



Diocese of Norwich  
Education and  
Academies Trust

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## The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Anne Neary

Web: [www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk](http://www.narvalleyfederation.co.uk)

Friday 9th September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

A very warm welcome back to school for the Autumn term; we hope that everyone had a good Summer and enjoyed all your different activities and holidays.

We are really looking forward to a year full of exciting learning, outdoor and hands on experiences, trips, performances, Church services and sporting events. It is also lovely to have started working with our new staff team members at each school; Staff photos for each school will be coming out in next week's newsletter so that you know who everyone is and what class they are teaching in.

Just a reminder in terms of attendance; strong attendance (96% and over) is so important for ensuring that your children learn and achieve well. 95% - considered satisfactory attendance by the Government and Ofsted as well as us - means not missing any more than ten school days over the whole year. Statistically, there is a clear link between children who regularly miss more than this in primary and achieving lower grades at GCSE and higher. (see this report: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/509679/the-link-between-absence-and-attainment-at-KS2-and-KS4-2013-to-2014-academic-year.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509679/the-link-between-absence-and-attainment-at-KS2-and-KS4-2013-to-2014-academic-year.pdf) )

Also just a reminder that the school day is from 8.40am until 3.10pm, with registration at 8.55am. Please do bring your children at 8.40am, as the 8.40am until 9am slot is a teaching slot alongside registration and we want all children to benefit from this. We do daily skills practise for English and Maths. Not coming at 8.40am each day would mean one and a half hours of learning missed each week, which means nearly 67 hours of extra learning that your child will miss out on each school year. It is also an important opportunity for staff to talk to the children, see how they are, pick up on emotions and support children.

PE kits; now that the need that arose from Covid, this year we are returning to changing for PE in school and getting changed back into uniform after the lesson. Please ensure that your child has their PE kit in school on a Monday and takes them home on a Friday. Please ensure your child has tracksuit bottoms and the school hoody or a plain tracksuit top for the colder weather.

Volunteers; we will be delighted to welcome back any of you who have previously volunteered, and anyone who would like to volunteer. All volunteers undertake DBS checks and safeguarding procedures and we will offer some training and support. If you feel you can help with reading, have a skill to offer, have a specialist subject you could talk about then please do get in touch, we'd be really, really pleased to welcome you.

Clubs;- We'd love to expand the number of clubs that we can offer our children; If you have a particular interest and would like to work with a member of staff to deliver a club then please do get in touch, we'd be really happy to welcome you.

Free School Meals, vouchers and hardship: please see the below info from Norfolk County Council (NCC); Rather than issuing the above in the school holidays, NCC is issuing them monthly to help families with the cost of living. Parents/carers may choose to save vouchers rather than spend at the time of issue, so they have more funds available during the school holidays if they wish to, within the constraints of the three-month expiry date of the vouchers. **Note: If vouchers expire, they cannot be reissued.**

### **Families in hardship and needing wider support**

In addition to the offer of FSM vouchers for eligible families, there is support available for families who are facing hardship and need support.

Anyone experiencing hardship may be able to receive support through the Norfolk Assistance Scheme (NAS), which may be able to provide support for food, fuel, clothes, and other essential household items to families experiencing hardship. Wider support from a range of partners can then also be made available with NAS working alongside the Children's Services Community and Partnerships service.

Families may get in touch with NAS via their [dedicated website which includes an online application form](#), or if they cannot access the internet, they can call **0344 800 8020**.

### **Message from Head of School**

Welcome back! It is so lovely to see you all again after 6 weeks. The holidays have absolutely flown by and I hope you all had a lovely time, enjoying the uncharacteristically hot weather and embarking on adventures and new activities. I would like to welcome our new families to the Castle Acre family. There will be lots of opportunities coming up for you to join us and get to know everyone and our door is always open so do pop in if you need to.

I would also like to welcome our new members of staff. Miss Bix is joining us as Rowan Class teacher and Miss George and Mrs Blakey are joining us as Oak Class teachers. We are really pleased to have them as part of the staffing team.

The children have settled back into school and their learning really well. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Children in Rowan Class were doing so super maths work yesterday, using skills they had learnt from Reception Year to complete addition sentences. When the Reception children joined them for the afternoon, they made expanding caterpillars which was super exciting!

Children in Whitebeam have been retelling the story of Little Red Riding Hood and learning some new vocabulary. They also harvested some of their crops they had planted last year – very tasty carrots!! Oak Class have grown up a lot over the break and the Year 6's look like Year 6's. We cannot believe it is their final year with us. All the children have been doing some amazing descriptive sentences and I look forward to seeing the result of the science experiment next week on teeth.

Looking forward to next week, we will have our school and eco councillors in place and are holding our interviews for Head Pupil. We look forward to being able to share the successful candidates in next week's newsletter. We have lots of exciting things planned for the rest of the term and will announce these over the next couple of weeks.

Finally, please remember that our door is always open. Please do pop in and speak to us if you have any questions or queries or equally if you have any positives and ideas.

During the drafting of this letter, we received the news that our Queen had died. Today in school we held a Collective Worship, to acknowledge and express respect for a life given in service. Our children wrote prayers/reflections, and we would like to share some with you:

From Isla P of Rowan class;  
"The Queen was very special"

From Alexander of Whitebeam class;  
“Dear God  
Thank you for our kind and beautiful Queen,  
Amen”

From Maddie of Oak class;  
“Dear God  
Thank you for our lovely Queen and the leadership she gave us. We have been inspired. Even though she is gone, she will still be in our hearts,  
Amen”

I am sure that in the coming days we will do more to remember the service of the Queen and mark her passing and we will of course share these arrangements with you in due course. In the meantime, we continue to attend school as normal.

For those families who are new to us, you are very warmly welcomed and to our current families, we look forward to another year of working with you all. See you soon either on the gate or at various events; we have fayres in the villages of Sporle and Castle Acre on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> so may see you there.

With very best wishes; see you soon,

Mrs Anne Neary



Executive Head Teacher  
The Nar Valley Federation of Church Academies  
Castle Acre, Narborough and Sporle

Mrs Emma Spaul



Head of School  
Castle Acre CE Primary Academy