



# RICHARD PATE

INDEPENDENT CO-ED SCHOOL 3-11  
CHELTENHAM

Friday 17th December, 2021

Dear Parents,

As always this final newsletter of the term is constructed as I sit in the relative quiet of my office. The children have gone and the teachers are clearing their classes ready for a January return. It has been a very busy last few weeks of term for us but we have been delighted that our Prep Nativity, Junior Latin play and Junior Christmas Carol Service were all able to proceed successfully, albeit with some restrictions. The final Zoom assembly on Wednesday was an opportunity to thank the children for all their hard work this term and reflect on and celebrate so many fantastic achievements across the School. The children in School had a special treat as we enjoyed a festive Richard Pate message from the one and only Tweedy the Clown. That video is available on Showbie in the Whole School section under Christmas Message. I would encourage you all to have a look to see myself and one or two other members of staff lampooned.

I wanted to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to my team at School for all they have done to see us safely through this term. The last 22 months have been uniquely challenging and my colleagues have gone above and beyond the call of duty to keep us safe, to educate your children and to do it in a fun and creative manner. They have given up break times, worked extra duties, stayed long after school and worked well into their evenings and weekends. It has not been easy but they have done it for the children and have maintained their smiles throughout. I know you have appreciated their efforts but I wanted to record my personal thanks as well. I feel incredibly fortunate to be associated with this remarkable group of people.

As always, your children have been a credit to you all this term. I am constantly impressed by the way they have handled life throughout this pandemic and it has been lovely seeing them enjoying a very nearly normal calendar of activities this term.

I would also like to thank you for your continued patience and support throughout the term. As I have said before, it has been impossible to address every point of view when it comes to infection control but we feel confident that erring on the side of caution will hopefully mean the majority of you can enjoy the important Christmas break. It is certainly a collective success that we have made it to the end of the term with relatively few cases. We must not be complacent as we return in January but I feel we can take a moment to say well done to all.

COVID-19 update: you will be aware from my messages this week that we currently have four positive cases of COVID-19 amongst our school community (one member of staff, one pupil in 6W, one pupil in 5M and one pupil in 4MH). We also have two pupils awaiting their PCR results. We have also had a small number of children with symptoms during the last few weeks (many of them similar to the usual illnesses at this time of year) and they have had their test results, which have all been negative.

We remain vigilant as we move into the festive period and into next term. If your child displays any during the Christmas break and you are waiting for test results, please inform us immediately by sending an email to [bursar@richardpate.co.uk](mailto:bursar@richardpate.co.uk) and cc'ing [office@richardpate.co.uk](mailto:office@richardpate.co.uk) and [rmacdonald@richardpate.co.uk](mailto:rmacdonald@richardpate.co.uk). If your child or anyone in the household tests positive during the Christmas holiday, then notify us immediately. We will send a return email to confirm we have received it.

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. We are all hopeful that we return to normal service in January 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. 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. If your child is isolating we would also ask that you post the work back on Showbie as it is completed rather than saving it up to be marked on their return. I will be hosting a Zoom registration each morning at 9.00am for those who are isolating for Covid related reasons and are well enough to attend.

PTA News: Government restrictions have unfortunately once again put a stop to some of our usual Christmas fundraising activities including the annual Christmas Fair and Movie Night but the PTA have pulled out all the stops to organise a brilliant Christmas Break the Rules Day and Movie afternoon in year groups, which were enjoyed enormously. They have also generously donated Christmas trees around the school and the children have enjoyed decorating them. We want to say a special thanks to Lisa Hall and her PTA Committee for their ongoing support through this challenging time. Mrs Hall will send round a fundraising roundup letter early in the Spring Term.

Christmas Lunch, Break the Rules and Christmas Jumper Day: This year's lunch was another great success thanks to Mrs James and her amazing team and the fantastic support from Mrs Hall and the PTA team of volunteers. There was certainly a festive feel in the air with all the children wearing home clothes, various sparkly accessories and Christmas jumpers! The teachers also enjoyed a wonderful lunch set up in The Street by the PTA volunteers. One of our newest teachers captured the mood by saying they had never worked in a school where they were so well treated at Christmas.

