



Dear Parents

Friday 4th September 2020

A very warm welcome to all families new to Town Close this year and, to all our returning families, it has been lovely to see you and your children again after the summer holiday. It may not be a normal start to a new school year but it is great to be back and we appreciate everyone's support in making the special arrangements for this term work. I am conscious that government guidance has meant parents not being able to come into classrooms, buildings and playground areas as usual and we are sorry not to be able to engage in the normal way. It has been good to catch up and engage in the drop off and pick-up spaces and please do feel welcome to email teachers (contact details available via the Portal) and arrange meetings as needed (all urgent emails should be sent to the front office due to teachers' limited access during the day).



From the children's point of view, I hope that school has felt as normal as possible and it has been a joy to share their enthusiasm, energy and thirst for learning during the first two days. Pre Prep and Prep assemblies have had one "bubble" physically present with the other classes joining live via Zoom. Our younger pupils learnt about all the ways they can take responsibility and be celebrated for their achievements as well as revising the Town Close Way and talking about the new school year. Headmaster's Assembly for Prep pupils happened yesterday, with Emily starting proceedings with a beautiful performance of *Badinerie* by Bach on her violin. We then used optical illusions to illustrate how truth about facts or people is not always as it seems. Mr Coulthart led this morning's assembly, looking at some of the worthwhile lessons we can learn from Winnie the Pooh and his friends.



A special thank you to our amazing team of PTA volunteers who have provided such an outstanding online second hand uniform shopping service over the summer, combined with this week's physical openings. They have new stock and are open for appointments every morning next week 8.00 till 10.00 with email orders also available. Our children have all looked very smart in their new uniforms and we look forward to welcoming our new Little Acorns on Monday, following their induction visit on Wednesday, who I am sure will look very smart and grown up too! While everything is fresh and new and so that we have pictures of all our new children, Thursday sees individual and class photos for the whole school. Please send children in looking as neat as possible with brushed hair, polished shoes and black or navy hair accessories only. We will share the photos with you as soon as possible.



During the first two days, I have visited as many classes as possible and, as I write, our returning Little Acorns are outside my study window waving. There were wonderful family portraits being drawn in Reception, Year 2 were completing maths activities involving estimating and Year 1 were embarking on an outdoor word hunt. Our Year 7 pupils had their first Mandarin or German lessons with Mrs Bowyer and Mr Walker respectively and a variety of classes visited the library and met Mrs Guymer, who has taken on the new role of Reading TA this year. She challenged those brave enough to pick a mystery book to try and welcomed visitors during lunch breaks now that this invaluable space is open again. It was



lovely to see the swimming pool up and running too, with newly cleaned tiles, and Mr Buck enjoyed introducing some of Year 3 pupils to DT, which children start in the Prep Department. Our Prep IT room has had brand new machines installed, which will be ready for use next week. Year 8 pupils will also be starting their leadership duties now that they have reached the top of the School.



Next week we look forward to the Pre Prep curriculum information evenings, this year via Zoom, with full details in the Pre Prep curriculum letters, accessed via the Portal. A full calendar is available there too, which you can personalise and synchronise to your phone or other device if you choose.



I hope that everyone has an enjoyable and restful weekend.

With best wishes