



# PALACE WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

## We are back!

The feeling that I had on Wednesday evening through to Thursday morning was hard to describe. Although the staff had been back at school for two days, updating our training and running over the routines needed, the first day nerves didn't really start kicking in until the day before the children came back.

Since Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March, the school has not felt quite right. We have gone through every possible scenario since March but nothing quite like a school full of children. I have to say that when I stepped on to the playground and saw the children and families, all dressed up smartly in their uniform, smiles on faces, eager to run in to start the year, I felt a little emotional. It is, after all, what we as educators all signed up for.

I wanted to extend my thanks to all of you for following the guidance that we have put in place to try and keep everybody safe. We have been monitoring all areas of the school to see how our plans have been working out, as they were obviously written without having 400+ children in the school! We have been delighted with how the children have responded, especially in their classrooms and with their learning. We have noticed some things that we will continue to keep an eye on to see if they settle down with time, but there are some things that we do want to update you on.

1. We have decided to open the alleyway gate to allow access onto Acorns playground.

We hope that this will ease the flow of parents on and off the playground.

2. Before and after school, we ask that you keep your child with you. As we have two year groups (and so four classes) at each of the drop off and pick up times, there is an increased risk of crossing over bubbles. We understand that it is difficult for the children to stand and wait, especially whilst on the playground as they will want to run around, but it is important that they do.
3. Children do not need to bring very much to school any more. In addition, our cloakrooms are small and so space is limited. We requested in the return plan that bags were no more than 40cm in length and were plain. This means no brightly coloured bags, or ones that have 'additional' fabric. This means that Smiggle bags are no longer allowed.
4. Uniform is really important to us as it gives us a sense of pride and unity. We will start our uniform slips home for incorrect uniform next week – this will include bags. Please make sure you **name everything**. All named items will be returned to their owners. Anything not named will have to be stored until it is safe to redistribute.
5. Please do not allow your children to play on the equipment as it is used on a rota during the school day. This will ensure there is no cross contamination.

Thank you all for your support, both in being ready for September and for the year ahead. We promise we will make it a good one!

### **Parent Feedback**

We really want to make sure that we get things right for children and families and so we are keen to get your feedback on the things that are working and that could be improved. In the next week or two, we will invite you to join us for a virtual parent forum where we will be able to discuss the return to school and the new routines that run alongside it. If you do have any questions, queries or feedback, please could you email them in by next Friday (11<sup>th</sup> September) as we will then use these to form an agenda for the meeting.

### **Attendance**

As you know, attendance is mandatory once again, and we are so delighted that our attendance for this week has been excellent. We will continue to report attendance in the newsletter in various forms as we love to share in the successes as well as pointing out where we can improve. Attendance is always a key part of the jigsaw puzzle for schools, as missing lessons is so problematic. We need to ensure that we extra vigilant this year, both in trying to make sure the children come to school when they can, but also following the guidance about COVID-19 to keep the community safe.

If your child is not well enough to come to school for any reason, it is even more important this year that you report the absence as quickly as you can. There are three ways that you can report your child's absence:

- Using ParentMail
- Phoning the office on the day of absence
- Emailing

[absence@palacewood.kent.sch.uk](mailto:absence@palacewood.kent.sch.uk)

We have to follow up any absences that we have no reason for, or where we may need more information. Thank you for your support.

### **And finally**

Over the coming months, there are likely to be some ups and downs, some bumps in the road and some quickly adapted risk assessments (hopefully not too many as they take a long time to write!). Our focus will be on keeping the children safe and helping them to learn to the very best of their ability. I know that we have an amazing community and that we will all continue to tackle the challenges head on. Over the year, we will continue to ask for your support, whether that be through fundraising, volunteering or helping at home and we know that you will step up as you always do. This year is going to be tough, but exciting. We are looking forward to getting things back on track and continuing the Palace Wood journey together.

#### **Dates for your Diary:**

3 remaining INSET days: 23/10, 4/1, 7/6  
Flu immunisation – whole school – 20/11  
Portrait & Family Photos – 13/10

#### **Parentmails:**

EYFS Garden Visits  
Yr 3 Teachers  
All PE Timetable & Back to School

### **Superstar Corner**

Don't forget to send in things that you have been doing outside of school for us to share. They can be anything from clubs attended to award won to new skills learnt.