year, we are delighted to be partnering with Atlas Camps to provide our after-school wraparound care provision. Following the success of the club during the summer term, I am particularly pleased to confirm that Miss Green and Mrs Knight will be continuing in their roles. Many of you will know the tremendous commitment they showed when they stepped in to ensure provision could continue for our families, and I am sure children will be pleased to see their familiar faces.

If you require after-school childcare, whether on a regular basis or occasionally, please visit the Atlas Camps website atlascamps.co.uk/aftercare/isbourne-valley-school/

Our Breakfast Club will continue to operate in the same way as last term (available from 8am and staffed by teachers and teaching assistants) and bookings should be made directly through the school by emailing wraparound@isbournevalleyschool.com.

To enable us to arrange appropriate staffing and ensure we can safely accommodate all children, breakfast club bookings for the following week must now be submitted by Thursday of the preceding week. Unfortunately, we are no longer able to accept last-minute requests made the day before attendance. We appreciate your understanding and support in helping us plan effectively.

Extra-curricular Clubs

We have a wide range of clubs and activities on offer for the children to take part in this term. Details of the clubs will be sent home soon and clubs will start on 14th September. Places are limited for some clubs so please make sure you confirm your child's choices promptly. We do not offer clubs to children in Coln class during their first term in school. There is an awful lot for them to get used to and they tend to get quite tired, particularly after the clocks change in October. We want them to be happy in school so prefer them to have the opportunity to settle into their school daily routines before they join in with extra activities.

Value

Each half term we focus on one of our school values. These values are explored through assemblies, classroom discussions and lessons, as well as through the many day-to-day interactions that take place across the school. We encourage children to think about how they demonstrate our values in their actions and to recognise them in others.

This term, our focus is Friendship. We will be encouraging children to think about what it means to be a good friend by showing kindness, respect and understanding towards others. Friendship is about including people, listening carefully, supporting one another through challenges and celebrating each other's successes. We want all children to feel valued, safe and supported at school, and we will be exploring how small acts of kindness and consideration can make a big difference to those around us.

Beech and Willow House non-uniform days

Congratulations to Beech House for collecting the highest number of house points last year and Willow for the highest number of house points in the summer term. Beech non-uniform day is on 18th September and Willow 25th September. Children in Beech and Willow House are welcome to come to school in 'home' clothes on that day with a yellow theme for Beech and Blue for Willow. Please make sure, however, that they wear suitable shoes and have coats for going outside.

Curriculum Overviews and Reading Rivers

The curriculum overviews for this term will be sent out on 11th September. These set out the topics, subjects and concepts which the children will be learning this term. They are also available on the individual class pages of the school website. Our Reading Rivers list the books and texts which the children will be enjoying. These are selected for a variety of reasons including to support children's writing (these have a blue border around the cover picture) and because they link to specific areas of study.

How we teach

There are a number of booklets on the website giving you information about how we teach your child(ren) and how you can support them <https://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/how-we-teach/>.

Meet the teacher

I mentioned earlier that the children have all settled into school really well already – I have been very impressed by them. Our new teacher, Ms Johnson (who will be covering Mrs Rogers' maternity leave), has also settled in very quickly! I know, from personal experience, that parents and carers also have a lot to get used to in September. To help you ease back into the routine, accustom to a new class, or find your adult school feet for the first time, we hold a 'Meet the Teacher' session. This will take place on 16th September at 3.30pm. Each teacher will give a short explanation of life in their class – the timetable, home learning, reading books and so on. You will be able to ask questions, see examples of books and work and your child can show you around their classroom.

We know some of you will have more than one classroom to cover and each teacher will therefore deliver their talk twice (back to back). Please do go to both talks, and if you have children in more than two classes go to two of the talks and speak to any other teachers on an individual basis.

Harvest Festival

We are looking forward to celebrating Harvest Festival on Wednesday 22nd October at 9.15am at St George's Church. Families are warmly invited to join us for this special occasion as we come together to reflect on the importance of gratitude, community and helping others.

As in previous years, we will be supporting the North Cotswold Food Bank through our harvest collection. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity shown by our school community and know that all donations are put to very good use. To make donating as straightforward as possible, collection boxes will be placed just inside the hall entrance and can be used at drop-off and pick-up times in the weeks leading up to the service.

The Food Bank particularly welcomes non-perishable items such as tinned foods, dried goods and toiletries, and any contributions would be greatly appreciated.

