

Wednesday 15th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the summer holidays draw closer, the governors look to reflect on the past school year. We wanted to get in touch with you to acknowledge the extraordinary challenges that you have been facing, and continue to face, during these difficult days and weeks. We would like to thank you for the way that you have worked with our school team to help them to continue to support your children in their learning, in whatever way you can, while for many of you also trying to fulfil the demands of your own work. We also thank the children who have had to adapt as all of their normal routines were taken away from them and their friendship circles distanced, through necessity. Our further thanks go to the entire staff team who have worked from home and on site to continually improve the provision, while also dealing with their own demands and pressures at this time.

The last few months have been a significant test of everyone’s resolve and determination across the country. As schools were closed to most pupils from 20th March, two weeks before the scheduled Easter break, they had to make rapid and urgent provisions to continue supporting the children of key workers on-site, and to educate all other children at home for the first time.

Like everything else in this time, governance has adapted and we have held our meetings virtually and also conducted governor visits online. We have been fully focussed on continuing to meet our core functions, including holding the school to account and supporting the school through focussing on the strategic direction as we adapt to new changes, while at the same time looking forward to the future and the direction the school needs to take. The wellbeing of our pupils, families and staff have also remained at the forefront, as we have conducted our work.

With no prior information given to schools before the televised government briefings, our Senior Leadership Team, supported by GLF, have done incredibly well to rapidly put these updates into practice, often with subsequent updated guidance being released requiring further changes to plans and associated risk assessments. The normal school business hasn’t stopped, and in the midst of dealing with these challenges Mr Custance and his team have also managed to recruit three strong teachers to the staff team ready for September.

Although comparing one school’s approach to another’s is understandable, the reality of what each school can provide for pupils is very different due to variations in space and staff available. At Floreat Wandsworth, we have had a very high uptake of pupils returning to school, when they have been able to, and this has very much dictated what has been possible for the wider school. To provide some illustrative context, please see the table below which shows the national data for attendance statistics for the week between Thursday 25th June and Thursday 2nd July, as published by the DfE, compared to the attendance data for Floreat Wandsworth for the same week.

	National Data (% of eligible pupils who attended school)	Floreat Wandsworth Data
Nursery	23%	78% of eligible pupils from Nursery, Reception and Year 1 attended school
Reception	40%	
Year 1	38%	
Year 6	44%	N/A

For a 2 form entry school with grouping sizes set to a maximum of 15 pupils, and taking the Year 1 data as an example, if 38% of children returned 2 groupings and 2 rooms would have been required, whereas at Floreat Wandsworth 4 groupings were needed for this year group, requiring double the number of staff and double the number of rooms.

We appreciate that for families with children in Years 2, 3 and 4 and for any families shielding this time has been particularly hard. We would like to once again thank the Senior Leadership Team for maximising the opportunities to return, based on the government's guidelines and the school's staffing levels. The team have worked so hard to open up as much opportunity as they could, while following the guidelines and we have fully supported their approach and desire to offer as much provision as any risk assessment could possibly allow.

We know that many of you have felt an anxiety about the work that was 'missed' this year. Will your child be ready for the next year group if they didn't 'complete' this one? What if they struggle? We want to reassure you that learning is what the school does best! It is true that certain aspects of learning may have been delayed, but the school will have a programme of support in place in September for those that need it and this will be aided by GLF's Re-engagement curriculum that Mr Custance has previously written to you about. The teachers are skilled at adjusting teaching to match the needs of the class, and individual pupils. There is much talk in the media about a recovery curriculum, but we believe the emphasis should be on re-engagement, ensuring the pupils are happy and secure in school, and first rate teaching. We have strong learning programmes in place and the School's aims and expectations remain high and staff will be striving for high levels of academic achievement.

The partnership between home and school is a crucial element of successfully reintegrating the children into school. Together, we need to spend time rebuilding their social relationships and their human connections. Before learning can happen, a child's mental health must be well, and we urge you to continue to work in partnership with the school if you have any concerns.

The coming months will continue to see changes as we respond to updates from the government, but Floreat Wandsworth, ably assisted by the Trust, will remain constant in their resolve to offer the best provision possible to ensure that our children and their families are getting the support that they need. We are not perfect, and there will no doubt be some challenges in the autumn, but by moving forward in partnership we can work to ensure the best possible outcomes for every pupil.

Moving into the new school year the governors will continue to work with the school as it adapts to the issued guidance and we will ensure that we fulfil our duties as governors, with an emphasis on supporting the wellbeing of children, families and staff.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions, do get in touch with the school. We are a strong school community and we truly look forward to everyone returning in September. Until then, on behalf of all the governors, we wish you all a safe and happy summer with your families and loved ones.

With best wishes,



Mills Brough
Chair of Governors



Harriet Johnson
Vice Chair of Governors