



Wednesday 30th September

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome Back!

It's been wonderful to welcome back our whole school this term. We have all been so proud at the way in which all of the children have settled in and the way in which they are all working to keep each other safe and healthy. A huge 'Thank you' to all our parents for helping to ensure such a smooth start and end of day and sticking to the correct time for your child's gate.

Recovery Curriculum/Teaching

Throughout the Summer term, we have been working as a leadership team, planning for your child's start back this term. We have been reading and researching what schools are doing, not just in the UK, but internationally to support children during this COVID crisis. We recognise that many children have missed out on face to face classroom learning and this, along with the ongoing worries children and families may be having, means our children need different things from us at school this year. As a whole school community, along with Heads right across our Trust, we have been planning for how best to support your child's return. Subject Leaders have been working with teachers to ensure that key concepts the children may have missed learning about, are now taught, so that their new year group also covers these 'building blocks'. Staff have been working with children to assess where they are with their learning, so that we can tailor our support. As well as 'academic' learning, crucially, we have been taking in our time to build back our children's confidence and resilience - all to support their wellbeing (see later article in this newsletter). The children have very quickly been confident again talking about their wellbeing and knowing how to look after their own health- this is such an important skill and we are very proud of them.



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Welcome EYFS and Little Stars Nursery children

This September we have loved welcoming in two new classes in Reception as well as new families who have joined Little Stars Nursery. We love welcoming new children and adults into our Ellacombe Family and we cannot wait to see what this year holds for us all.



We have had some brand new staff starting with us too! Mrs Van Der Meer, who was at Little Stars Nursery last year has joined Reception as Little Bears teacher. She brings a wealth of nursery experience and a familiar face to support the transition to school. Miss Cole is now our Little Stars Nursery lead and many of you will recognise her already! We have also welcomed Mrs Khan, Ms Anthony and Mrs Gribble to our Nursery team.

We are all looking forward to an amazing year ahead!



Wellbeing and Mental Health Learning

Our PSED and Nurture team have been visiting classes talking about how we can all look after our own wellbeing. Each class started to talk about the balloon activity, as shared on our social media over the Summer holidays, thinking about problems they hold onto and which ones they can 'let go of'. Towards the end of September, we started to talk about the subject 'How Big is your Problem' across the whole academy, and will continue to talk about this up until half term. This activity will lead to introducing problem solving as an important life skill.

In October we will be marking World Mental Health Day through #hellyellow, with activities and class discussions. More information about this will be in the individual year newsletters.



School Lunches

A huge thank you to all of our parents for ordering school lunches online and bearing with us whilst we sorted out some teething problems. As you know, we have now moved our catering in house and the children have been enjoying the new menu on offer.... especially Fish and Chip Friday! We hope to be able to expand our menu as time goes on but we have to be mindful of having things which are able to be easily and safely packed up and delivered to classrooms at the moment whilst children remain in their class bubbles. You will soon be able to order lunches for next half term – we will let you know when this is ready on School Money.



School Photos

We are delighted to be able to tell you that individual school photos will be going ahead on Wednesday 14th October. We have been in touch with Jelly Images and discussed COVID secure plans and a risk assessment with them to enable the photographs to go ahead. We will not currently be able to offer photos for nursery children as it would involve them visiting the academy but we hope we may be able to do this later in the term with Jelly images making a special trip to Little Stars – we will keep you posted. We will be offering sibling group photos.



Please ensure children come to school on 14th October looking super smart in full school uniform, including academy jumpers with long hair tied back.

Parent Consultations

These will take place virtually after school on 19th and 21st October. We will be asking you to book in the normal way via our online system Teachers2parents and you will then receive a Google Hangout invite by email prior to your meeting. The Google Hangout invite will be sent to your child's @lapsw.org account, so please ensure you can access this. Please click on the link to log into your meeting at the correct time and you will have a 10-minute slot to discuss your child's progress. Bookings will be opening very soon and will close on Friday 16th October at 3pm. If you need any assistance, please do contact the academy office.



Harvest

As you know, we have implemented a series of additional safety measures during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These mean that we will need to look at each of the events we would normally be hosting and considering what this might look like at present.

We have been liaising with Reverend Sam from St Mary Mags Church and the team from Riviera Life Church in relation to Harvest. We are pleased to tell you that we will be able to take donations of food for both of these very worthy community hubs, it will just look a little different this year. From Monday 5th October, there will be a drop off point in Garden Lane, next to Mrs Semmens, where you can leave donations of food. Any donations will be gratefully received and we will be collecting for two weeks, until Friday 16th October.



We will be celebrating Harvest in school, giving thanks to the children and their families for the kindness and donations they bring for others and our community. We look forward to sharing pictures with you on our social media and via newsletters.

English Hub

The Ilsham English Hub had a fantastic year and would like to thank each and every person who has continuously supported our children in; learning to read, keeping reading and sharing and loving stories throughout what has been an unprecedented year. The hub started last year, intensively supporting 20 schools and also giving medium support to all the other schools signed up to the hub (287 schools to date). We were incredibly proud that Miss Leaman, as a Specialist Leader of Education, used her expertise as Literacy Lead, supporting school as part of this, last year. This year, she is bringing this learning back into Ellacombe and supporting the whizzy phonics so that all children have these essential building blocks as early readers. We continue to work with the Ilsham English Hub and are very fortunate to benefit from the training and expertise this continually offers to our staff.



I hope this short newsletter has been helpful for you and thank you for your continued support embracing the changes that the return to school has brought.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Semmens

Head of Academy

THANK
YOU!

