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Friday 4th September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

I'd like to welcome you all back to what is undoubtedly the most eagerly anticipated start of a new school year I have seen during my career in schools.

I had numerous conversations with staff on Tuesday and as you would expect, without exception, everyone was eager to have the children return and, judging by the length of the queue to get into school on Wednesday morning, it was a sentiment shared by all!

We've had a very enjoyable three days and, whilst there are many changes, the children have adapted well to these and shown us just how resilient they are.

Speaking of changes, the New Normal document has been updated, the two significant changes that you need to be aware of concern drop-off & pick-up and updated protocols for music teaching in the school.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

The arrangements at the beginning and the end of the school day seem to be going well although a little slowly but we have made some minor changes over the past few days to facilitate this.

Whilst we have a window of 20 minutes in which children can be dropped off and collected, we do have a lot of parents arriving at the beginning of the window which in turn causes congestion. Whilst this will naturally diminish as some parents wait until closer to the end of the 20-minute period, it would be helpful if you are not in a hurry to get to work or back home that you aim for 8.50am rather than 8.40am. This will space out the arrival of children on site and therefore mean less congestion.

It is expected and understandable that, for the first few days, parents would wish to see their children into school but, in order to save you time, parents of older children are able to leave their children in the smaller playground and then exit through the pedestrian gate into the school carpark, joining the one-way system out of the school gates. The children can then make their own way to the classrooms and means that parents do not have to walk around the whole one-way system.

Parking (*sigh*)

For those of you who drive into the village, can I also remind you about parking. Sadly, I have already had my first contact from a resident of Riverside Close who sent me a photo of a car parked up on the kerb which meant that anyone in a wheelchair or with a buggy would not have been able to get past.

Music Lessons

No one can question the benefits of music and singing and Mrs Brookes and Mr Miles have been busy putting together some protocols to ensure that our excellent music lessons can continue in a safe and enjoyable way. The full details can be found in the New Normal document



New Toilets

Ask any school council in the country what they would like to change about their school and I guarantee you that toilets will be in their top 3 (if not their number one!). Over the summer holidays, Mr Moon has been working with Waller Building Services to completely refurbish the three pupil toilet blocks throughout the school.

As you may remember, the children selected their favorite colours for the toilets and I personally think that they look amazing. We have also got rid of the urinals in the boys toilets because... boys!

This also gives us the facility to have separate adult and child toilets when we hold community events as the Year 6 toilet block are full-height.

A job well done to Mr Moon and Waller Building Services!



PESE (News for Year 6 Parents)

Kent Test

You may have seen over the holidays that the date of Thursday 15th October has been confirmed as the date of the Kent Test. Before this, the children will be undertaking the CATs which they normally would have completed in May and I will be writing to parents closer to the time about this.

Secondary School Selection

Applications for secondary schools are open and close on Monday 2nd November (the link is below). You are eligible to name up to six secondary schools due to the extraordinary circumstances but if you would like any advice about this then please do not hesitate to contact me.

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools/school-places/secondary-school-places#tab-2>

School Dinners

Just to remind all parents that children in Key Stage 2 are not automatically eligible for Free School Meals. This is obviously a change for those who have children in Year 3 and I wouldn't want any families to unknowingly incur any debt.

Updated Contact Details

If, over the summer, parents have changed their phone number or any other contact details then please could you let the school office know, preferably by emailing office@bridge.kent.sch.uk

Meet the Team Sessions

Normally, at the beginning of each year, we hold a parent session where you can meet your children's teachers. This year, we will still be holding these but we are going virtual and these will be held online via Zoom. More details will be in next week's newsletter.

Di Oxenham

Many of you would have seen the sad news that, over the summer holiday, Di Oxenham passed away. Her contribution to Bridge School and our children and families cannot be under-estimated. Whilst I did not have the pleasure of working directly with her, I met her on several occasions and the strength of her personality and her commitment to the school and its children was evident. She was loved and will be sorely missed.

Term Dates

As a reminder, these are published below:

Term Dates (2020-21)

- Term 1:** Wednesday 2nd Sept to Friday 23rd Oct
- Term 2:** Wednesday 4th November to Friday 18th Dec
- Term 3:** Monday 4th Jan to Friday 12th Feb
- Term 4:** Monday 22nd Feb to Thursday 1st April
- Term 5:** Monday 19th April to Friday 28th May
- Term 6:** Wednesday 9th June to Wednesday 21st July

Term Dates (2021-22)

- Term 1:** Wednesday 1st Sept to Friday 22nd Oct
 - Term 2:** Monday 1st November to Friday 17th Dec
 - Term 3:** Tuesday 4th Jan to Friday 11th Feb
 - Term 4:** Monday 21st Feb to Friday 1st April
 - Term 5:** Tuesday 19th April to Friday 27th May
 - Term 6:** Monday 6th June to Friday 22nd July
- * Five staff training days to be determined

With best wishes,



James Tibbles