



www.churchtown.org.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. J. Payne

30th August 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we turn our minds to the start of the new academic year, I wanted to take this opportunity to write to families to express my gratitude, communicate the work and support we have put in place over the summer and outline next steps ahead of pupils returning on Wednesday 4th September.

Firstly, I wanted to thank the entire school community for their unwavering support, continued encouragement and understanding over the last five weeks. The strength of our community has been evident in abundance and, in such tragic circumstances, has provided positivity and hope as we look ahead – thank you.

As a school we are trying to balance the support we have planned based on a range of differing needs of children and their families, whilst continuing our primary purpose of providing a high quality, engaging education for all children. There will be those families who have spoken very little about the events that took place over the summer to those families who were directly affected by the incident. Similarly, there will be children severely affected by trauma and those looking forward to returning to the classroom with no triggered trauma issues. To meet these varying needs, we have ensured that throughout the summer we have sought advice, training and research from professionals to ensure our approach in September is measured, considered and informed. Our plan is outlined below:

Summer support:

1. Over the last 4 weeks, we have held 6 open drop-in sessions for families, staff and the wider community to come together as an opportunity to talk to one another, access specialist support and receive information regarding further support networks available. Feedback from these sessions highlighted how children and their families have benefitted from the opportunity to talk to each other, talk with familiar adults in school and seek support from external professionals.
2. One-to-one bookable sessions with a mental health nurse have also been offered to families and staff to provide further, specific support.
3. Key staff members have provided tailored, specific support for children and their families directly impacted by the incident, including home visits and school-based support during our open drop-in sessions.
4. We have compiled a range of supportive information and resources for including information on available services and tools to help your child(ren). You can find everything on our website at www.churchtown.org.uk or by clicking the link below: <https://churchtown.org.uk/support-resources/>. These pages will be updated regularly in the coming months.



An Endeavour Learning Trust School
Registered in England
Company Registration Number 7848372
VAT Registration Number 125718416

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📍 St. Cuthbert's Road, Southport PR9 7NN



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Plans for the first week back (W/C September 2nd):

1. Working with a range of professionals, we have put together a robust, modified INSET plan for staff during the Monday and Tuesday which includes face-to-face training and access to research materials:
 - Health, Wellbeing and Emotional Regulation training (delivered by a leadership and coaching psychologist)
 - Trauma Based Support training (delivered by a specialist clinical practitioner from Victim Support)
 - Safeguarding Training including updates to the Keeping Children Safe in Education documentation (delivered by Heather Fowler the head of safeguarding and welfare for Endeavour Learning Trust)
 - Return to School Guidance (written by Ez Mills Principal Educational Psychologist for Sefton)
 - Guidance on creating the best environment for recovery (written by the UK Trauma Council)
2. A modified start to the academic year on Wednesday 4th September. This approach is being taken following advice from a range of educational psychologists and is designed to provide more opportunities for pupils to talk with their teacher in small groups and take part in therapeutic play, before we return to whole class teaching and learning. All children will attend a one-hour session in a small group (maximum of ten pupils per session) of their peers to spend time with their new class teacher. During the session, children will have the chance to talk with their friends, talk to their teacher and engage in a range of creative activities. There is no set 'objective' for the session but the time will allow children to familiarise themselves again with our school routines and for teachers to talk about the year ahead (e.g. PE days, first subjects studied etc.) This approach will help ease the transition back into school life and provide a supportive environment for children, families and staff. All school gates will be open for the beginning and end of each session, and teachers will collect children from the yard and bring them back to the yard at the end of their session. If you have not yet booked your child(ren)'s space, please register here: <https://churchtown.schoolcloud.co.uk/>.
3. As part of the support on Wednesday 4th September, we are also offering a space for the families of our children to attend a session running at the same time as your child's class visit. This session, led by Heather Fowler (Head of Safeguarding and Welfare at Endeavour Learning Trust), will take place in the main school hall. It will focus on how all adults can support children in helping to process, and heal from, the recent tragic incident, as well as ask any specific questions that you may have.

Safety and Security:

1. Churchtown Primary School has an annual review of Safety and Security, carried out by the Estates Team of Endeavour Learning Trust. In addition, there is an annual Safeguarding review, which incorporates safety and security measures and protocols. Termly evacuation procedures are practiced and reviewed, and invacuation procedures, which are inside safety drills for when the danger is outside and needs to be avoided.
2. In light of recent events, leadership staff from the school and the Trust have met with the Northwest Regional Prevent Coordinator for the Department for Education and the Designing Out Crime Officer for Merseyside Police to review the security of Churchtown Primary. The outcome of the visit was that the school premises are very secure with high quality security fencing, CCTV, and door access control contributing to a secure school environment.



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As is normal practice, our operational procedures will continue to run as planned and these will be reviewed on a termly basis. These procedures include but are not limited to, school gates being manned by a member of staff (all staff wear Hi-Vis jackets), external classroom doors are locked prior to gates being opened, secure main office/entrance to school and mag-locked doors throughout the site. As a school, we will be sending out a letter about invacuation procedures to inform families of practices and how these will be carried out in a proportionate manner for the age of the children.

3. We will continue to ensure a visible staff presence across the school site, including Senior Leadership Team presence at the beginning and end of each school day.

Looking ahead to the academic year:

1. Our Personal, Social, Health and Economic curriculum (PSHE curriculum) and school assemblies will continue to be adapted for our school context and be supported by the research and recommendations outlined by the UK Trauma Council to help create the best environment for recovery.
2. We will continue to work closely with a range of professionals, including educational psychologists, clinical practitioners and mental health nurses to provide targeted support to relevant pupils, families and staff.
3. As a school, we pride ourselves on offering a broad curriculum, full of opportunities for our pupils to develop both academically and personally. Our top priority is to ensure that every child can access their education, make the most of all opportunities, and continue to thrive.

Thank you again for your continued support. If you have any questions or need further support, please do not hesitate to contact the school via email office@churchtown.org.uk. As mentioned, we have also compiled a range of resources for pupils and their families to access which can be found on our website and by clicking the following link <https://churchtown.org.uk/support-resources>.

We look forward to welcoming our pupils and their families back to school next week.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs Payne
Headteacher