

## **MAPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, ST. ALBANS**

2nd September, 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

The staff and I are very much looking forward to welcoming all your children back to school tomorrow. It will be absolutely great to have all the children return to school; and also to be able to welcome our new Reception pupils. Whilst the term ahead will be a different one in many respects, we will do all we can to support the children in adapting quickly to the new routines and settling well.

On a personal note, I would like to thank the large number of parents who gave me a gift at the end of the Summer Term. Your generosity and kind words were very much appreciated.

### **School Re-opening Plans**

Last Saturday, the updated school re-opening plans were sent to all parents, along with a Public Health Management of COVID-19 flowchart and Government guidance entitled 'What parents and carers need to know about schools in the Autumn Term'. (This publication contains information and guidance about shielding, which I appreciate has been a matter of concern to some parents).

If you have not already read through this information, may I encourage you to do so, as there are a number of changes and different ways of working that we have put in place and it is very important that you are aware of and understand these.

A reminder that, if your child is unwell in any way, please always inform the school office by 8.50 a.m. This can be done by e-mail if you wish. The address is [admin@maple.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@maple.herts.sch.uk). Mrs. Stanley or Mrs. Doidge will check the e-mails shortly after 9 a.m. The Local Authority's School Health department advises that if a child has been physically sick and/or has had diarrhoea, he/she be kept at home for a period of **48 hours**, to prevent the spreading of infections. Children should also be kept off school if they show any flu' like symptoms.

### **Staffing appointments**

We are pleased to welcome the following new teaching assistants this term:

Ms. Beth Withers (who will be working in the Reception Class)  
Ms. Ellis Giddens (who will be working in the Infant classes)  
Ms. Alana Potts (who will be working in the Year 4H class)  
Mrs. Veronica Bodell (who will be working in the Year 3, Year 4D and Year 5 classes); and  
Mrs. Julie Inns (who will be supporting a pupil with SEN)

Also, Mrs. Amanda Miller will be joining us as a Midday Supervisory Assistant.

### **Key dates for the term**

A list of Key Dates for the term is attached to this letter. Further information about the various forthcoming events will be sent out in due course, as appropriate.

A decision on whether or not we can hold the various Christmas events listed in italics in the second half of the Autumn Term will be made by the October half-term holiday.

### **Start of term newsletters**

Start of term newsletters from the class teachers, giving information about the work to be covered this term, along with general class-organisation arrangements, will be e-mailed to you on Friday this week (4<sup>th</sup> Sept). In addition, the teachers will email you a power-point presentation containing information that would usually be given out at the start of academic year parents' meeting, as these won't be taking place this term.

## **Parent / Teacher Consultations**

This year's parent/teacher consultation sessions will again be held in the weeks before the October and February half-term holidays.

This term the consultation sessions will be on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October and next term on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February. The consultation sessions will all begin at 3.30 p.m. and end at 8 p.m. The final appointment on each evening will therefore be at 7.45 p.m. You will be advised of the format of the consultations and, if appropriate, the safety measures that will be put in place, nearer the time.

Parents will have a third opportunity to meet formally with the teachers, if they wish, at the end of the academic year, to discuss the annual written report.

Parents of children who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs), due to their children's special educational needs, will, in addition, be invited to meet with the teachers on a termly basis, to review the progress their children are making with their IEP targets and to set new targets.

## **Supervision of classes**

If a teacher is out of school attending a training course/meeting, or is unexpectedly absent (e.g. due to ill health), then in the short-term her class will usually be taught by one of our Teaching Assistants acting in the role of a Cover Supervisor. If a Cover Supervisor is taking the class, there will often be another Teaching Assistant present in the room as well.

As most of the cover for an absent teacher will be undertaken by staff at the school, or by one of our part-time teachers, there will probably only be a few occasions, if any, when your child is taught by an adult they do not know; and this will hopefully ensure consistency and the maintenance of high standards in the classrooms.

Each teacher receives regular non-contact time, known as Planning, Preparation and Assessment time (PPA time), equivalent to approximately 10% of their regular teaching commitment. Details of the days when the teachers receive their PPA time, and the name of the teacher or Teaching Assistant covering the class during their absence, will be given in the start of term newsletters.

## **Re:play Breakfast and After School Club**

Re:play Breakfast & After School Club is based in the school dining hall. Due to strict safeguarding & OFSTED requirements, whilst Re:play are in operation (either before or after school hours) parents dropping off or collecting are not allowed in the school building. Re:play staff can be contacted via the intercom near by the Junior entrance door. Your help is very much appreciated in this matter.

Parents dropping off and collecting from Re:play may park in the school car park before 8 a.m. and after 4.30 p.m. but should not use the car park in-between these times.

The one-way system for entering and leaving the school grounds must now be followed by parents dropping off and collecting from Re:play.

