



St. Matthew's High Brooms C.E. Primary School
Powder Mill Lane
Tunbridge Wells
TN4 9DY
Telephone: 01892 528098
Email: office@st-matthews.kent.sch.uk
Head teacher: Mrs S Hayward
Deputy Heads: Mrs C Pollard and Mr T Hardwick

Fulfilling God-given potential

14th July 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are rapidly approaching the end of the school year, but a year that has been different to all others. At the end of each year, we are always sad that we have to say goodbye to our year 6 pupils and members of staff. This year, we have not been able to hold the same events and experiences for our year 6 children, although we have been delighted that so many chose to return to school in June so they had the opportunity to complete their primary schooling with their peers and teachers. We wish them all well in their secondary school education.

Staff news

We are also sad to see Mrs Hayward depart from St Matthew's. Her original plan was to stay a couple of terms until we secured a permanent Headteacher, however three years later she is only now saying goodbye as she returns to Speldhurst full-time. We are really pleased to know she is just down the road and can support St Matthew's as part of the Tunbridge Wells network.

Mr Hardwick was seconded to Sundridge & Brasted Primary school as Acting Headteacher in Term 4. Throughout Term 4 and during lockdown, he has split his time between the two schools, however in September, he will be based at Sundridge & Brasted full time. We are delighted that he is being given this opportunity although we will miss him greatly at St Matthew's. He will still be part of St Matthew's as he is seconded until Easter.

Another person we have to say goodbye to is Mrs Snowdon, who has been working as a TA in the school for over 20 years, especially supporting the year 6 children in their final year. Having become a grandmother, she has decided to retire, so she can help look after her grandchild. We will miss her very much.

The exciting news for Mrs Boyages is that she will be starting her maternity leave in September. It is wonderful for her and her husband yet feels very strange not to have seen her at all since lockdown. We can't wait to see photos in the Autumn!

We are delighted to welcome back Mrs Prideaux from maternity leave, who will job-share with Mrs Tibbitts-Williams in year 3. Mrs Chater, who was with us in year 1 for just a few weeks in Term 4, will be full-time in September working in year 2. Miss Marsh will join the staff from September as a full-time teacher in year 4. She worked with us last year in Mrs Claro and Mr Hardwick's class, completing her teacher training and has successfully led the home learning for year 4 during the Summer term. We are so lucky that all these teachers know St Matthew's well.

Finally, we are delighted to welcome Mrs Phillips, as our new headteacher. She has been working hard alongside the staff and Governors to get to know the school and is really looking forward to being on site to meet the children and parents. We know that you will all give her a warm welcome in September.





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Transition

Each class has set up a zoom session with their current teachers. These have been very successful and it has been so lovely to see the children. Teachers have met to pass on information about their class to the new teacher which is vital to ensuring all children's needs are known. Miss Lumley has reviewed SEND plans and written social stories for children with Individual learning plans to aid their transition.

The Reception staff have been contacting parents of our new entrants and they have been visiting the pre-schools where possible to find out all about the children who are arriving in September.

Plans for September

Plans are being put in place for the children to return in September. From the day we received the Government guidelines, we started working on what measures we needed to put in place to keep everyone as safe as possible. We are still waiting on guidance and information from the Local Authority and our plans need to go to our Governors in the form of a risk assessment.

There will be many changes in September and we will inform you of as much as we can now, and in further letters. What we do know is:

- All year groups will return in September. Years 1-6 will return on Thursday 3rd September.
- Children will return to school in school uniform.
- Attendance will be monitored and all children, unless they are exempted on medical grounds, are expected to attend. For any queries, our Attendance Officer can be contacted via email carly.buckwell@st-matthews.kent.sch.uk
- There will need to be staggered starts and finishes to avoid crowds of people gathering. At present we have very wide staggers – these will be reduced to avoid parents having to wait if they have children in different year groups.
- The children will come into school in the morning independently – this has been very successful since June.
- We will operate a one-way system at the end of the day with specified waiting areas for parents for each class.
- Visitors and parents will need to be invited to enter the school building. Parents will be asked to leave messages by phone and dojo rather than speaking to office staff.
- Everyone in school will frequently wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitiser. Children will clean their hands, on arrival, after breaks, if they change rooms, before and after eating, and after sneezing or coughing.
- Children and staff will operate within 'bubbles'. This means that interactions across the school are reduced, therefore reducing the chance of transmission of the virus.
- Independent catering will be providing school lunches.



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- Lunch and break times will be staggered.
- We will not be able to offer Early Start or after school clubs in September as children from different year groups should not mix. This will be reviewed in Term 1.

Recovery Curriculum

Over the next year, our curriculum and timetable will be more flexible to respond to the different needs of the children who return to school. We will prioritise their wellbeing and emotional response to the pandemic by including lots of personal and social education, wellbeing, creative arts and outdoor learning as well as Reading, Writing and Maths. Mrs Phillips and Mrs Pollard have attended a course on the recovery curriculum which builds on many practices already embedded in St Matthew's, such as growth mindset, class rules and routines, use of books as a stimulus to explore issues and physical activity.

Our school year ends on Wednesday July 22nd and we wish you all a lovely Summer holiday and look forward to seeing everyone back in September.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'CPollard'.

Carolyn Pollard
Deputy Head