

10<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to you all. It is of course typical that the weather has improved now that the children have all returned, but they don't seem to have minded and it has been wonderful to welcome them back to the new academic year. It has been particularly exciting to see them sharing the same spaces at breaktimes, in lunches and in assemblies. You can see Derek in full flow in his first proper face-to-face assembly! The highlight of the week for me was probably singing with the whole school in our first singing assembly since March 2020.



It has also been lovely to welcome some new additions to the school. On the staff, we welcome Helen Mulholland who will be working with individual children in KS1 and Sarah Hill who is a student teacher based in Y1. Besides our 30 new Dragonflies, our new children are Eva and Theodora (Y2) and Sienna (Y4H) and we welcome them all and hope they will be very happy at their new school.

We have been reviewing our systems over the week and tweaking here and there as they have bedded in. Thank you for your patience on this. One significant change for next week will be around **KS2 pick-ups** at the end of the day. When we last ran this system, there were four KS2 classes, but now there are five and we know that the release of children is proving longwinded and not as secure as we would like. With this in mind, we are splitting the release of KS2 classes at the end of the day from Monday. Lower KS2 (Y3, Y4D and Y4H) will come out of the main entrance, whilst Upper KS2 (Y5 and Y6) will continue to come out of the side gate. We hope that this will make pick-up quicker and maximise the security.

In the meantime, may I ask all parents/carers to review their journeys at drop-off and pick-up to see whether there are days when they could either walk to school or park and stride, using a nearby road. If we can reduce the number of cars using the car park, we will reduce congestion, increase the children's safety and be more environmentally friendly.

#### Summer Reading Challenge 2021



This week, although nothing had been said until today, some children remembered to bring in their **Summer Reading Challenge** certificates. Each certificate that comes in gains a house point and gets our house point competition started, so do encourage your child to bring in their certificate. They are also welcome to bring in their medal if they would like to, but please make sure it is named on the back.

We are also welcoming evidence that children took part in the summer **Eco Challenge** which was issued at the end of last term. Again, children will gain a point for their house; they will also win a special Eco Challenge badge which is in the process of being designed and should hopefully be ready in time for next week's Celebration Assembly.

I hope that all parents/carers will have been able to attend their child's **Meet the Teacher**. We have kept these on Zoom, as feedback suggested this suited everybody better and reduced the issues around childcare. If your child's Meet the Teacher hasn't happened yet, I do urge you to attend, as it will give you a clear overview of the term ahead. As ever, parents/carers are always welcome to contact teachers with any questions or concerns.

You should have received a **clubs list**, setting out the options for this term. We believe in extracurricular opportunities and try to field the best range of clubs that we can. We welcome Aspire as our new PE provider and our altered timetable allows us now to offer three sports-based clubs each week run by Aspire which is great. We are always looking for extra clubs and parents/carers who would like to run or assist with a club are always warmly welcomed. If you do think you would like to offer a club, we are happy to consider starting additional clubs at half-term or in January.

### **Theatre Fridays**

The winter programme has just been published for the Chichester Festival Theatre. Theatre experiences can be magical for children, but theatre prices can quickly become quite unaffordable, if a parent takes a child, let alone if a whole family goes. With this in mind, and having contacted the theatre yesterday, I would like to tell you about a theatre scheme we are trialling this year which will hopefully enable some of our children to see a local performance which might otherwise prove too expensive.

Booking becomes available for the general public on 21<sup>st</sup> September and I plan to reserve a block of tickets for three different performances. Initially, the tickets will be opened up to specific age-ranges. After that, if there are any tickets unsold, we will open them further to include older children. If all of these tickets are bought, we will be able to fill a minibus, though I will need at least one additional adult. This will not only bring each child's ticket price down from £16 to £8.50, but the children will also not need to be accompanied by a paying parent/carer, and this should, hopefully, make the outing more affordable.

Here are the three suggested outings:

- Y1-2 Children  
**Stick Man** – Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> December @ 4.00pm
- Y3-4 Children  
**Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World** – Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> January @ 7.00pm
- Y5-6 Children  
**Private Peaceful** – Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> March @ 7.30pm

We are very fortunate to have such a brilliant theatre close by and I hope this initiative will prove successful. Keep your eyes peeled for more details towards the end of the month.



## Year 6 Debate

Today, I was fortunate enough to be invited to a Year 6 debate on the value of restarting the Daily Mile. I have organised the Rotary Rother Valley Debate for many years and have seen a lot of primary school debating teams in my time, but I can honestly say that the two teams did brilliantly, especially when one remembers that this is still Week 1. Not only were the teams articulate and organised, but they also fielded the really sensible questions from the audience calmly and effectively. They are going to repeat their debate for the whole school in Tuesday's assembly. Once the second debate has taken place, the staff will discuss the future of this initiative. It is really encouraging to see our Year 6 children stepping up so early in the year and helping to shape the direction of the school.



### **Macmillan Fundraiser – Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> September - after school, in Easebourne Park** (message from Laura Bond)

We'd love to see you all - please come and enjoy some delicious cakes, whilst raising important funds for the wonderful Macmillan services. Our family are currently receiving fantastic and invaluable help and support from our local Macmillan angels - this is our opportunity to give something back. A Love for Cakes (Laura Bond)

will have a lovely assortment available for you, in return for your kind donations.

Thank you & we look forward to seeing you all.

With changed arrangements this term, the **half-termly Book Club** will once again be open to Year 5 children, as well as those from Year 6. We meet half-termly after school on a Friday and discuss a book we have all read over squash and biscuits. It runs until 4.15 and all are welcome. The only expectation is that children will have read the book so a commitment to reading is necessary! Our first meeting will be on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> September, when we will simply discuss books that we have read and enjoyed. The first book for the year will be given out then. If your child is interested, please could they let me know.

I would like to thank the PTFA for all that they have done for the school. Most recently, they have funded the purchase of a whole new stock of fully decodable books for our younger children. Even better, their generosity has been match funded by the English Hub.

Finally, can I thank all those parents, carers and volunteers who have purchased a book(s) from the school's **Amazon Wishlist** on our website. It has been tremendous to have this boost to the school's library stock. This is a new initiative and gives the community an easy way to support the children's reading in the school by helping to build class libraries of rich texts. The wishlist will continue to be available for you to use and might also be a helpful guide for choosing books as Christmas and birthday presents for your child.

Have a good weekend!

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Johnny Curran'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'J'.