

14th October 2022

Dear Families,

I hope that you are well.

Today marks the final day of what has been an action-packed half term. If your child joined us in September, I hope that they have settled well and have started to develop the kinds of relationships with staff and classmates that ensure their school days are filled with excitement, joy and wonder. As I wrote in my last letter, we want you to feel involved and included in all aspects of your child's school life so please don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher if you have any questions. Please also feel free to contact a member of the Leadership Team if you require any further support.

We are delighted to report that our fourth site, Riverside Phoenix, opened very successfully at the start of term and all our new children have settled in beautifully. Many of you may have visited the Phoenix Centre in recent years and we are so pleased with the transformation of both indoor and outdoor spaces to ensure that the learning environment is one in which our very youngest children can grow and flourish.

We know that some of you have faced some challenges with home-school transport this term and I hope that these issues have been, or are in the process of being resolved. We are in very regular contact with colleagues from SEN Transport and whilst, as you will appreciate, it is not within our gift to determine routes or timings, we will always try to support you in whichever ways we can.

There have been a number of things to mark and celebrate this term, from the school community's impressive fundraising efforts for Macmillan Cancer Support, to wearing yellow on World Mental Health Day to show young people that they are not alone. We have launched the new family choir, celebrated Black History Month and ended the half term with Bring Yourself Day, an opportunity for every single member of our school community to celebrate and share what makes them, uniquely them. We sent out a social media post last month to share the news that we have been re-accredited with the prestigious Artsmark Platinum Award for our work in the Expressive and Performing Arts and we were delighted to receive some glowing feedback from the Artsmark assessor. Highlights include:

"The arts continue to transform the lives of your students and their families. Your relentless focus on leaving an arts legacy shouts out loud and clear that the Arts are here to stay at Riverside! Your partnership with Rose Bruford has enabled your students with even the most complex medical needs and those at early stages of cognitive development to become performers. The Belonging Agenda is using the Arts as a vehicle to not only embrace individuality but, to also celebrate diversity and draw the community together. It was great to read of the Family Project where 12 diverse families representing a range of backgrounds came together with their children to rehearse and perform in the Performing Arts Hall. Your arts offer ensures it is relevant to the needs of your students, inclusive and challenges misconceptions. Your determination to show what can be achieved through the arts by SEND students is a strong driver in achieving your aims. You are playing a key role in supporting future creative practitioners to help them understand what works best with SEND students in delivering the Arts by giving lectures at the Royal Academy of Dance and Trinity

Laban and working with Rose Bruford to shape a new curriculum for their arts students. Give yourselves the credit for all that you do".

We are already looking forward to the second half of the Autumn Term and details of our many festive events will follow soon. For now though, I will highlight two particular events. Attached to this letter are our Riverside Connect dates for the upcoming year, and I would like to draw your attention to our Family Conference on Friday 11th November. Please feel free to extend the invitation to others whom you feel may be interested and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Secondly, our Christmas Fair will take place on Saturday 26th November at Riverside SPC between 12pm and 2pm and, in light of the fact that we couldn't have a Fair in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the pandemic, we can't wait to welcome you back this year.

One quick note to those of you who currently pick up your child before the official end of the school day. You will be aware that we open our doors at 3:15pm and it takes between 10-30 minutes for all children to leave the building, depending on site. In previous years, in exceptional circumstances and where there are no other alternatives, we have had special arrangements in place for a small number of families to pick up before 3:15pm at Riverside SPC. However, these arrangements should be in exceptional circumstances only and with that in mind, if you currently pick your child up before 3.15pm, we will be in touch with you to discuss this after half term. We know that some of you have children in different settings and therefore end-of-day timings can be tight, however the number of early pick-ups are proving more and more challenging for us to manage, in addition to the fact that the children are missing out on an important part of the daily routine. We understand that every family will have different circumstances, so we will talk to you about these individually rather than applying a blanket rule to everyone as we believe this is the right way to approach this matter, Thank you in advance for your understanding.

You will be aware that for the first time, this October half term will be two weeks. You may recall that the Local Authority undertook a consultation over a year ago and as a LA maintained school, we are bound by the outcome of the consultation. We hope that the change works for you and that a longer half term in October balances out with shorter holidays at other points during the year (to make up the five extra days).

