



Friday 28th May, 2021

Dear Parents,

Words cannot express the joy I have felt at being back with your children over the past six weeks! The warm greetings shared, the funny tales told, the countless waves through the window of my office have made my return worth the protracted wait. The children continue to be a wonderful credit to you, both in the way they immerse themselves in their learning and in how well they continue to adapt to the continual changes. As the vaccination programme rolls out we all look forward with an optimism that has not appeared in the collective psyche for some time. Equally the Indian variant reminds us that we must move forward cautiously so as not to undo the tremendous work we have all achieved together. With that juxtaposition we shall look at what might be possible as we return for the second half of term. First of all we shall take a quick look at some of the impressive things that have been happening already.

Curriculum Focus: This term the spotlight has focussed on History and we have enjoyed a number of exciting activities under the guidance of Mr Lowe and Miss West. The Year 4s were involved in an action-packed History Day, dressing in medieval costumes, making shields, castles and helmets and taking part in jousting on the field. The 'This Week in History' factsheets have been very informative and I have certainly learnt a thing or two! It has also been enlightening to learn of the famous ancestry of some of our pupils. The second half of term will see us burying two time capsules in honour of the School's 75th anniversary. We shall produce one for the Prep and one for the Juniors that will tell the next generation about life today during this momentous time in history.

New Appointment: I am delighted to announce the appointment of Ms Zoe Ellis as our new SENDCo, replacing Mrs Conner who will sadly be leaving us at the end of this term. Ms Ellis joins us from Cirencester Primary School where she has been doing the equivalent job as well as acting as their Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead and Senior EYFS Lead. Ms Ellis has been working closely with Mrs Conner to ensure a smooth handover and I know you will join us in welcoming her from September.

Competitive Sports: It has been wonderful to see competitive sport return to our programme and the children have picked up where they left off with an impressive run of performance. We have been cautious in reintroducing sport and all credit to Mrs Knight and Mr Edwards for all they have done over the past 14 months to keep the children fit and ready. We have not welcomed spectators back to school yet and this is largely due to the requirements we have in the car park. Adding additional cars to the matrix at the moment is not conducive to the safe transport of the school as a whole. We look forward to having you back on the side-lines to cheer and as soon as that is possible we will let you know when that becomes a reality.

Junior Sport Representation: We are delighted that some of our Junior children have been selected for regional representative cricket and tennis squads. Congratulations to Freddie Finlay, Lucia Mico, Artie Whitelock, Christopher Byrne, Sophie Compton, Daniel Clack, Charlie Parsons, Jessica Wooddisse, Lottie Compton and Alice Woodward. We wish them luck in their upcoming matches. We know that these are just some of the great achievements of our pupils. If you have some exciting news to share, please do let me know and cc Mrs Compton (vcompton@richardpate.co.uk).

Cheltenham Festival: Every year our children are heavily involved in the Cheltenham Festival of Performing Arts and this year they have come away with a huge number of medals, certificates, prizes and cups. It has been lovely to hear feedback of successes in prose speaking and instrumental competitions and as mentioned before please do let us know of your children's success. Well done to all the children involved and what a joy to see our children being allowed to perform again after the restrictions of the last year.

Drop Off and Pick Up: We are looking closely at what next September may look like in terms of transport and while there is much of the COVID changes that we never wish to see again there are some things we think we might keep. Many of you have shared how much you miss the daily interactions with your child's class teacher and the teachers feel the same. We also know that the system of drop offs have been incredibly efficient as well. As we look to September we are keen to find a hybrid solution that covers both possibilities. As a result we are planning to trial a system at drop off that alters the current arrangements slightly. We would like to trial that system in the week of 28th June. We will send details of how it might work when we return after half term.

Diary Dates

Tuesday 15 th June	Nursery Play	First performance
Wednesday 16 th June	Nursery Play	Second performance
Thursday 17 th June	Time Capsules buried	
Friday 18 th June	Year 6 Leadership Challenge	Details to follow
Friday 25 th June	Charity Day	
Monday 28 th June	Year 6 Bikeability	
Tuesday 29 th June	Junior Parents Induction	Available on Showbie
Wednesday 30 th June	Prep Sports Morning	
Thursday 1 st July	Prep Parents Induction	Available on Showbie
Tuesday 6 th July	Performance of Annie for Year 6 Parents	
Wednesday 7 th July	Performance of Annie for Year 6 Parents	
Friday 9 th July	10.30am Final Assembly	
Friday 9 th July	3pm – 6pm PTA Picnic Party on the field	

Induction Evenings: Normally we would be getting ready to host our induction evenings for both Prep and Junior Departments in School upon our return. Last year we organised these as virtual evenings through Showbie and they proved quite successful. This allows us to post videos from various members of staff to explain about the transition from Nursery into Reception and for those making the move from Year 2 into Year 3. These are significant steps in our School journey and we want you to feel reassured and as well prepared as possible. We have designated Tuesday 29th June for the Junior Induction Evening and Thursday 1st July as the Prep Induction Evening and in the current format you could watch them at your leisure. We will be sending details of both of these meetings after half term.

Sports Day: We have now set aside Thursday 24th June for the Junior Sports Day and Wednesday 30th June for Prep Sports Day with both events taking place from 10.00am to 11.30am. We will provide more details nearer the time and let you know if parents will be able to spectate. In the event that parents are not able to spectate we will ensure that there are ample photos on the Gallery and Instagram for you to enjoy.

Charity Day: Our annual Charity Day is arranged for Friday 25th June. The exact details of the day are yet to be finalised but as in previous years the older children will come to school in home clothes while the younger children arrive in themed costumes. This year the Nursery will be coming as Pirates while the Reception to Year 2 children will hopefully come in 1940's themed outfits. Once again we will send more details upon our return.

PTA News: Our fabulous PTA continue to work behind the scenes and have offered their support to us throughout this challenging time. As regulations relax they are also looking to hold some low key events over the coming weeks. We alerted you to the possibility of a PTA Picnic on the Field Event and we have decided to change the date of that event for a variety of reasons. We now hope to hold it on the final day of term, Friday 9th July from 3.00pm to 6.00pm. This will allow our Year 6s to complete their traditional end of school

celebration and return for the event. Mrs Hall and her super team of volunteers will communicate further details when we return from half term holidays. The other fundraising possibilities include an exciting Smarties Challenge, a Break the Rules Day and a slightly altered form of Ice Cream Fridays. Keep your eyes peeled for the leaflet which will explain it all!

Year 6 Production: Rehearsals of the Year 6 'Annie' production are in full flow and we can't wait to watch it. We are hoping that Year 6 parents will be allowed to join us for the performances and we are closely following the Government guidance. We have sent a letter to all Year 6 parents to confirm arrangements and we are organising for the rest of the School to enjoy performances within school time if permissible.

Final Assembly: We hope that our Year 6 parents will also be allowed to join us on the final Friday of term to be part of the Leavers' Assembly. This will be held at 10.30am and details will follow once we are clear on what is allowable. The Year 6s have been a delight this year and deserve a fitting send off to celebrate their time at Richard Pate.

In this morning's assembly we spoke about history makers and how we can all make a difference to the lives of those around us. Your children have brought great joy to all of us over the past 6 weeks and we hope they bring the same to you for the week in prospect. If you are staying put for the week enjoy the sunny weather. If you are travelling, please make sure you have a lovely time and return safely. I am jumping in my car now and driving overnight to Scotland before catching the ferry to Belfast where I will see my daughter for the first time since October. I look forward to seeing you all again upon our return.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert MacDonald". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Robert MacDonald
Headmaster