Prep Nativity: The Prep Nativity took place with three performances last week. As always, it was a wonderful spectacle and I was proud of all the children who took part. All credit to Miss West, Mrs Norris and the wonderful Prep Department for their efforts to stage this lovely Christmas event. No doubt by now many of you have watched it on multiple occasions on the DVD that has been flying off the shelves! There are also photos on the website Gallery for all to enjoy.

Junior Christmas Carol Service: We were delighted to be able to go ahead with the Junior Carol Service on Tuesday night. It was lovely to have everyone together at Christchurch (in a socially distanced way!) and the choir, musicians and readers all performed brilliantly. I would like to say a huge thank you to Miss Crompton and her amazing team for doing such a fabulous job and to Mrs Hayman for her logistical brilliance in ensuring everyone entered and exited the church in a safe way. It was an absolute joy to see the children's faces as they were able to hear the applause of an appreciative audience and I was incredibly proud of how brave they were to stand in front of a crowd, in many cases for the first time. If you were unable to come and would like to donate to the collection in aid of Cheltenham Open Door please click on the link below: <https://www.justgiving.com/cheltenhamopendoor>. As a precaution we filmed the rehearsal on Monday and we are currently seeing if we may be able to make it available for the parents who could not attend the actual service. We need the permission of parents who have not given permission for their child's image to be used. I will let you know when I have heard back from all those parents and I will only be able to share it on the understanding that it is not shared more widely and it particularly does not appear on any form of social media.

Curriculum Focus: We have enjoyed an excellent Maths Curriculum Focus this term, thanks to the hard work of Mr Jones and Mrs Argyrou, and culminating in our brilliant Year 4, 5 and 6 Maths teams all winning the St. Edward's Maths Challenge against more than 20 local schools. Next term we are going to focus on Science and Mr Wade and Mr Pound are already planning some fun activities for the children. You will see upon your return a very eye catching display board which has just appeared at the end of The Street to launch this term's focus. In the Summer Term we will be looking at Environmental Studies for those who are interested.

Junior Sport: What a term it has been for RPS Sport! Following on from the U11 Boys' Football team's success at the IAPS National Championships, where they finished in the top 8 schools in the country, they have also won the County Championship. They will now go on to represent all Cheltenham schools at the South West Championships in April. Less than 24 hours later, our U11 Girls' Hockey team faced stiff competition in the County Championship at Dean Close and emerged victorious. They will now be representing Gloucestershire at the South West Championships in March.

All the Junior children have been busy participating in a huge number of hockey, rugby and football matches this term at all levels. We have also had several of our Junior pupils taking part in the Cheltenham Schools Virtual Cross Country competition with some impressive times recorded. A big thank you to Mr Edwards and Mrs Knight and their team for their coaching and support throughout the season.

As we enter the Spring Term can I ask that Junior boys have shin pads, gum shield and trainers / astros, and a hockey stick if they have one, but school have enough to provide if not. The girls will do Netball to begin so no protective gear is needed. All pupils are advised to have a change of footwear and socks if the weather is bad.

Year 6 Destinations: From the grammar school result we have 8 children who have qualified for Pate's Grammar School, 9 who have qualified for Denmark Road, 8 who have qualified for Sir Thomas Rich, 3 who have qualified for Stroud High School and 3 who have qualified for Marling. This has been an excellent set of results once again. We have also received some wonderful feedback from the independent senior schools on our doorstep and we have already been offered 15 scholarships for academics, music, sport, drama, art and various combinations. We will not know about Cheltenham Ladies' College until January as there are still assessments to sit. I was also delighted to learn that all eight of our Year 6 applicants to Cheltenham College were offered places despite concerns that this would be difficult. It reminds us of the value and importance of seeing their time out at Richard Pate before moving on to the next school. I am incredibly proud of all the Year 6 children for their hard work this term. They are a wonderful group to have at the top of our school and we look forward to the next two terms of the Year 6 adventure.

