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Dear Parents,

Words cannot even begin to express the joy I feel at seeing the children back in School. I am tremendously proud of the way we all coped through the lockdown but nothing compares to the buzz of a school full of children. We are aware that some of our new children may not have been attending school for the past five months and that some of our returning children have found home schooling a greater challenge than others. I want to reassure you all that settling the children back into full-time education happily is the priority for us all. You can assist us with that goal by letting your child's class teacher know if there are any issues as soon as they arise. These can be communicated through the reading record /homework diary or through e-mail.

I want to thank everyone again for their patience and support in making the drop off and collection possible. We will inevitably find this challenging because of the government restrictions placed upon us but I anticipate it will get better with each passing day as we learn lessons and become more comfortable with the arrangements. I am grateful for the feedback many of you have provided and the e-mails of support are always gratefully received.

Staff Announcements: We had a number of retirements announced last year and these were all filled during a flurry of Spring Term recruitment. I am delighted to welcome 6 new members of the team who I know are going to bring a huge amount to so many aspects of our provision. Very late in the summer Mrs Alison Roach, one of our Year 1 TAs decided to retire to spend more time with her family and help out with her beloved grandchildren. Mrs Roach joined Richard Pate the same year I came and has done a brilliant job in both Reception and Year 1. We have moved Mrs Vanessa James into 1J to work alongside Mr Jones and appointed Mrs CJ Markham in the Nursery for the coming year as a Nursery TA. Mrs Rachel Norris has joined as one of the Reception teachers, Mrs Laura Thomas becomes the teacher in 1T and Mr Luke Kitchen takes on the teaching responsibilities of 5K. With Mr Pound, our specialist Science teacher, moving to part-time we welcome Mr David Wade as our teacher of Year 5 and 6 Science. We are also very excited to welcome Mrs Victoria Compton as our first ever Head of Communications and Marketing. Mrs Compton is already working on a number of projects and is keen to get to know the school community better.

Coronavirus: As the new term has begun we have already had a window into this new reality. We had three children unable to begin the term as they had to wait out quarantine with their families. We have also had a number of children kept off school as they, or a member of their family, developed symptoms of the virus. Frustratingly in two cases the tests were lost and had to be re-submitted. I do appreciate everyone's cooperation with the regulations and fortunately we have Showbie to help us educate those who are not in the building. For those new to RPS, Showbie is our platform for remote learning. All new parents should have received an e-mail from Mr Hooper explaining how Showbie works. We will be sending out a brief survey to parents regarding Showbie to help us improve the provision for those who are off for a short period of time or in the event of a larger lockdown.

Languages Curriculum Focus: Every term we enjoy something called Curriculum Focus. This is an opportunity for us to take a look at the delivery of a certain subject but also to have some fun with some alternative activities. The new restrictions have placed some extra challenges for this programme but we are looking at creative ways to present the topic of languages to the children. Mr Chesworth is the Curriculum Lead for Languages across the School and has a number of activities planned. I appreciate that many of you speak different languages and if you felt you might be able to contribute please do let us know. We will be sharing more information about the activities in the coming weeks.

Car Park and Southern Road: I am very pleased with our drop off and pick up arrangements so far and feel very grateful for everyone's help. We are continuing to tweak our plans and are currently looking at a few adaptations to help at pick up time. We would like to remind all Year 5 and 6 parents that they should remain in their cars at pick up and the children will be delivered to you. Any contact with the teachers should be through the homework diary or by e-mail. Next week we will resume with our after school clubs and activities and this should help with reducing the number of vehicles coming at once. I would be very grateful if everyone could aim to stick to these timings as closely as possible. Inevitably the new restrictions have placed a significant pressure on our car park but I am grateful for almost everyone's patience. I was disappointed to hear one or two car horns blaring because people felt parents were not getting their children out of the car quickly enough. I only expect to hear a car horn blast if it is likely to save a child or adult from serious harm or death not because someone is late for their 8.30am appointment. I would also like to remind everyone that our relationship with the local residents is very important to us and we would appreciate you always parking sensitively if you are on the surrounding roads.

