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Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to extend a warm welcome back to our children and families from previous years and to those families who are just joining our school community this week with their children in Year R. As I walk around the school, it is a pleasure to see the children back – a school without the children seems such a soulless place.

Yesterday, in our Collective Worship, I spoke to the children about how a school community can be like a jigsaw, each piece is needed and no one piece is less or more important than the others as you need every piece to complete the puzzle.

As we rebuild the relationships in school after the summer break, it is important to remember that every member of our community is important and to be thankful for each other – regardless of role.

In that vein, I am looking forward to a busy year ahead. It will not be without its challenges but I know that with the community working together to support each other, we will ensure the best possible outcomes for the children in our care.

Over the next two weeks, parents are invited to a Meet the Team session with their child's class teachers. This is an opportunity to meet the staff, find out what the children will be learning and any other information about the upcoming year. Details are below and we hope that you will be able to join us. If you cannot, do not worry, we will upload the presentations onto the school website.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2.45pm: Year 3

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2.45pm: Year 5

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2.45pm: Year 4

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2.45pm: Year 1

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2.45pm: Year 6

Thursday 21<sup>th</sup> September, 2.45pm: Year 2

## Attendance

One of the lasting impacts of the Covid pandemic has been its effect on school attendance, especially with historic guidance being to stay away from school and places of work rather than the normal approach of dosing up with Calpol/Lemsip/etc.

Whilst the impact on attendance is not felt as strongly at primary than it has been at secondary, our school attendance figures are lower with more children's attendance below 90%.

Parents have shared their views that schools need to 'get back to normal' and I could not agree more – this includes our approach to minor illnesses. Time not spent in school has an obvious impact on outcomes – academic and personal.

90% attendance may seem like a high figure, but this equates to a day off every fortnight or almost four weeks (a whole month) over the course of a year.



All schools of course are also bound by the Department of Education to monitor and report on the attendance of all pupils. When a pupil's attendance drops below 90%, we are required to request medical evidence to support an ill health absence. Without such evidence we are required to record the absence as unauthorised, and we may need to seek support from PIAS (KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service).

We monitor all of our pupils' attendance from the outset of the year and whilst a few days off in the early stages of the academic year can adversely affect average attendance and can, of course, sometimes be unavoidable, it is also potentially indicative of possible issues arising surrounding attendance.

This coming year then I ask us all to try to get 'back to normal'. Whilst we all get sick from time to time and 100% attendance is perhaps a lot to ask, the 'if in doubt, stay out' days are thankfully past us so a bit of a cold shouldn't stop us from attending school.

### Punctuality

I would also like to stress the importance of punctuality. All too often I see the same children coming into school late and this also has an impact on them. It's embarrassing for the children when they enter the classroom late, the children in the room are already learning about what is expected of them in that lesson - the child coming in does not and then needs 'catching-up' from either the class teacher or teaching assistant. Either way, this is taking valuable adult-time away from the other children.

Parents should also know that lateness after 9am is logged as an absence and this can also lead to involvement from PIAS (KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service) and potentially fines.

### RAAC

You would have seen on the news over the past few days about reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in schools. I have been asked by a couple of parents but I am pleased to confirm that no RAAC has been identified in school following a survey by a structural engineer which took place in June.

With very best wishes,



James Tibbles  
Headteacher

### A Prayer from the Diocese

*Almighty God,*

*As the new school year begins, we ask for your continued blessing upon all who study in our schools, colleges and universities. Walk with those starting in a new setting this term. May they be filled with your peace and confidence to settle quickly.*

*We give thanks for our teachers and school staff. Fill them with your abundant energy, patience and creativity. As they deal with the busyness of school life, grant school leaders with the wisdom they need to make decisions for the best of the community they serve.*

*Faithful God, we hold all the pupils, staff and families of our diocese before you. Go before them into this new school year to enable all to accept new challenges with eagerness, new risks with courage and new insights with openness.*

*We ask this in the name of Jesus.*

*Amen*