



Headteacher: Tina Holditch

Rectory Lane North
Leybourne
West Malling
Kent
ME19 5HD

Tel: 01732 842008
Email: headteacher@leybourne.school
www.leybourne.school

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Dear Parents,

Christmas Cards

Your child will today bring home the proof of their Christmas Card design – they really do look fabulous! In a change to previous years, ordering of Christmas Cards and other products can only be done on line. Full details can be found on the proof and on the message Mrs Eldred sent out earlier today. Please note that orders should be requested by 19th October 2023. Thank you for your support.

Fletcher

Some of you may by now have heard about Fletcher – our new school dog. Fletcher is my Hungarian Vizsla, who has been coming into school and spending time with children across the school. Fletcher is incredibly gentle and calm, with a wonderful temperament.



Many schools now have dogs working with the children. Having a dog to talk to, play with and care for can have a hugely positive effect on pupil well-being and can help to improve their attendance and engagement in school. In just a few very short weeks, we have already noticed the impact that Fletcher has had on a number of children. In time,

Nurturing the spark of God within

“Those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles” Isaiah 40:31



Ms Miller's dog, Flossie, will also be coming into school to work with the children, although Fletcher and Flossie will not be in school on the same days to avoid overwhelming the children.

Please be assured that no child will be made to interact with the dogs, and if you would prefer your child not to have any involvement with them, please do let us know. However, if the children would like to see the dogs they will be able to, obviously under adult supervision. In addition, the dogs will be supporting individual pupils as required, and with the agreement of their parents.

Harvest Festival

Thank you so much for your wonderful donations to our Harvest Festival yesterday. We really were overwhelmed by your support of the Food Bank. We were delighted to have Reverend Helen with us to celebrate a really joyful Harvest Festival.

It was also lovely to be joined by some of the children from Leybourne Pre-School. They coped beautifully with being in the hall with the "big children" and performed so well with Reception to sing "Big, Red Combine Harvester." We loved having you with us!



PTFA Discos

A reminder that the PTFA will be hosting their first Discos of the academic year next Friday, 13th October - Year R and KS1: 3:30pm – 4:30pm, KS2 5pm – 6:15pm.

Year R and KS1 should come to school with their party clothes in a bag to get changed in the classroom at the end of the school day. They will remain in the classrooms until the playground has been cleared, before being taken to the hall to start the disco. Any children not attending the disco will be released at 3:15pm in the usual way.

At the end of the disco at 4:30pm their teachers will collect the children from the hall to gather their belongings and release them to you as they would on a normal school day.

Please return the emergency contact form to the office for ALL children attending.

COST

Entry to the disco will be £5 per child. No physical tickets will be issued.

This includes a glow stick, drink and snack – there will be no need to bring extra money.

HOW TO MAKE PAYMENTS

Payments are now being accepted in advance only via our “Sum up” shop, details below.

Please follow this link:

- <https://leybourne-primary-school-ptfa.sumupstore.com/>
- Under “Highlights” select event.
- Select the number of tickets you require
- Click Add to Cart
- Select the basket at the top right of the screen.
- In the grey box “message to merchant” include the name of your child/ren.
- Checkout
- Under “Contact Info”, please enter your name, email and contact number.
- Select Continue
- Enter your card details to pay.

IMPORTANT: Please ensure that the email address used here is the same as that on the emergency contact form so that we are able to match your payments.

There is no limit on the number of children that can attend however, the last day for making payments will be Wednesday 11 October. I’m afraid that we will be unable to accept any payments after this date – the PTFA need time to match payments and create lists of attendees for safeguarding purposes as well as purchase refreshments/glowsticks for everyone, all around our own work commitments. Thank you for your understanding.

Pupil Premium

Some of you may be aware that some families can receive free school meals for their children. You may not, however, realise that children who are eligible to receive free school meals also receive Pupil Premium Funding - additional funding which we, as a school, can use to support the children’s access to the wider curriculum and address non-academic barriers to success in school. We can, therefore, use this funding to support parents with the purchase of school uniform and shoes, payment for school trips (including the residentials) and for extra-curricular opportunities, such as Football Club, RockSteady and Breakfast and After-School Clubs.

Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 automatically receive free school lunches as part of the Government’s Universal Infant Free School Meals Scheme. However, these pupils can also receive the additional Pupil Premium Funding if you apply for free school meals, as detailed below.

In addition, each eligible child will receive a £10 per week food voucher during the school holidays and will also be eligible to join the Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF) - a range of free activities in the Easter, summer and Christmas holidays.

Your child may be able to get free school meals if you get any of the following:

- Universal Credit (provided you have an annual net earned income of no more than £7,400, as assessed by earnings from up to three of your most recent assessment periods)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guarantee element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for four weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

If you would like to find out more about free school meals, and check your eligibility, please use the link below:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/free-school-meals>

I know that some parents may be concerned that their children may be singled out in some way, or treated differently, if they receive free school meals. Please be assured that this is not the case. The children are not aware of who receives free meals, or who pays. They are not told about the additional funding and how it is used. Details of pupils receiving free school meals are treated confidentially amongst those staff who need to know, and are not shared widely. Finally, we are only notified of a successful application for free school meals, so if you apply and are not successful, we are not informed.

Please do consider applying for free school meals if you think you might be eligible. I would hate to think that there are families struggling financially when support such as this is available to them. If you have any questions or concerns about this process, please do not hesitate to contact me – I will do all I can to help you.

I hope you all have a wonderful weekend and enjoy the predicted lovely weather!

Best wishes

Tina Holditch

Headteacher