



RICHARD PATE

INDEPENDENT CO-ED SCHOOL 3-11
CHELTENHAM

Friday 16th October, 2020

Dear Parents,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and I am sure you are all looking forward to the half-term break. The first six and a half weeks of term have been busy, if a little different, and I have to say the whole school community has adapted very quickly to the 'new normal'.

The children have been brilliant at settling back into a full timetable and are very accepting of our new COVID rules. The staff have been working tirelessly to ensure we are all working in a COVID-secure environment, whilst still maintaining our safe and happy atmosphere, and I would like to thank them for their exceptional commitment this half term. I would also like to thank you for your continued patience and support, in particular making the drop off and collection run as smoothly as possible given the government restrictions placed upon us. It has been a valuable experience to take on the role of car park attendant and I have enjoyed my enthusiastic waves from each and every one of you.

In this newsletter I will share some important notices and give a quick update on some of the exciting events and successes of this half of the term, as well as looking forward to the coming weeks.

COVID-19 update: We have had a small number of children with symptoms (many of them similar to the usual illnesses at this time of year) during the last few weeks and they have had their test results, which have all been negative.

If your child displays any symptoms (high temperature; a new, continuous cough; a loss or change to sense of smell or taste) during half-term and you are waiting for test results, please inform us **immediately** by sending an email to bursar@richardpate.co.uk and cc'ing office@richardpate.co.uk and rmacdonald@richardpate.co.uk. If your child or anyone in the household tests positive during the half term holiday then notify us immediately so we can contact Public Health England to formulate our response. We will send a return email to confirm we have received it. This also applies if your child needs to self-isolate for any other reason during the half-term break.

We continue to monitor the ever-changing Government guidance and we would like to reassure you that we are fully prepared for individual children, members of staff and families self-isolating. As before, Showbie is ready to be used. Fingers crossed it will not happen but should we find ourselves in a full lockdown situation again, we will revert to delivering a full timetable on Showbie and will share details with you as soon as we are made aware of any government decision. This will also apply to year group isolation in the event of a positive test result. I would like to remind everyone that Showbie is not to be used by children who are off sick. If they are not well enough to be in school they should not be following a full curriculum load. It is a huge commitment for teachers to populate Showbie whilst they are also teaching full time so it must be a tool we only use to support those who are away from school because of Covid restrictions.

Zoom Parents' Meetings: We have now completed our first round of Zoom Parents' Meetings for Reception to Year 5. I recognise that they are certainly not a permanent replacement for face-to-face meetings but they are our best option in the current circumstances. The process appeared to run smoothly from our perspective and I hope it did for you too. I welcome any feedback and suggestions for improvement moving forward.

Grammar School Tests: Many of our Year 6 pupils are taking the delayed Grammar School test tomorrow. We wish them the very best of luck and I look forward to hearing news of the results in the coming weeks. We also have a number of our Year 6s going through the independent entrance and scholarship exams and that process runs for the next three months. I am incredibly proud of all the Year 6s for how they have entered into the spirit of the new arrangements. They are an excellent group of children to lead the school through these challenging times.

Charitable Initiatives: We continue to feel very grateful for the generosity of the Richard Pate family and it was heart-warming to see the large amount of dried foods and canned goods that were donated for our Harvest Festival last week. The Year 6 Choir sang beautifully and the Year 2 children entertained us all with a poem and we all paused to say thank you for the many blessings we all enjoy.

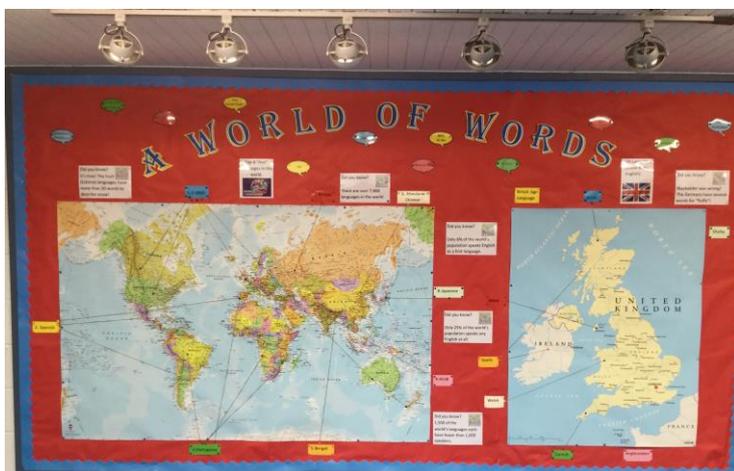


The produce was despatched to a number of grateful recipients via Cheltenham Community Projects, Cheltenham Open Door, Astell House and the Trussell Trust Foodbank.