And finally, we are all acutely aware of the rising energy costs and daily living costs that are affecting every household, business and school in the country. Like everyone else, we are anticipating further pressures on our school budget but as a school, our approach never has been, and never will be, to simply "batten down the hatches". We will continue to be ambitious, creative and forward-thinking and whilst we will, of course need to be responsible and accountable for the decisions we make, we will always strive to provide your children with the very best possible. We've said it before and we'll say it again ... you, and your wonderful children deserve nothing less.

All that remains for me to say is that I hope you have a good half term and we look forward to seeing you again on October 31st.

With very best wishes,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher



Our Riverside Connect sessions are an opportunity for families and friends to learn more and to be an integral part of Riverside community. Below are dates for your diary, if you are interested in attending a session please log on to www.riversideschool.org.uk (Information for Families/Riverside Connect) or click here: [Riverside Connect Dates - Register your Interest](#) Here you will be able to let us know if you will be attending. We can't wait to see you 😊



Dates for your diary

| Date | Time | Site | Topic |
|---|----------------|---------------------------|--|
| Thursday 3 rd November 2022 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | Sensory Support |
| Friday 4 th November 2022 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | Sensory support |
| Friday 11th November 2022 | 10am | Based at SPC | Family Conference |
| Thursday 1 st December 2022 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | Communication at Riverside |
| Friday 2 nd December | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | Communication at Riverside |
| TBC | TBC | Based at all sites | Cinema night |
| Thursday 19 th January 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | MENCAP |
| Friday 20 th January 2023 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | MENCAP |
| Thursday 9 th February 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | PLPs and Happiness Passports |
| Friday 10 th February 2023 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | PLPs and Happiness Passports |
| TBC | TBC | All sites | Stay and Learn – Classes will invite families into school in a meaningful and personalised way. |
| Friday 24th February 2023 | 11am | Based at SPC | Parent speed questioning – A chance for parents to ask questions to each other. |
| Thursday 16 th March 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | Wellbeing at Riverside |
| Friday 17 th March 2023 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | Wellbeing at Riverside |
| Thursday 4th May 2023 | TBC | Based at all sites | Sibling Event - Siblings will be welcomed to come and join in some Riverside fun. |
| Thursday 18 th May 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | Personal care and Puberty |
| Friday 19 th March 2023 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | Personal care and Puberty |
| Thursday 1 st June 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | Sleep and Diet |
| Friday 2 nd June 2023 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | Sleep and Diet |
| Thursday 22 nd June 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | What's out there – Information sharing |
| Friday 23 rd June 2023 | 10.30am | Based at Beckenham | What's out there – Information sharing |
| Friday 7th July 2023 | 10.30am | Based at SPC | Time for you - A chance for you to unwind |

Please look out for other flyers with more details, for the events in bold.

Family choir is also running on Friday 30th September, 7th and 14th October, 4th, 11th and 18th November – If you are interested then please email Chantal chantal.cook@riverside.bromley.sch.uk



We look forward to seeing you soon.

Family Conference

Friday 11th November 2022 from 10am - 2pm

Venue: Riverside St. Paul's Cray

You are warmly invited to this year's Riverside School Family Conference.

You will have the opportunity to listen to a range of speakers, meet new families and explore practical ideas that we hope will make a positive difference to you and your child.



10:00am - 10:10am: Welcome

10:10am - 10:30am: Inside the Golden Circle

Why we do what we do, how we do what we do and what do we really do.

10:30am - 11:00am: The Sensory World

Supporting our children with self-regulation and meeting their sensory needs.

11:00am - 11:20am: Break

11:20am - 11:50am: Communication and Interaction

Supporting our children with the fundamentals of communication.

11:50am - 12:20pm: Happiness and Wellbeing

Supporting our children with what happiness and wellbeing means to them.

12:20pm - 12:40pm: Belonging

A chance to hear about our Belonging journey and next steps.

12:40pm - 1:30pm: Lunch and opportunities to speak with staff, view resources and meet other families.

A sandwich lunch will be provided, made by the pupils. Please feel free to also bring your own lunch if you would prefer. (Please be aware we are a nut free school)



To confirm a space, please [CLICK HERE](https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/form/?pid=5&form=289) or visit <https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/form/?pid=5&form=289> and feel free to invite wider family members and friends.

We look forward to seeing you there.