

# COLDWALTHAM, ST. JAMES' C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

*with Chuckleberries Pre School*



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**Executive Headteacher: Mrs Stephanie Gibson**  
**Head of School: Mrs Lizzie Martin**

## Learn, Discover, Achieve

21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Arrangements for September 2021

Following the announcement that statutory regulations related to Covid-19 are ending on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July, we anticipate that we will be starting the new academic year in September with no specific guidelines or restrictions in place, which will be quite liberating after the last sixteen months. However, this does not mean that arrangements in school will return exactly to the way they were before the first lockdown.

No-one can deny how terrible this pandemic has been; the impact on people's individual lives has been more than significant and society as a whole will never be the same as it was. Nevertheless, when faced with adversity and having had to adjust arrangements in order to protect the health and safety of the whole school community, we have, through having to work within guidelines, discovered new ways of doing things that have caused us to say 'Well, why didn't we think of this before?!

Therefore, in September, we will be putting in place arrangements that are a mixture of the old and the new; the changes, we think, will be to the betterment of the school and will also maintain a degree of protection against this virus which it would seem will become an accepted part of life in much the same way as flu has.

Some of the arrangements outlined below are not to do with Covid-19 but rather to do with the change in structure that we now have at St. James' due to our numbers rising or have been discussed as a staff team and are something that we feel was ready to be reviewed and adapted.

#### **Class names**

As St. James' will be moving to a four-class structure, this meant that a new class name needed to be considered. Viewing this as an opportunity to review our class names completely, the staff and children put their heads together to think about what our names could change to.

School Councillors consulted with each class about broad categories that the names could possibly fall within. Some of the ideas of the children were very creative and imaginative, some were more prosaic and others were, quite frankly, outlandish! However, it was a very enjoyable and fun experience to hear the children's ideas and what they thought.

The School Council relayed these ideas back to me and it was clear that an animal-theme was popular. Mrs Kirby took this base idea and built on it by coming up with an initiative which we are all incredibly excited about.

Many of you will have heard of the work of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), particularly with regard to protecting endangered species. As a school, we have decided that each class will adopt an endangered animal, highlighted by the WWF, to support and this will become their class name!



When this idea was presented to the School Council and the staff team, it was met with great enthusiasm and support. Each class will be given a starter budget to adopt their animal and will then be encouraged as classes to undertake mini-enterprises to ensure that the money is raised to continue with the adoption each year.

Not only does this give each class name true meaning and purpose but it also helps to raise the children's awareness of global issues, such as environmental and climate change, our personal 'global footprints' and animal welfare concerns. This links to our vision as a school of the children being prepared to be members of not only our school community but a citizen of a much wider society.

Having now explained the rationale for the name changes, I am pleased to announce that the new names for the classes will be:

- Year R – Penguins
- Year 1/2 – Rhinos
- Year 3/4 – Elephants
- Year 5/6 – Jaguars

The animals have been chosen in consultation with class teachers and children. Our first week in September will be a 'Learning to Learn' week and, as part of this, the children will be learning about their class animal (where they live, their characteristics, why they are endangered, etc.) and creating distinctive displays in their classrooms to showcase them.

Our sister school in the Arun Villages Federation, Amberley CE Primary School, are also going to be adopting a class animal each (though not changing class names as there was not such a pressing need for this to happen there). We are very pleased that the whole federation will be uniting in this joint initiative and are looking forward to sharing more about this with you in the coming year!

### **Drop-off and pick-up arrangements**

Having had sixteen months of statutory guidance to follow regarding these, we have reviewed what we have done and have decided the following for the coming academic year.

#### **Drop-off arrangements**

Drop-off arrangements will remain the same as they have been throughout the pandemic with the children being brought to the main school gate at **8.45am**. As has been happening, a member of SLT will be on the gate and there will be support staff members to receive the children as they walk down the drive.

If parents/carers have any urgent messages that need to be given to the class teacher, they can tell the member of staff on the gate. Any non-urgent questions/enquiries need to be directed to the Office via a telephone call or email where they will be passed on to the relevant member of staff to respond to.

#### **Pick-up arrangements**

The school day will finish for **all** children at **3.15pm**; there will no longer be staggered finishing times. The school gates will be unlocked at **3.10pm** to allow parents/carers to walk down to the playground where each class will be brought out to. As prior to lockdown, the children will line up in a specific place and be released to their parents/carers by staff.

Please respect the 3.10pm opening of the gates; please time your walk to school gates so that you arrive at this time not ten minutes before it.

For safeguarding reasons, please ensure that, if your pick-up arrangements change at short notice, you have informed the school via the School Office and we are aware of who will be picking your child up. Unless we have specific permission from a parent/carer, we are unable to release your child to a non-specified adult, even if they are very well-known to the child and the school.

May we also remind you that, unless there is an emergency, children should be picked up promptly at 3.15pm. Contrary to the popular view of much of the nation's population, school staff do not stop working at home time! Teachers are very often required to be at meetings by 3.30pm or have planning and preparation to do following the school day; if a child is not picked up promptly, this

does have a significant effect on teachers' commitments. We would ask that you respect this and arrive promptly to pick your child up.

### **PE Kits**

During the pandemic, the children have been coming into school dressed in their PE Kits on the days when their PE lessons are timetabled. We will be continuing with this in the coming year as it has proved to be a fantastic arrangement. PE days for each class are in the process of being finalised and you will be informed by your class teacher about this at the start of the new school year.

### **Bags and personal belongings**

During the pandemic, children were not allowed to bring in personal items from home and this, again, has been very helpful. Gone are the days of children having to report that they have lost a precious toy or think that something has been stolen. Therefore, we will be continuing with this rule in September with no toys or personal pencil cases being brought into school.

We appreciate that having a bag in school can be useful so the children will be permitted to bring a small to medium sized bag into school that could hold their packed lunch box, a water bottle, reading book and A4 zip wallet in it. If your child comes into school with a large rucksack, we will ask you to change this. Space on pegs is not vast so large bags are not suited to school. Thank you for your support with this.

### **Snacks and birthday 'treats'**

All schools are required to promote a healthy lifestyle and to encourage children to have a nutritious, balanced diet. As mentioned earlier, this is part of our vision as a school that we prepare children for their future lives and we would like them to be healthy, physically-fit people who have a care for their bodies and wellbeing.

All Key Stage 1 children are provided with a piece of fruit or vegetable as part of a government funded scheme to promote healthy, nutritious eating. If you feel that your child will need something different or a little extra and, for our Key Stage 2 children who are not included in the scheme, we invite you to send in a nutritious healthy snack for them to have mid-morning.

Snacks that are permitted are as follows:

- Fresh fruit or vegetables;
- Pure dried fruit snacks that do not contain added sugar e.g. raisins, BEAR fruit Yo-Yos or Paws, Fruit bowl fruit flakes. *Please do not send in yoghurt/chocolate covered fruit flakes/raisins;*
- Rice crackers, plain crackers, bread sticks or wholemeal pitta bread.

*Please do not send in snacks that are high in fat or sugar such as crisps, cereal bars, chocolate bars, biscuits, cakes or cake bars.*

**To keep children with severe allergies safe, we are a 'nut-free' school. Please do not send any nut-based snacks, biscuits/bars or sandwich fillings (such as peanut butter or Nutella) into school, either as a snack or in your child's lunchbox.**

In line with this commitment to healthy eating, we are also introducing a 'no birthday treats' policy across the school. Whilst I appreciate the kindness of sending in sweets or treats for the children to share on birthdays, for the school to allow this, it seems contradictory to the healthy eating message that we are wishing to promote. There are also health and safety implications for those children with allergies and the financial implications for those families who may not be able to afford to do this.

This does not mean to say that the school will never allow the odd, unhealthy sweet or savoury treat – the ice-cream the children had yesterday was very much needed and welcomed by them all and class parties do have to have a cheesy wotsit! However, we would like to keep these treat times to a minimum and also be able to monitor possible difficulties with allergies more easily. Again, I thank you for your support with this.

### **Communication with parents/carers**

At St. James', we are very much aware that communication with parents/carers is vital to the smooth running of the school. Communication (like parking!) can be a thorny issue in all schools:

some people think there is too little communication whilst some think there is too much; some want an instant response whilst others are willing to wait a little longer; some prefer face-to-face communication whilst others prefer a phone call or email.

What I do know is that, very rarely, can we please all the people all of the time! Therefore, I would like to outline some basic principles that we, as a school, will abide by which will hopefully help you to understand our lines of communication better.

- Telephone calls and emails to senior members of staff, the Office or class teachers will be responded to **within 48 hours (not including weekends and holidays)** dependent on the urgency of the enquiry. Any safeguarding concerns would be responded to immediately.
- The School Office is not always supervised due to the contracted working hours of the staff; we will make you aware at the start of the new school year when the Office will be staffed and the arrangements should there be an emergency during the unstaffed time that requires immediate contact.
- Teaching staff are under no statutory requirement to respond to telephone calls and emails outside of usual working hours (8am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, term-time); if a member of staff chooses to respond to a telephone call or email outside of this time, this is their choice and it can be that this is the best time for them to do it. However, from September, we will be encouraging our staff to not phone past 6pm or email past 8pm in an evening on weekdays, or respond at weekends and during holidays (where possible) in order for them to have a healthy work/life balance.
- Teachers are very willing to have face-to-face conversations with parents/carers and, sometimes, it is necessary that these need to take place ad-hoc. However, it is far more productive and helpful, if you have a particular concern that you need to discuss, for you to email your child's class teacher and arrange an appointment with them. This allows the discussion to be structured, more focused and enable fewer miscommunications to happen.
- Teacher and class email addresses will be changing at the start of September in line with our new staffing structure and new class names; if you need to email the school over the summer, please direct the email to the [office@coldwalthamschool.com](mailto:office@coldwalthamschool.com) email address, with 'FAO...' in the 'Subject' box. The email will then be forwarded to the relevant person who will respond to you at an appropriate time.

I am aware that this is a very long letter and (as pointed out above!), some of you may find it a little overwhelming. However, the information in it is vital for the start of the new year in September so this is a communication that needed to be shared. We will remind you of these arrangements closer to September in case you lose this email!

Thank you again for your continued support of the school and the arrangements that we have in place. We are very much looking forward to seeing the children back on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September (or Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> September for new reception children)** and I wish you a very restful, relaxing and enjoyable summer break.

Kind regards,



Mrs L Martin  
Head of School