2nd September 2020

**Keeping in Touch - 16**

Dear Parents and Carers,

I really hope that you and your family are enjoying the final week of a wonderfully restful and safe summer holiday. I am sure your thoughts are now turning to school – both excited and nervous thoughts I am sure!

We are SO excited and ready to welcome the children back to school, and to support them as they continue, or indeed begin, their educational journeys at Russell. We have really missed everyone and are looking forward to getting back into a more familiar routine!

I want to reassure you that we remain absolutely committed to school being a safe and happy place, with a strong, caring and inclusive community where academic and personal progress and achievement is made. We are proud of our collective achievements during this challenging time so far, and extremely grateful for our wonderfully supportive school community.

The beginning of the new school year is an exciting time, but we must, and do, acknowledge that, in this time of ‘new normal’ the beginning of the school year can also be a time of concerns and worries. Please try not to overly worry (although it is the most natural thing in the world!): we are ready and waiting.

As you know, we will welcome **Years 1, 2, 3 and 4 back on Monday 7th September,** with our new Foundation Stage children joining us the following week. I am also delighted that, we have a huge number of in-year applicant children (14 new children) joining us across the school this year. To all our new parents and children: know you are not alone and very, very welcome. We hope you will be very happy, and thrive here at Russell.

In order for school to have a calm, orderly and safe start to term, could you please re-read the letters sent out at the end of last term (I attach the last Keeping in Touch letter 15 and the Class arrangements for September letter too) so we are all doing everything we can, and need to? Thank you.

Please ensure that you:

* Know the time your child needs to start and finish school and which gates to use, and be prompt, without being early or late. Please only send one adult and leave the site quickly (even if your child is distressed. This is quite normal and we will ensure they are ‘scooped up’ quickly and supported)
* Do not try to have conversations with staff or other adults on site. This will lead to potential social distancing concerns and safety issues
* Only keep your child away from school if they are unwell or showing **any** Covid-19 symptoms
* Reassure your child (and yourself), it will feel very much like ‘normal’ school, (with more handwashing!), it is safe, and we have not had any cases at all even though we have been open since March
* Get your child back into a good sleep routine if they are out of it
* Make sure your child has what they need for the day (see previous letter)
* Not linger on site to chat to other parents or allow children to play on equipment. The equipment will have been cleaned ready for the next day and this could contaminate it again
* Please call the school office (01525 755664) or email instead of speaking directly to the school staff (either office@ or class@ email addresses). We can pass messages on quickly
* Some queuing will be inevitable; please observe the social distancing rules when this is necessary
* Please leave plenty of time to find parking spaces around the school site, and either park and stride, walk/scoot or bike to school wherever possible. It will be busier than it has been for months around the school gates, please take care and keep your distance
* Please make sure your child is washing their hands JUST before they leave the house in the morning, and as soon as they come home in the afternoon/evening

You may have heard all sorts in the national press over the summer. Please do try not to worry. I don’t even recognise a lot of what I have heard and read! For example, we will not be testing your child for Coronavirus at school! The letters we sent out in July are still totally correct, and map out our intentions as a school. Nothing has changed for us. We will continue with a very similar system, following a very successful period of opening for Key Workers, Foundation Stage and Year 1 children in June and July. The best possible testimony is how happy the children (and staff) were using this system. We are confident your children will be safe and happy at school using it too!

The government has also asked us to share this source of information with parents. This link is below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

As always, please do not let anything worry you. Do not hesitate to get in touch and we can put your mind at rest.

Stay safe and well and enjoy the last few days of the holiday. I will continue to update you as necessary, as well as returning return to the more usual monthly newsletter later this month.

We all really look forward to welcoming you back to school on Monday.

Many thanks and kind regards,

**Nicki Walker**

**Headteacher**