

Ashbourne Primary School

Headteacher: Paula Chisholm

Co-Headteacher: Heather Davis

Chair of Governors: Ashley Tabony



2nd February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning)

We are writing to let you know about some upcoming changes to lunchtimes and outdoor play, as part of our continued work with OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). These changes have been carefully planned with our lunchtime play team to ensure children remain safe, active and well supported.

Lunchtime arrangements

- Children in Reception and Year 1 will continue to go into the dining hall first, as they do now.
- Year 2 children will go outside initially but will need to eat their lunch before accessing the back grass area.
- KS2 children will have a *free-flow lunchtime*, meaning they can choose when they go in for lunch. This approach works very well in other OPAL schools and helps reduce queues and lining up.

To ensure all children eat their lunch, class lists will be displayed at the kitchen so children can tick their name once they have eaten. A bell will ring for 'last orders' to remind anyone who has not yet had their lunch.

There will be adults supervising the dining hall and playground zones, and we will be closely monitoring behaviour and routines as the children adjust to this change.

Outdoor play and site access

- The school site will be divided into zones, each supervised by a member of the play team, with an additional adult roaming the whole site.
- The back grass area will be open, however children must wear wellies to access it at this time of year.
- The EYFS yard and climbing equipment remain for EYFS children only.

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Wellies

As part of our OPAL play, children will need access to the back grass for low-risk outdoor play. For this reason:

- Children should bring a pair of named wellies to keep in school.
- Welly storage stands will be placed outside classrooms or in suitable nearby locations.
- Children will not be able to use the back grass without wellies during wetter months.

We appreciate your support with this, as it allows children to enjoy outdoor play safely and comfortably.

We will have additional adults outside during the first few weeks to support the play team and help the children settle into these new routines.

OPAL will begin after half term on 23rd February.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support.

Paula Chisholm & Heather Davis

Headteachers

Kythe Beresford

OPAL Leader