

City of Rochester School Newsletter

Autumn 1 – Academic Year 2020-2021

Introduction from the Head

Welcome to the first edition of our Newsletter for academic year 2020-2021.

This term has again been busy and challenging for our school community and we acknowledge that it has also been a worrying time for many of our families. However, our pupils have shown great resilience and have done well to re-integrate back into school life.

I want to say a “congratulations” to all of our pupils for making such a positive start in returning back to school in Term 1, they have all done incredibly well.

Pupils are mindful and sensible in school and abide by our COVID guidelines, with frequent handwashing, using the one-way system and interacting with children within their own bubbles.

I want to thank you all for your on-going support of the school and the positive feedback from some of our parents/carers this term – it has really helped assure us that our families are behind what we are trying to achieve as a school.

I wish you all a pleasant and restful half-term break and look forward to welcoming our pupils back to school on Monday 9th November 2020.

Key Dates:

Term 2 - 9th November '20 to 16th December '20

16th December '20 – Parents' Evening (see notes below)

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Community Links

Our chosen charity this year is **wHooCares**. **wHoo Cares** is a community interest company created to support vulnerable people living on the Hoo Peninsula. This organisation targets support that will make a difference to people's lives – whether that is a chat and a cup of tea once a week, helping with transport to the local coffee morning or support getting to GP or hospital appointments. The pupils and staff at City of Rochester School donated food items and a number of hampers were made up and delivered to those individuals who were most in need.

Thank you for all your contributions – your donations were gratefully received. The picture below shows Benjamin, Kian and Lenny who helped organise the hampers. Our next exciting project will be making up Christmas Cards, with our pupils being responsible for the design. I very much look forward to sharing these designs with you.



Curriculum

We are very conscious that our pupils have missed a lot of learning over the last few months due to the pandemic and next term we want to accelerate and boost English and Maths progress through running some catch up sessions. Our proposal is that these sessions will run every **Monday and Thursday after school – 3:15 – 4pm** and that these sessions will commence after the half-term break, with the first one starting on Monday 9th November '20. We will of course provide transport back home within Medway and extended to Gravesham. Any pupils falling outside these areas will be considered on an individual basis. We will evaluate what impact these sessions have had and consider whether to continue them into the new year. We have sent out a consent form for this, which I would appreciate you returning at your earliest convenience so we can begin planning.

Experiential Curriculum

Some pupils in school have had an opportunity to explore key geographical and historical places of interest in Kent and Medway during Term 1. Pupils visited Reculver Country Park, Oare Gunpowder Works, Faversham and Westgate Parks, Canterbury. During these sessions our pupils explored species found in different water sources such as ponds, rivers and the sea. They learnt about the history of each place and followed a GPS system to uncover facts and complete a trail. This picture shows Tegan engaged in a map reading and geocaching activity.



During Term 2, some pupils will be attending Forest School – this will be at Detling Hill, Maidstone. Pupils will be learning about the woodland environment, wildlife and habitats. Pupils will be building shelters, taking part in arts and crafts and for older pupils they will also look at relevant career options. These topics all link to our Science, Geography, Maths, English and PSHE curricula. A parental consent form will be sent to you in due course.

Also, during Term 2, some of our older pupils will be taking part in a Challenger Troop taster programme based at their training facility in Sittingbourne. This will involve the students working to complete tasks such as bush craft, survival skills, obstacle courses and physical fitness activities. A parental consent form will be sent to you in due course.

Equality and Diversity

Each year we have a Cultural and Diversity Calendar of events that we follow, either in class or as a whole school. These have always been very enjoyable.

This term we have had to make allowances because of our COVID safety guidelines so all events have been slightly more low-key than would usually be. We celebrated Recycling Week at the start of the term. Children learnt about the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling. National Fitness Day was also in September. Rather than a big sports event, pupils explored different ways of keeping fit. Neptune and Jupiter class enjoyed taking part in a Marine Life Olympics as part of a Coastal Capers session.

October is Black History Month and this has been covered in various lessons across the school with a focus on slavery and stereotyping in society. We also had World Mental Health Day on 9th October where we focussed on wellbeing and having a healthy mind.

Next term we have Anti-Bullying Week and Children in Need. We will be wearing something yellow or something spotted for Children in Need Week. A £1 donation is recommended so that we can raise money to donate to the charity. We will write to you separately about this.

OTHER NEWS:

Building Works

We have more renovations taking place over the holidays which include re-organising the staff area in reception, extending Jupiter classroom and essential works in relation to Health and Safety. All pupils from Jupiter Class will receive visuals of how the space looks prior to them returning to school.

New Staff

We have a new teacher starting with us after the October half-term. Paul is a keen musician and will be supporting Gilly in offering more music opportunities to our pupils, as well as leading our cookery curriculum and supporting with English and Maths teaching.

Parents' Evening

You will see from our School Calendar that we are scheduled to host a parents' evening at school on Thursday 16th December. In light of COVID and the need to operate safely for our school community, it is likely that we will host these remotely via Zoom or telephone calls. I will write to all our families in due course with further details.

COVID-19 Update

We continue to operate in school as safely as possible. We will of course keep you fully informed of any changes or instructions from the Department for Education.

Policies – Code of Conduct – Parents/Carers and Visitors

As a partnership we are all aware of the importance of good working relationships and all recognise the importance of these relationships to equip our pupils with the necessary skills for their education. For these reasons we will continue to welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school. We have produced a Code of Conduct to outline the expectations of all parents, carers and visitors connected to our school. This document is on our website.