Charitable Initiatives: We continue to feel very grateful for the generosity of the Richard Pate family and it was amazing to see the extraordinary amount of dried foods and canned goods that were donated for our Hamper Scamper at the beginning of the month. The produce was collected and will be given to a number of grateful recipients via Cheltenham Community Projects.

In other charity news, we organised a collection for our wonderful Junior Christmas Carol Service in aid of Cheltenham Open Door. Thank you for all the donations so far. If you were unable to come and would still like to donate, please click on the link below: <https://www.justgiving.com/cheltenhamopendoor>

Year 5 Preparations and Parent Meetings: I will begin visiting the Year 5 classes next term to work on some exam preparation and discuss with them the process of transition. I will also be arranging Zoom meetings with every Year 5 parent to talk about the options available to them and the children for Year 7. If you would like to book an appointment, please contact Mrs Hayman in January and she will confirm a time for the Spring or Summer Term. I will also be organising meetings with parents next term to discuss the transition to secondary/senior schools and will announce those dates shortly. We had to postpone this last term and I am very keen they do take place in the Spring Term.

Absence: In order to ensure your child's continued safety it is important that you report any absence to Mrs Hayman and Mrs Thornton in the office. You can do this either by ringing 01242-522086 and leaving a message or by sending an email to [absent@richardpate.co.uk](mailto:absent@richardpate.co.uk). I would like to remind everyone that children should be in school by 8.55am at the latest each morning. Late arrivals are extremely disruptive to the class and can be very difficult for your child as well.

After School Club: The After School Club continues to be very popular and as we continue to operate in Year bubbles, we find the club oversubscribed on occasion. I would be grateful if all parents could look at their block bookings for next term, particularly the Junior parents once they decide which clubs and activities their children will be joining. If you do not require a particular session, it is important to cancel that booking with the office or you may be charged. Places can be booked on a daily basis by contacting Mrs Hayman or Mrs Thornton. I would also like to remind everyone that the last collection time is 5.30pm.

Notice Requirements: We like to remind parents at this stage that if you intend to remove your children from the Richard Pate School at the end of the academic year then we need to receive notification by the last day of the Spring Term which this year falls on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> April. Failure to give notice by this date could incur a term's fees in lieu of notice. For those Nursery parents who are waiting to hear about places at local primary schools through National Offer Day (which this year falls on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> April) I would suggest you book an appointment via Mrs Hayman to discuss this with me in the coming weeks.

Next Term's Calendar and Clubs and Activities: Along with this newsletter I am sending out next term's calendar as well as the list of clubs and activities. The calendar is far from complete as there is so much uncertainty surrounding our return. The boys' fixture list is incomplete as some of Mr Edwards' counterparts have yet to confirm their fixture list. You will also notice that sadly the Young Voices' Performance has been postponed. This is disappointing as it was to be our first but given the infection rates it is probably a wise decision. We will let you know about any updates as they come. On the Clubs and Activities list you will see the addition of Year 1 tennis with East Glos and Year 4 to Andy Tucker Football. This is done directly through the providers and instructions are supplied on the Clubs and Activities attachment.

Open Day: We are due to hold an Open Day on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> February for prospective parents. This is an important opportunity for those parents to see our School facilities and to get a chance to meet our lovely staff. I would also like them to meet some of our children in action and will be contacting some of you in the new year to see if they can spend the morning with us. I wanted you to mark it in the diary as I know how busy many of your weekends are.

All that remains for me to say as I close this final newsletter of 2021 is to wish you a safe, healthy and happy holiday. As always, it has been a great pleasure for us to watch your children continue to flourish this term both in and out of the classroom. I hope you all enjoy your children's company over the next three weeks and we look forward to welcoming you all back on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> January. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Yours sincerely,

*Robert MacDonald*

**Robert MacDonald**  
**Headmaster**