

13th October 2023

Dear Riverside families,

I hope that you are all well.

It has been an action-packed half term and we are well and truly back in the swing of things. Whilst September was spent settling children into their new classes, October has seen a number of events on all sites, from Macmillan coffee mornings in the Happy Café; birthday parties in the Riverside Lounge and activities to mark Black History Month and World Mental Health Day. We have also hosted visits from prospective families on all four sites, provided training for trainee teachers, introduced "Blossoms" sessions at Riverside Phoenix and re-established connections with a range of high-profile organisations in line with our ongoing commitment to innovation in the Expressive Arts. In other wider school news, there are a few things that I would like to mention and whilst not all of them apply to all families, I hope you find them useful.

Firstly, if you are a Riverside SPC family and you transport your child to school, you will be aware that we are trying a number of different ways to improve safety on what is a very busy road. We were informed at the start of term that the private land directly opposite the school would no longer be available to park in and we have tried to mitigate this by allocating, as far as we are able, parking for families on either side of the school entrance. As this is a public highway, we cannot mark out spaces in any way but by ensuring our staff park elsewhere, and through working with our local community, these spaces have invariably been available for family usage, as well as being on the same side of the road as the school. We continue to work with our colleagues in the council to improve safety measures and thank you for your patience as we continue to refine our systems to ensure we can provide you, and your children, with the safest possible routes in and out of school.

Secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify our attendance expectations with regard to the timings of the school day. In recent months, there have been an increasing number of children at SPC who are being dropped off later and picked up earlier than our official school hours. Not only does this mean that their educational experience and learning time is being shortened, they are also missing out on important daily routines that signify key parts of the day. It is also fair to say that it can be disruptive for other pupils and class staff and impacts on the smooth running at the beginning and end of each day in a number of classes. You will be aware that we open our doors at 9.00am and, moving forwards, we respectfully ask that children arrive at this time. It can take a little while for all the children to come into school, so we will build in a degree of flexibility and extend drop-off times until 9.10am if required. A bigger issue is the end-of-day pick up and whilst we understand that there may be some historical early pick-up arrangements, moving forwards, and for the reasons outlined above, we respectfully ask that children are picked up when we open our doors at 3.15pm and not beforehand. Again, we know that it can take some time for all the children to leave the building, so we will build in a degree of flexibility and extend pick up times until 3.30pm if required.

We fully acknowledge the pressures that families face and we also appreciate that this is the last day of the half term. We do not want this to add any further stresses for you over the next fortnight so if you are impacted by this and would like us to consider exceptional circumstances in your child's case, please put these in writing on our return to school to admin@riverside.bromley.sch.uk. All requests for late drop-offs/early pick-ups will be considered individually, on a case-by-case basis at that time and, equally, if you need a little more time to put the necessary arrangements in place, please do let us know and we will always seek to find an outcome that satisfies all parties. Please know that whenever we put forward proposals for changing practice, they are done with the whole school community in mind, balanced with specific individual needs. We hope that you understand our position and thank you in advance for your understanding of our statutory obligations.

During the half term break, we are undertaking maintenance works at all four sites and we continue to develop our physical environments to ensure they provide your child with what they need to flourish. I am delighted to report that significant and extensive remedial works are about to start on our hydrotherapy pool and as referred to in previous letters, this has been a top priority for us for many months. Whilst the pool renovation work will take some time, we remain fully committed to achieving a positive outcome and re-opening the pool as soon as we are able to. Thank you for your continued patience and as soon as we have further updates, we will share these with you.

You will be receiving your child's Personal Learning Plan (PLP) and Home Learning Plan (HLP) soon. The format remains very similar to previous versions and our aims remain to work on the things that will make the biggest difference to your child's life and the life of your family. We hope that they fully reflect what you want for your child, both in school and home and if you have any questions about either document, or any wider feedback that you would like to share, please don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or a member of the Leadership Team.

There are so many things to look forward to after half term, with class-based, phase-based and site-based events already in the planning stage. So, from our whole school Autumn Festival on 31st October, to Diwali in November and a number of festive events in the run-up to Christmas, there will certainly be something for everyone!

That just remains for me to wish you all a safe, happy and healthy half term and we look forward to seeing your children again on Monday 30th October.

With very best wishes,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher