



RICHARD PATE

INDEPENDENT CO-ED SCHOOL 3-11
CHELTENHAM

Friday 12th February, 2021

Dear Parents,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and I am sure you are all looking forward to the half-term break. It has certainly not been the first half of the Spring Term we had hoped for but as a school community, we seem to be well-versed in very quickly adapting to the world of remote learning and in-school provision for those children of critical workers. Sadly, we have been unable to hold many of our usual Spring Term activities such as History Day, Charity Day and the Junior Disco but we really hope to reschedule these in the Summer, guidelines permitting! 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 hopefully looking forward to some sort of normality in the coming weeks.

Showbie and Remote Learning

It cannot be underestimated what a massive undertaking it was for us to set up remote learning and in-school provision once again with next to no notice from the government. It has been a tremendous team effort from all of the staff 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, particularly to those of you who have managed your children on Showbie at home, often juggling with your own work. I appreciate there have been some challenges, whether we are in School or at home, and I do hope you can enjoy the break next week. We have made some adjustments throughout the course of this half term and our Zoom registration seems to have been a success with the children and their parents. The teachers have also tried to create more opportunities for direct one to one contact and for allowing the children to join them on Zoom for English and Maths if they need some support. These adaptations are designed to provide the connection of live lessons with the countless benefits of the Showbie system. We will continue to refine the provision and appreciate your patience and support as we do so.

You will no doubt have seen that there has been much debate in the media recently regarding helping pupils to catch up after the disruption caused by the pandemic. I would like to reassure you that by delivering our full timetable on Showbie, we remain on track with the curriculum this year. We will be carrying out our usual assessments of all pupils once we are back together as a School and if we think that any of our children have fallen behind in any aspect of their learning, we will put everything in place to support him/her on an individual basis. As before our priority will be to ensure that they all return with their positive mental health as our primary concern.

As some of you may have noticed, I have been dropping into the class Zoom registrations as well as a weekly Zoom lesson with the Year 5 children and it has been lovely to see a screen of smiley faces (and often younger siblings and pets!) in the morning. I also receive the Showbie notifications for all 298 children and the buzz of seeing the high standard of work and creativity being returned in all subjects has been quite inspirational. I am very proud of all the children as they continue to navigate these challenging times in school and at home.

Year 6 Destinations

On the 1st March, our Year 6 children will discover their designated state school if they are pursuing that route to grammar or comprehensive schools in September. We have had a number of children seeking places at various independent schools and all have been offered places. We are still awaiting word on one or two scholarships but the children have acquitted themselves very well once again in this process. The picture will become much clearer after the 1st March but I anticipate the children could end up in 15 different schools next September and they will all be incredibly lucky to have this special cohort. I am tremendously proud of all the children and how well they have handled this process throughout particularly given the challenging circumstances of the past eleven months. I am continuing to work with the Year 5 children via Zoom in preparation for their next steps and have been meeting virtually with their parents to discuss the many options available to them as well.

How Far Have You Travelled Challenge?

As you will have read in the Link, we launched this challenge at the beginning of this term to encourage all of us to take a break from our screens and get some fresh air. The weather has not been on our side but we have battled snow, sub-zero temperatures and driving wind and rain to clock up some significant distances. I have been so impressed by the enthusiasm of all the children, parents and staff in rising to the challenge and I announced in this morning's assembly that we have collectively reached 4177.7km. This gets us to within 170km of the latest target Sherbrooke Nova Scotia Wow! We can but dream... It would be great if we can have one last push over half term so please continue to record your kilometres and submit them via this form: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SBanHXzn6kmKRuB-AI768mbYS2voagIHmBdwfD9IQJ5UQVdWVRlpHMIU5VVIRQUFJOTFQSI REUFVDRS4u>

'Wear Red' Day

Today is our 'Wear Red' Day in aid of local charity, Heart Heroes, as part of National Heart Month. The charity works with children and their families living with congenital heart conditions. They aim to provide services for these children in the South West, to help them meet others who are in similar situations and allow their family to talk to other families going through related experiences. It has been amazing to see everyone taking part at home and at school and thanks to your generosity, we have just exceeded the £1000 mark so far. As always I am overwhelmed by the generosity of the Richard Pate family. If you haven't yet done so, there is still time to donate your £2 via the following link: <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RichardPateSchool>. I would also encourage you to have a look at the brilliant video Mrs Knight and Mr Edwards have put together to support this cause which can be seen on Showbie in the Friday assembly slot. A bit of fun for the end of this half of term! Below are a couple of screenshots of our children at this morning's Zoom registration resplendent in red!



Testing of Staff

Our bi-weekly testing programme for staff is well underway. It involves staff (who opt in to the process) doing self-tests at home twice a week (Tuesday and Friday). It is designed to pick up asymptomatic positive cases and we hope it is therefore reassuring for both our staff and also for those of you with children in School. We assume that this testing programme will continue for the foreseeable future, unless we hear otherwise from the government. It is a bi-weekly ritual to monitor these results and I have been delighted that all the results so far have been negative.

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 this half of term 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.

Diary Dates

We are awaiting the government announcement after half term before we populate the calendar for the second half of this term and the Summer Term in prospect. We have scheduled the next round of parent teacher meetings for the 16th and 18th March so please keep at least one of those evenings free for this important consultation. We sincerely hope that we will be able to gather together as a community but as always will follow the guidance to keep everyone safe.

As always, your children have been a pleasure to teach (whether in person or remotely) this first half of term. We eagerly await the next government announcement with regards to the return to school and will update you as soon as we receive further detail. We are counting down the days until we are all together in school again. In the meantime, please make sure you all stay safe and we look forward to seeing you again on Monday 22nd February.

Yours sincerely,



Robert MacDonald
Headmaster