We are currently in discussion as to what we can focus on for the Christmas season. Led by the PTA, we will certainly be doing the Hamper Scamper again to support the local community and we will be collecting food donations as before. We will be sharing more details shortly.

World Mental Health Day: Today, we have all had great fun wearing home clothes, and in many cases sporting something yellow, to recognise the importance of World Mental Health Day. The global pandemic and subsequent lockdown is an unprecedented situation in modern times. It is hard to gauge the full impact that the situation is having on children and young people's mental health and wellbeing. My assembly this morning was all about the importance of maintaining our mental health as well as our physical health and this is a theme that permeates our PSHEE curriculum and is at the forefront of every teacher's approach.

Curriculum Focus: Mr Chesworth has led us through an excellent Curriculum Focus in the first half of term. This term's spotlight is Languages and we have seen the children (and a few parents!) speaking an impressive number of words from different languages ranging from Japanese to Welsh.



There is also this fantastic World of Words wall display in the Street.

We have been very grateful to parents who have participated via Showbie and please also remember the Language Poster competition is running for Years 3-6 until the middle of November. For further details, please refer to the information Mr Chesworth has posted on Showbie (Whole School/Languages Curriculum Focus/Languages Competition).

Recent Successes: All our Junior children have enjoyed taking part in the Cheltenham Schools Virtual Cross Country competition with some impressive times recorded. The top three times for boys and girls in each year group were announced in assembly this morning. We are continually looking at our PE and Games provision and hope to resume our competitive sports programme as soon as it is safe to do so.

Uniform: As we return for the second half of term we will expect to see all the children arriving in winter uniform on their uniform days. They will still be required to come into School in their PE and Games kits on days that have Games and PE or an after school sports club (other than the Y5 girls on a Monday). We also ask for your help in reminding your children to bring their coats home from school and to wear them on these colder mornings. They will also require regulation school hats, scarves and mittens or gloves. On the very coldest of days the children are welcome to wear their track suit bottoms to keep warm. I leave this at your discretion.

January Fee Increase: Following my letter dated 9th July, I would like to remind you that the deferred scheduled fee increase will take effect from January 2021 for the Spring and Summer Terms. The updated schedule of fees is available to view on our website <https://www.richardpate.co.uk/pages/fees.htm>. It is also worth reminding everyone that if you are intending to remove your children at any point then we require a term's notice. If you do not provide that notice then a term's fees will need to be paid in lieu of notice. It is worth having an early conversation with me if you are needing to relocate for any reason.

Personal Hygiene and Handwashing: In addition to the ongoing COVID hygiene guidelines, we are conscious that the winter months can often bring a proliferation of colds, flu and nasty germs. We would be grateful if you could remind your children of the importance of washing their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating or handling any food. Reminding them of this message will help to keep everyone safe as we move into winter. On 10th and 11th November we have the flu immunisation team on hand to inoculate those children who have signed up.

PTA News: Government restrictions have unfortunately put a stop to our usual Christmas fundraising activities but the PTA is working hard to finalise some alternative COVID-friendly plans. We will be sharing more details shortly.

Diary Dates: The second half of the Autumn Term is usually filled with many highlights including the Prep Nativity Play, the Nursery Christmas Celebration, the Carol Service in Cheltenham College Chapel, the Christmas Fayre, Strictly Come Dancing and the list goes on. We are having to be creative in how we manage these events and we will endeavour to share plenty of photos on our Gallery when the activity has to occur "in house". We have some very creative minds working on how we are going to make Christmas at RPS extra special and I have no doubt that your children will enjoy the festive season with us. They have all worked so hard and have endured a great deal of uncertainty over the past eight months so we want to make sure they enjoy their time as much as possible.

As always, it has been a great pleasure to watch your children flourish in this first half of term. Despite the ongoing challenges, the School continues to come alive with their wonderful work, sporting and music activities and the many displays throughout the corridors show how proud they are of their efforts. I hope you all enjoy your children's company over the next two weeks as much as we have over the first half of term. Please make sure you all stay safe and we look forward to welcoming you all back in a fortnight.

Yours sincerely,



Robert MacDonald
Headmaster