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Dear parents & carers,

Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we experience high levels of staff absence.

Year Six has been especially affected by staff absence. As you will know, both class teachers, Mrs Ross and Miss Conopo have all been out of school for the last few weeks. Miss Medlin has now returned to school. Whilst, I cannot give you precise details of their absence, there is further information I can now share with you.

Miss Pauline Banks and Miss Aimee Conopo have been suffering from illnesses requiring time at home to recuperate and they intend to return to school shortly. Mrs Jane Ross will be absent for slightly longer, but will also be rejoining us as soon as she is able.

Mrs Claire Bull has given me permission to share this information with you all. Unfortunately, Claire was taken ill quite suddenly and has discovered that she will be unable to work for a prolonged period of time. As I'm sure you can imagine, Claire is disappointed by having to leave her class but simply has to follow medical advice to stay at home. I know you will all join me in wishing her well. We look forward to welcoming Mrs Bull back when she is fully recovered.

As you know, staff recruitment is proving very difficult at the moment and we will not compromise on the quality we expect from our staff. From Monday, Sycamore class will be taught by Mr Paul Francis. Paul is an experienced teacher, who has taught in a number of schools and will be joining us full time for two weeks, in the first instance. We are, of course, hopeful that Mr Francis will fit into our school well enough to remain with us for longer. He will be joined in Year 6 by Ms Heidi Robertson, who will be providing stability by continuing her role working across both Year 6 classes. Miss Summer Medlin and Miss Aimee Conopo will also continue to work in Year 6.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that, despite the difficulty of the last couple of weeks, the children have made a good start to the school year. They completed Mock SATs assessments, which are used as a baseline guide to what we need to teach the children. At this stage, these are important to inform the teachers of the priority areas for children to work on. For data purposes, they are meaningless at this time of the year - they are 'End of Year 6' assessments and so the children are not expected to achieve well in these tests. But they are invaluable to staff to inform our curriculum content. All Year 6 staff have ensured that the children are receiving the curriculum they need to close any gaps caused by lockdown

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losses. Specific interventions are in place, with Ms Robertson leading on this. Our team of fabulous support staff have ensured that all children are receiving any specialist support they require.

I know that you may be concerned about your children's education, particularly following on from the last 18 months. Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to ensure that the children achieve the expected standards for Year 6. Ms Robertson will remain in the Year group, being a third teacher across the two classes. This approach gives us a great deal of flexibility, high levels of interaction between teachers and children and allows us to ensure that children's individual needs are met, at all levels of academic ability. The support staff team in Year 6 is first class and they will remain in this year group, where they have developed excellent relationships with the children. Myself, Mrs Wagg, Mrs Dunton (Phase Leader) and Mrs Phillips (SENDCo) are closely involved in monitoring the provision in Year 6 and you will soon have Parents' Evening consultations. I have adapted these appointments following feedback from parents and so, will now be 20 minute sessions, giving you twice the time to discuss your child. Obviously, should you need longer, staff will be happy to make a further appointment.

We will hopefully soon restart Parent Awareness events, to help you to support your child further. Obviously, these are much more effective when you can come into school and so have again been delayed, but we have ensured that support is there for you, as you require it. Please do not hesitate to contact the Year 6 Team should you require any information about your child.

Finally, I would like to make you aware of the fantastic job that staff in school have done to try to maintain continuity for the Year 6 children. We have been able to attract some excellent supply teachers, but they have been joined regularly by our dedicated staff team, who have been leading and guiding their work. I am grateful to them all.

I hope this information reassures you somewhat but if you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Kind regards,

Vicki

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