Class Assemblies

Each class has a chance to hold their own assembly each year. The first class to perform an assembly will be Evenlode class on 19th November at 9am. All parents are welcome to join us.

WOW Wednesdays and Marvellous Monday

These are some of our favourite events. An opportunity for you to pop into school to have a look at your child's work, see what they have been doing, explore their classroom and generally let them enjoy share their learning and school life with you. They are short sessions at the start or end of the school day. Our first Marvellous Monday is on 23rd November at 2.55pm. Please do come along if you can.

Lunch and Snacks

Lunches are provided by Caterlink. They are cooked in Woodmancote School and brought to school every day. The menu for this term is enclosed with this letter and available on the school website (<https://www.isbournevalleyschool.com/lunch-menu-1/>)

Children under 5 and those on free school meals are entitled to free milk in school. Other children can order milk from Cool Milk online. Children in KS1 (Coln and Avon classes) receive a snack every morning through a government healthy eating initiative. All children can bring a healthy snack into school. Please remember that the school is a nut free zone and to cut grapes in half if you are sending them in with younger children (they are a choking hazard).

Parents' Evenings

Our first Parents' Evenings of the academic year will take place in October (see dates below). These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss how your child has settled into their new class, celebrate their successes and talk about the progress they are making. They are also a valuable chance for parents and carers to ask questions and share any information that may help us support their child.

If there is a particular issue, concern or area you would like to discuss during your appointment, we would be grateful if you could let us know beforehand. This allows staff to prepare fully and make the best use of the time available. You can do this by contacting the school office or adding a note when booking your appointment. Further information about booking appointments will be shared closer to the time.

Nut Free school

Just a reminder that **Isbourne Valley School is a nut-free school**. This means we kindly ask that you avoid including any nuts in your child's snacks and lunchboxes. By working together, we can create a safe environment for those who have nut allergies.

To help with this, please consider the following when packing lunches:

- **Check labels** for any nut ingredients.
- Opt for **nut-free alternatives** such as seeds, fruits, and vegetables.

School Events

These are the dates for your diary for this term (I have listed as many as possible, but please do keep an eye on the website calendar for any additional details):

01/09/2026	Inset Day, no children in school
01/09/2026	Term begins
07/09/2026	Reading books home
10/09/2026	School Immunisation Day
11/09/2026	Reading Rivers and Parent overviews
14/09/2026	Extracurricular clubs to start this week
16/09/2026	Meet the teacher
18/09/2026	Beech House non-school uniform
24/09/2026	School photos
25/09/2026	Willow House non-school uniform
12/10/2026	Bikeability Y5 starts
12/10/2026	No extracurricular clubs this week
12/10/2026	Parent/Teacher Meetings
12/10/2026	Black History Month event
12/10/2026	EYFS and KS1 Cheltenham Literature Festival
13/10/2026	KS2 Cheltenham Literature Festival
14/10/2026	Book Fair
15/10/2026	Parent/Teacher Meetings
22/10/2026	Harvest Festival 9.15am at St George's Church
22/10/2026	Northleach Concert 7pm
23/10/2026	Inset Day, no children in school
26/10/2026	Half Term Holiday
02/11/2026	Term Begins
11/11/2026	Open Morning for prospective new Reception children
11/11/2026	Evenlode Trip "Saxons and Dragons" Museum of Gloucester
11/11/2026	Remembrance Day
12/11/2026	Windrush trip to Corinium Museum
17/11/2026	Open Morning for prospective new Reception children
19/11/2026	Evenlode Class Assembly
20/11/2026	Children in Need
20/11/2026	School Disco 3.20-5pm
23/11/2026	Marvelous Monday pm
25/11/2026	FIVS Wreath Making
26/11/2026	FIVS Wreath Making
02/12/2026	Stanway Club Choir Performance
03/12/2026	Winchcombe Christmas Festival – Choir Performance 4pm
07/12/2026	Nativity dress rehearsal (performance to Key Stage 2)
09/12/2026	Nativity performance pm

10/12/2026	Nativity performance am
14/12/2026	No extracurricular clubs this week
16/12/2026	Christmas Party Day
18/12/2026	Christmas Service at St George's church 1.15 pm
18/12/2026	School finishes at 2pm – mince pies with governors in the hall
TBC	Curriculum Information Session 3.30pm

Yours faithfully

J R A Godding

Mr Godding
Headteacher