

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back! It has been lovely to see you all return to school this week. After receiving an inbox full of government updates last weekend, I was very keen to ensure that this week would run smoothly and the children would return happily and safely to their new classrooms. Despite the rain on Wednesday afternoon, everyone has responded incredibly well to the new routines we have put in place and systems are already working well.

As it is the start of the new year, I would like to quickly introduce some new colleagues to you. Emma Connelly is one of our new Reception teachers; Vicky Duffy is our new School Business Manager and we welcome Danielle Hover and Elle Reynolds who also join us as new teaching assistants.

The children have re-joined their classmates in new class bubbles that are being managed carefully to maintain everyone's safety. We are keen to ensure that life in school returns to normal as much as safely possible to ensure we can deliver a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum to enable the children to catch up and get back on track as quickly as possible.

I have been monitoring closely this week and I am delighted to see how well the children are managing in their classrooms and at playtime. We had our first whole school 'virtual' assembly yesterday using video conferencing with all of the children in their classrooms and we spoke about the things we are doing to stay safe. Everyone looked happy and settled and this was a good opportunity to share some whole school messages at the start of a new school year.

We are really focussing on pupil wellbeing this term to ensure everyone feels secure and reassured after a prolonged absence from school. Some children will require more support than others but please be reassured that we will work closely with you and your child to get this right. If you have any worries or concerns please email your class teacher because it is difficult to have these conversations at drop off and pick up times as there are obvious restrictions we need to manage for the foreseeable future.

In addition to the pastoral work we are focussing on we will be assessing all of our children carefully to see what they have remembered and we will be developing catch up programmes to cover any gaps in the children's knowledge and skills. Essentially, this will be the main emphasis during the autumn term and we are confident that the children will catch up and settle quickly as the weeks progress.

In order to ensure our full return to school is as successful as possible we have discussed a new school mantra or mission for this term which is '**work hard, be nice!**'. We think this captures the essence of what we need to do this term and it would be great if we could all promote this approach in the weeks ahead. In assembly, I asked the children if they could make me a poster to represent this aspiration and I hope to see some fantastic examples coming in next week with the best one's receiving an award in assembly.

Hopefully, you will have noticed that the school website has changed over the summer. It has been re-designed to make information more easily available and we will be updating sections during the next few weeks. We have a 'shortcuts' facility on the home page which will be very useful and we will also have a social media feed too which we will provide further information about when this is ready to use.



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To conclude this first update, I would like to thank you all for your patience and support during the pandemic. We have received a lot of very positive feedback and constructive suggestions that have enabled us to take the very best care of our children, families and our staff. Having made a great start this week, the real test will be the way we all manage these routines and expectations as we go forward. It will be very important, looking ahead, that we all play our part and stick to the agreed routines on everyone's behalf.

If you have any concerns or are worried about anything at school then please email your child's class teacher or, as an alternative please email or call the office and we will respond as quickly as possible. Everyone's safety in the weeks ahead is paramount and we need to maintain a considerate, patient vigilance to ensure that our school community continues to stay well. We still have a long road ahead...

Best wishes and stay well,

Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)