Uniform: We are generally very pleased with the uniform that Schoolblazer provides for us and take great pride in the appearance of our pupils. We are aware that there have been some issues raised regarding the school coat and are taking this to the company for their consideration. Children can wear either summer or winter uniform until half term as we often have great variations in the weather. When we return from the half term holiday we expect all children to come to School in winter uniform. There is an expectation that all children from Nursery to Year 6 will come to School in regulation uniform and all their kit should be named. Unnamed kit is the number one reason for lost property and this can be a source of frustration for child, parent, teacher and Headmaster. This should be less of an issue with us removing changing for the time being but children still manage to remove their blazers, school jumpers and coats. If you have purchased anything from second hand uniform please make sure the name is changed before you send it in to School.

Nut and Sesame Seed Allergies: We continue to have a growing number of children suffering from allergies here at School. In order to keep those children safe we made our kitchen "nut and sesame free" although we cannot eliminate products which "may contain nuts or seeds" as that seems to appear on almost all packaging. We, once again, ask for your assistance in keeping the School "nut and sesame free" and that requires help from each of you in your selection of morning snacks if you choose to send them in with your child. As you know we are providing milk and a piece of fruit for every child but I appreciate that some of you may still wish to send a healthy snack in for your child. I would be grateful if you could refrain from sending nuts in their purest form but also those bars which contain nuts or sesame seeds as well. I appreciate this adds an extra challenge to your weekly planning but the potential for a child to suffer a severe anaphylactic shock surely makes that worthwhile.

School Photographs: Thursday is the individual photographs for your child. We have sent home information regarding this activity but wanted to remind everyone that all children should come to school in school uniform and not games kit. As a result of Covid restrictions we will not be taking any sibling photographs on this occasion. We will be bringing the children to have an individual photo taken for our own records but these will also be available for you to purchase. Unfortunately due to the coronavirus restrictions Tempest will not be able to do any retakes but we are looking at the possibility of class photos later in the year if restrictions relax.

After School Club: Our after school club is open to children from Nursery to Year 6 from Monday to Friday. We are trying to encourage regular bookings to help us track who to expect. If you find yourself in an emergency then do get in touch. If you wish to book your child in on a regular basis you can also do that through Mrs Hayman. Please remember to cancel bookings by noon or you will be charged for the place. **If you had a booking last year it has been carried forward to this academic year. If you no longer require this slot please do let us know or you may be charged.** As you know we have changed our locations for After School Club to reduce the contact between bubbles. For us to run ASC in eight separate locations would be impossible from a staffing point of view. As an alternative we have organised three sites and placed more than one group in each with an understanding that the bubbles still do not mix with one another. **It is vital that your children are collected by 5.30pm. We are now applying a late charge to anyone collecting after 5.40pm and the children will be collected from the office from a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We will also have to withdraw the option of late club for anyone collecting late on three occasions. If you are unable to collect the children yourselves please ensure other arrangements are in place. Should an emergency arise and you find yourself unable to make the 5.30pm pickup time please ring the Nursery on their direct line on 01242-531472. In those cases of emergency, we will be understanding but alternative arrangements should also be organised.**

In the coming days we will be sending out the clubs and activities lists and these will explain whether they are lunchtime or after school and how children can join up. These will operate in year groups to ensure the integrity of the bubbles is retained.

Update of Information Form: Along with today's newsletter we are also sending a copy of the Update of Information Form. It is important that all parents complete this form for each child. It contains invaluable contact information as well as any special dietary requirements. Without this information we can have difficulties getting in touch with you during an emergency or providing the essential care your child may require. Please complete the form and return it electronically to your child's class teacher. If there are no changes we still expect you to tick the box indicating that is the case and returning it to your child's class teacher.

Communication: Clarion Call is our text and e-mail messaging service and is a very useful tool to contact you for emergencies such as school closures but also for last minute changes to trips or fixtures. Please take a moment to ensure the information we have is up to date on the contact information sheet we have sent to you.

We are all very excited for the term in prospect even though it might be different to those in the past. We shall send you more information shortly about parent evenings, Nursery and Reception information meetings and the vibrant PTA offerings to name but a few. Now more than ever we hope you will use our Gallery on the website to get a flavour of what is going on in school. If you would like to download any high resolution copies of any photos simply click on the photo and enter the username and the new password which can be found in the email version of this newsletter. I look forward to engaging with you all through the course of the upcoming term.

Yours sincerely,



Robert MacDonald