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End of Term Letter from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to start my final letter of the year to you with a huge thank you to you all. Your support for St Peter's through this year has been absolutely fantastic. Your comments on Facebook, your telephone conversations with teachers, your emails to me or to the office – they have all kept us going through these difficult and distanced times. For those of you with children in school this term, the way you have understood and engaged with the lining ups and collections, the starting and finishing times and the peculiar routines and procedures have made what could have been a difficult time both manageable and enjoyable. And all of you who have been overseeing home learning and grappling with concepts and methods and terms that you haven't had to think about since you were in school yourselves, nothing less than Outstanding grades all round!

All the children are at home now and staff have all been busy in school, getting ready for September. I am very, very glad to say that we will be back in September – and in a way that will feel very much like being back as normal.

I was very pleased when the Government's guidance came out a week ago as it clearly sets out that the expectation is for all children to be back at school and set out the importance of schools providing the broad and rich curriculum that we are so proud of at St Peter's.

So what will September look like?

The most important thing for us is that school will feel normal for the children. They need normality, need lessons, teachers, friends and playtimes - but in a way that keeps them safe. Therefore, we will be sticking with the 'bubble' system that we have been using this term, but adapting and expanding it to make it work for the whole school.

Each class will be its own bubble. Typically, at St Peter's this means that bubbles will have around 30 children, their teacher, and their TA. Because of the importance of children being taught the full curriculum, the guidance makes it clear that our specialist teachers, our art and drama, sport and music teachers, can teach across these bubbles and we will be able to use places such as our Studio and our fantastic new Art building which will hopefully be finished by then! But we will need to remain vigilant and pay close attention to the hygiene and handwashing routines we are now so familiar with. Children will wash or sterilise hands as they come into school, as they move between lessons, before, and after lunchtimes and playtimes. We will keep the sharing of commonly used resources to a minimum and we will provide all children with their own stationary and equipment that they will need each day.

We will also divide the school into two overarching bubbles – Super-Bubbles! – with Years 3 and 4 in the Lower Bubble and Years 5 and 6 in the Upper Bubble. We are doing this to help minimise contact between the different groups of children and we will be having separate playtimes and lunchtimes for these Upper and Lower School Bubbles.

I am also thrilled to let you know that we will be offering our fantastic Breakfast Club, After School Clubs and Extended Day provision in September. I know how needed these are for

our working parents and how much they are enjoyed by our children. To keep peace of mind and to help minimise the contact between the children, these clubs will be specifically set up for children from the Year 3 and 4 Super-Bubble or children from the Year 5 and 6 Super-Bubble. We are improving the way we share club details with you and allow you to sign up for clubs, and you will receive an electronic brochure and sign-up sheet from Mr Bewick on the 1st September. If you are planning on using Breakfast Club or Extended Day you will need to book your child a space using School Gateway and we will need to be strict about booking places in order to manage the new bubble system. To be able to book if your child hasn't been before, you will need to contact Mr Bewick on extendedservices@stpetersthanet.co.uk as soon as possible to be added to the relevant group.

I know there has been a lot of talk in the press about having staggered starts to the school day, but I've decided not to do this. So many of our families have children in more than one year group and would have had to wait around that it would both defeat the object of keeping children separate and would also have been most annoying for you! What we will do is extend the time that children can come into the school so that there is less of a bottleneck at the start of the day. The gates front and back will be opened at 8.35 and children can walk round to their classes, with gates and registers closing at 8.55 as normal. Parents can then self-regulate their arrival and minimise crowding. For those collecting children at the end of the day we will again open gates slightly earlier at 3.05 and we will ask parents to wait behind the marked collection points opposite each classroom door for their children to be dismissed to them. Children going to Clubs will be registered in school at the end of the day in their Super-Bubbles pretty much as usual and children in the Upper School Bubble who have written parental permission to go home on their own will be able to do so again – the new permission slips will be sent home in September.

We will ask you to be alert for possible symptoms and it is important that you inform the school straight away should your child have a temperature or new continuous cough. We really do know that for the most part these symptoms will mean nothing worse than a normal cough or cold - but it is vital that any child or a family member displaying symptoms follow national procedure and get tested immediately. If a child in a bubble tests positive, it is the law that they stay at home and that their bubble will be sent home and will self-isolate for 14 days. Parents and family members will not have to self-isolate for this time unless their child also tests positive. The hand washing, hygiene routines, class bubbles and super-bubbles are all put in place to help minimise the risk of this happening. If a bubble does have to be sent home and self-isolate for two weeks, we have prepared a two week home-learning project for each year group in the same style as we have been providing through these last few months which has aligned so well to the rich St Peter's curriculum, and in September we will spend time with all the children to make sure they can access the home-learning confidently.

I think that is enough detail for now! The main thing you need to know is that we will be back as St Peter's in September! Our new Year 3s will come in for an Transition afternoon to meet their teachers and classmates and see the school on the afternoon of Wednesday 2nd September and then we will welcome all children back on Thursday 3rd September - with our new system of gates being open from 8.35 and registration at 8.55.

'Til then, stay safe, enjoy the summer and see you all in September!

Yours,

Tim Hunter-Whitehouse
Headteacher
St Peter-in-Thanel