



BUXLOW

Independent Preparatory School

Easter Newsletter - 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I have given this newsletter and its contents much thought and I think this is due to the unprecedented experience that Covid 19 and the subsequent lockdowns have provided for us. There is much to consider when reflecting upon the last year. History will judge this time in its own way, but for us, the generation that has lived, experienced and been through so much, we should never underestimate the impact of this time on society, relationships and our view on life. Reflection is healthy and I consider that notwithstanding the awful direct impact of Covid on many people, that we have all had other opportunities, positive opportunities that have strengthened our family relationships and community ties, with the hope and belief that when we emerge from this period, those strengthened ties remain.

We have seen at first hand the wonderful support from our school community during this period and I would like to sincerely thank you all for this. You have been patient with our changing school processes and enabled us to focus on maintaining the safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff. Before the end of the last lockdown, we identified that we would need to support our pupils with a Recovery Curriculum and the inclusion of lessons to enable the pupils to discuss, reflect and exercise any thoughts or concerns that have arisen from the period spent at home. For many of us that recall as a child the summer holidays appearing to last an age, the 2 months plus of the second lockdown would understandably have a mental and physical impact on our pupils and it is vital that we address and support any needs arising from that. Since the return of pupils to school, I have no doubt that the school environment is the best place for our pupils and we take every element of safety into account to ensure the continuity of this:

In my previous communications to you, I detailed the stringent processes that we have in place to protect pupils, staff and parents and I want to assure you of their continued prominence as part of our school routines. Staff will continue to laterally test twice weekly, the results of which are uploaded to the NHS portal and the DFE guidelines for vaccinating nursery staff enabled Buxlow staff to gain access to the vaccination treatment over the February half term.

Spring beginnings

For many, the start of spring exemplifies nature and new life. With this in mind, there will be an unusual addition to the Buxlow family: Chickens. At the start of the new term, we will have received a consignment of chicken eggs and an incubation kit. Our pupils will have the opportunity to witness at first hand the wonder of life as the eggs hatch and the chicks grow. We intend to provide many learning opportunities around this theme. Rather than return the chicks to the supplier, the school will be keeping 4 of the chickens (all female) to rear for the remainder of their lives. This is a delightful way for our pupils to observe our chickens hatching, developing as chicks and growing into adult chickens. It is often said that the presence of animals enable positive human qualities such as

care, kindness, empathy, compassion along with responsibility and we hope that those virtues will be encouraged by our new additions. All care and management of the chickens will remain the responsibility of the school staff only. Ms. Stanton will be setting up a time-lapse recording during the incubation period to record the eggs hatching and we will be delighted to share those via our social media.

On that note, we share many of our school achievements via social media and it appears that parent engagement with our school social media platforms is lower than expected. I would welcome an increase in that engagement, perhaps sharing our achievements with relatives. Our pupils are justifiably proud of their achievements and staff take considerable time and effort to share those moments with you, so please do take the time to view them. #pleaselikeandshare

Over the Easter break, the Resource Room will be converted to an additional space for our every growing nursery. From September, we will be welcoming younger children to Buxlow as we will have the addition of a Baby Room, for babies from 3 months old. There will be additional staffing at Buxlow as we grow to meet the requirements for working parents. We will also be welcoming back Teddy Tennis for the nursery pupils, which I know both nursery pupils and staff enjoy participating in.

Sport

A session of archery will be running from the start of term until the end of May and provided by Info4sports. A very familiar face, Coach Ernest, will be delivering this. Archery will be run on Fridays for pupils from Year 3, 4, 5 and 6. Since the removal of the Red House, we have the space to incorporate such activities, with others to follow.

ILG will be holding their annual sports event towards the end of May. A number of pupils will be selected to attend and as part of their preparation, Mr Smith, who now leads PE as a subject, will ensure they are adequately prepared for that event. He will confirm the date and pupil selection at the start of the summer term.

I am also pleased that we shall be return to using the sports field at Wembley Primary for the start of the academic year in September. Mr Smith's drive and passion for sport will be ensure a prominent place for PE at school and raise its profile. We intend that Buxlow will attend a number of events next year such as: The Lyndhurst School Cross Country run at Mill Hill, Queenswood School Tennis tournament and Queenswood Athletics day to name a few. Further details will follow in September.

ICT

Since achieving the level of Apple Teacher for all teaching staff at Buxlow, the improvement of the ICT provision has been firmly on our agenda. An internal audit has enabled us to identify and formulate our plan to enhance the teaching and learning of ICT with a subsequent expansion of the resources that we currently have available. We are now awaiting an order of IPADS which will result in each child having access to an IPAD at any time during the school day, one IPAD per child. They will be used not only during Computer Science, but also to enrich learning in other areas of the curriculum. We have received the licence to maintain and manage our IPAD devices, resulting in full control for Buxlow to acquire apps and enable our curriculum to broaden in a creative context.

We will also be taking delivery of our 3d printer over the Easter break. Next term, to commemorate its inception, a school wide competition to design a 3d object will be held and a winner selected. Each winner will have their design printed by the 3d printer.

Apple TV's will be installed in every classroom to enable greater use of IT and the increase of an IT platform across the school. I welcome these developments in IT, which illustrate our commitment to improving the learning experience for all pupils.

Reporting to parents

Parents will have received their child's interim Spring report via email from Mrs Hutchinson. Reading, Writing and Mathematics levels were given and are based on age related expectations. The full summer report will be based on all subjects and include the results of Progress tests which will be held in June. IEP consultations have been on going with new targets set for the summer term. Mrs Kelly has been extremely busy, ably supported by Mrs Rashid, ensuring our pupils are provided with the support that they need.

Curriculum

With consideration to Remote Learning, the school focus over the next term and beyond will be thinking skills and metacognition: thinking about thinking. This will be an agenda on our school development plan with an increase of the practical exploration of learning and investigation to encourage the thinking skills attributed to planning and testing. We have invested in a programme of STEM lessons, the results of which we will share with you on social media.

A special thanks to Mrs Campbell for the delivery of reading books from the author Caron Trafford. Every child received a number of books and I am very grateful for the donation.

Madame Zinkin was able to secure a new role in school counselling, a role she has sought for many years. We at Buxlow thank her for contribution and wish her the very best of luck.

Madame Doyle teaches French at Grange Park Prep, a fellow ILG school and has settled in well since starting at Buxlow. She is from Reims in the North-East of France and has been living in London for over 30 years. Madame Doyle is passionate about sharing her first language and feels it is an important gateway to learning other languages and helping to understand your own. She has been working as a language teacher in primary schools for over 20 years and always aims to teach French in a fun and enjoyable way. Her lessons include lots of speaking opportunities, and the use of games, songs and role playing to maximize the children's engagement and help them build their confidence.

And finally....

Lockdown had been a challenge for all. The staff at school are delighted that pupils are back at school, learning in the classroom and playing with their friends once again. For educational professionals, nothing can replicate the experience of the classroom and the return of our pupils has provided the life and energy missing from the school since January. As I wrote in my updated Head's welcome (shortly to be uploaded to the school website), the role of headteacher at this enchanting school is one of both the head and heart.

I wish you all a wonderful break.

Regards,

Mr D May
Headteacher