

1st September 2023

Dear Riverside families,

I hope that you are all well and have had a good summer.

We have loved having your children back at school this week and I hope that they have been excited to come in and returned home happy. We have welcomed a number of new starters to all four sites and, if this is your child's first week at Riverside School, I hope it has been a positive start to their Riverside journey. I also hope that you start to feel part of the wider school community, the Riverside family soon.

Pupils, both new and existing have settled in really well to their new classes and have clearly enjoyed re-connecting with familiar faces. They have also started to develop new friendships and positive relationships with new classmates and staff. We know how important it is that your children feel secure in their new environments and the focus in these first few weeks is to form the kinds of relationships that will enable them to find their place and find their voice, in whatever form this takes. And however loud or quiet, we will always hear them and tailor our responses and approaches accordingly.

We now have 350 pupils, aged between 3 and 19 in 39 classes across our four sites: 25 at Riverside SPC, 6 at Riverside Beckenham, 5 at Riverside West Wickham, 3 at Riverside Phoenix and, as we continue to grow in size, please know that we will never lose sight of the things that really matter to you and your child. All of your children are wonderfully unique, with a whole range of strengths, interests and requirements and our commitment is to provide them with a profoundly personalised curriculum and an environment that enables them to flourish and feel truly valued for who they are.

Over the summer, we carried out extensive maintenance work on all four sites, both internally and externally and we are continuing to do our utmost to rectify the challenges we have had with our hydrotherapy pool. This remains a top priority for us and following some further remedial work undertaken during the summer holidays, we are one step closer to being able to set a potential re-opening date. We do need to manage expectations as there is still a significant amount of work needed but please be assured that we have ring-fenced funds and will continue to work closely with all the contractors currently involved to achieve a positive outcome as soon as we possibly can. In the meantime, if your child has hydrotherapy identified in their EHCP, I am sorry that we are unable to provide this on-site at the present time but please be assured that we really are doing whatever we can to rectify this. Thank you very much for your continued patience and understanding.

It has always been important to us that you receive the information you need to feel involved and included in all aspects of your child's school experience, so please let your child's teacher

know exactly what you want to hear about. Please also feel free to contact anyone on the Leadership Team if you require any further support. Our new Leadership Team is:

Headteacher: Steve Solomons (*cross-site*)

Deputy Headteachers: Amy Price and Charlotte Downs (*cross-site*)

School Business Manager: Naomi Walters (*cross-site*)

Assistant Headteachers: Daniella Costanza (*SPC Primary*); Helen Bushell-Movahedi (*SPC Lower Secondary*); Clare Collett (*SPC Upper Secondary*); Katie Collett-Strutt (*Maternity Leave*)

Phase Leaders: Emily Morris (*SPC Primary*); Lucy Godley (*SPC Secondary*); Clare Marseglia (*Riverside Beckenham*); Lauren Mullan (*Riverside West Wickham*); and Laura Stevens (*Riverside Phoenix*)

In addition, we update our website regularly and aim to provide content which you will find useful. So, whether you are interested in details about our curriculum or classroom approaches, training videos, resources for home, Makaton stories or helpful contacts, please visit www.riversideschool.org.uk. If you have any suggestions for additional content, or for information to be presented differently, please feel free to get in touch.

In my final letter of term, I wrote: *We try to ensure that your children's days are filled with the types of activities and opportunities that motivate, excite and inspire them to learn more, do more and know more. We want them to feel safe in their school environment, whilst at the same time be challenged and feel confident enough to step out of their comfort zones. It is often when they, like us, are given that extra nudge or word of encouragement that they fly.*

So, now that we are back for what promises to be a fun-filled and exciting Autumn Term, we are all looking forward to helping your children to fly. We hope that they are too!

With very best wishes,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher