ST. JAMES' C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL, COLDWALTHAM
with Chuckleberries Pre School

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Executive Headteacher: Mrs Lizzie Martin
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Enabling every child to thrive and succeed

26th August 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the start of the new school year, we wanted to write to you with a warm welcome back to all our returning children, and a very special welcome to those families joining us for the first time as their child begins Reception. Starting school is such an exciting milestone, and we can't wait to welcome our newest pupils through the gates and begin this exciting first chapter of their formal education journey with them.

For our returning children, we hope you have all had a restful summer together, and we are really looking forward to seeing familiar faces back in September, ready for another year of learning, friendship and fun.

Leadership Update

We are delighted to let you know that our Executive Headteacher, Mrs Lizzie Martin, will be returning to work next week, ready for the new school year. Mrs Martin will be back to leading both schools forward, picking up on the fantastic work that has been done in her absence and will continue with her great work already underway across the federation. Her return to work will be phased across the first six weeks of the half-term, with the aim of her being back to full-time in a swift and timely manner. She is very excited to get back into both schools and to be working with the children again.

As a new addition, and to help support both schools to give them the best start this year whilst Mrs Martin is on a phased return, I am pleased to say that myself, Nick Matthews, will be joining the federation short term, to help get the schools off to the best possible start in September. I am an experienced headteacher in West Sussex and have been in education for almost 23 years. I am excited to be working with Mrs Martin and the schools for the first half term. Whilst I will be an interim headteacher at the school, I am there purely in a supportive role, designed to give both schools the best possible start to the year.

What This Means for You

In practical terms, this arrangement means greater access to a headteacher in each school and a greater presence across the week. Mrs Martin and I will be working as one Executive Head, but with two physical presences across the federation, giving parents

and children more headship visibility, day to day. We will both hold the same decision-making powers and so you will be able to talk with either of us about anything you like regarding school; please don't worry about "which" headteacher to approach as we will be sharing and collaborating a lot. We are looking forward to working as one, sharing ideas, working on school improvement and making sure every child has the best start.

This measure is in place until October half term. After that, Mrs Martin will continue leading both schools on her own, as it is planned that I will be stepping away from the schools at this point. Hopefully as parents, you will see this as a real positive, as with more leadership comes more experience, knowledge and a different perspective on things. I know many of you have really missed Mrs Martin and will be pleased to see her back, as I know she will you.

We are really looking forward to welcoming you all back, and to another happy and successful year across both our schools.

Please do not forget the first day back at School is Wednesday 2nd September, as Tuesday 1st September is an INSET day and so there is no school on that day. We cannot wait to see you then.

With very best wishes,

Nick Matthews (Interim Headteacher) & Mrs Lizzie Martin (Executive Headteacher)