## **Pupils with allergies / special diets**

Please remember that if a child has an allergy (or develops one) which will affect the food they can be served at lunchtimes, it is the parents' responsibility to provide the school and Herts Catering with information and evidence regarding their child's needs. Medical evidence must be provided in the form of a letter from a GP or medical specialist. The office staff can provide a leaflet on how to upload this information to Herts Catering.

## **General reminders**

For safety reasons, please do not allow your children, or any pre-school children, to play on any of the climbing apparatus / outdoor gym equipment or to go on the field, either before or after school. From 3.15 p.m. onwards the children are not supervised, unless they are attending an after school activity. Please therefore collect your children promptly at either 3.00 or 3.15 p.m. and do not let them play unsupervised in the playground after school. Parents are requested to leave the school grounds as soon as they have collected their children, via the one-way system. Older children who are walking home by themselves should also leave promptly at 3.15 p.m. and not play unsupervised in the playground.

If an older child walks to school by themselves then they may bring a mobile phone to school which should be handed in to the class teachers at the start of the day. Such phones are expected to remain switched off at all times, including in the playground before and after school. The children are not allowed on the Top Playground after school, unless they are attending an after-school club (when these are running).

For health benefits and due to the congestion in the roads around the school, we strongly encourage parents and pupils to walk to school whenever possible. Children may also use cycles / scooters and leave them in the cycle racks provided.

Please do not allow your children to walk through the car park on their way into or from school. Children should access the school only through the pedestrian gate near the Main Entrance and leave by the footpath to Hall Place Gardens. This is particularly important, as there are a number of taxis, for our unit pupils, entering and leaving the car park at the beginning and end of the school day.

Due to the very limited space available, parents should not park in the car park, unless they are coming in to attend a meeting or dropping off / collecting children from Re:play (see permitted timings above). Parents must also not drive into the car park at the beginning or end of the school day to drop off or pick up children, or use it for turning cars round. If you do park in the car park, it may well be necessary to 'block' someone else in. If that is the case, please advise the office staff of the situation when you arrive. All parents visiting school must sign the visitors' book when they arrive, to ensure we always have a precise record of who is in school at any particular time.

All parents entering the main school buildings must now wear a face mask and use the hand gel provided. Parents wishing to speak with a teacher will need to make an appointment to do so. In the main Reception area, only one parent will be allowed in at a time. Parents are encouraged to communicate with office staff via telephone or email, wherever possible.

A reminder that if the Junior children bring in a mid-morning snack it should be a healthy one and should be a fruit, vegetable or raisins. Crisps, cereal bars, chocolate biscuits and sweets are not acceptable. The Infant children will continue to receive a 'free' piece of fruit or a vegetable at break time each morning. No food containing nuts should be brought into school, either for a mid-morning snack or for a packed lunch.

Please remember to make your child's selection of school lunches on School Grid. This must be done by 8.55 a.m. each morning. All selections can be made up to October half-term, when the menu changes. If no selection is made on a particular day, we will assume your child is having a packed lunch.

If the children have notes/envelopes for the school office, these can be handed to their class teacher at the start of the day. The children are now not permitted to go to the office. Envelopes for the office can also be placed in the postage box in the entrance lobby. Please ensure that all envelopes are clearly labelled (name + class).

When paying for activities or other bills, we would strongly encourage you do so using our School Gateway on-line payments system. If, however, you have to make a cash payment, then this must

be delivered in person to the office, rather than cash being given to the class teachers, and a receipt will be issued upon request.

We will endeavour to contact the parents of any pupils who have not attended school, and for whom we have not been notified of their being absent, soon after 9 a.m. Therefore, please let the office staff know of any absence before 9 a.m. to save Mrs. Stanley or Mrs. Doidge from having to make a call.

### **The year ahead ...**

Finally, the staff and I very much look forward to working in partnership with you this year. Whilst the term (and possibly the year) ahead will be a very different one to usual, we will strive to ensure that all the children are happy and safe. We hope that your child makes good academic progress, develops his/her social skills and, most importantly, enjoys school.

As you are aware, I will be leaving Maple next Easter, to take on the role of the National President of 'The National Association of Headteachers' for a year, prior to then retiring. Whilst I am very much looking forward to the responsibilities of this new role and the challenges it will bring, I want to stress to you all my absolute commitment to the whole Maple School community over the next two terms.

I will be working closely with Mrs. Shanti Johnson, my Deputy Head Teacher, to ensure that she is very well prepared to take on the Interim Headship role next Summer Term and that the transition goes as smoothly as possible. In addition, I am determined to do everything I can to ensure that the school manages and adapts to the new way of working and the challenges that no doubt lie ahead, as well as we possibly can. And, despite this time of uncertainty, I am very much looking forward to the privilege and joy of continuing to lead our school and supporting each and every child.

Yours sincerely,

**Timothy Bowen**  
**Headteacher**