



Rowlands Gill Primary School

1.7.2020 Newsletter

End of Summer Term - Tuesday 14th July

Our school term ends for all children at home time on Tuesday 14th July. This is to allow all children the opportunity for a short transition visit to say goodbye to their current teacher and hello to their new teacher. You will have received a letter detailing your child's specific day and time for this visit via the eSchools system.

School will not remain open for children of key workers during the summer holidays.

Wider Re-opening

From Monday, we have more children from key year groups returning to school. To accommodate this, we are opening up more bubbles and will be at capacity in terms of staffing safely.

This means that we will not be able to invite any other year groups back, other than for their planned transition visit. I had hoped that there may have been an option to open up to at least one other year group for the final part of the term but unfortunately we are not able to.

There is a letter from the Director of Education at the end of the newsletter to explain this further.

End of Year Reports

This year, because of the school closure, we will be sending out End of Year reports electronically via eSchools so that parents have the opportunity to read them before the end of term. You should have received your child's report by the evening of **Monday 13th July**. The children will still collect a paper copy of their report on their transition visit for you to keep.



We are offering optional telephone appointments for those parents who would like to discuss their child's report with the class teacher. These will be available during the school day from Wednesday 15th to Friday 17th July. Once you have received and read the report, if you require a telephone appointment please contact the office, via telephone or email.

Prior to lockdown we had planned for the children to contribute to their report by identifying their favourite part of the year, best achievement and creating a self-portrait. We are unable to do this at the moment, but it will certainly be a feature of the reports next year.

Usually, with your child's report, we include a parents' reply slip, to confirm receipt of the report and to make any comments about the school which you wish to share with us. As your child will not pick up their paper copy until very late in the term and won't be back in school before September, this will not be possible. I will create an online form instead, which parents can access through the school website.

On this form you will be able to confirm receipt of the report and share with us your thoughts about the report, your child's progress and how your child has enjoyed this year (despite the enforced school closure, over which we had no control). The comments on this form will only be accessed by myself or Mr Boddy and will remain confidential. We really value your thoughts and comments and will use them to guide us for next year.



Please note we have 4 pages on this newsletter!

Eschools

Now, more than ever, we are relying on eSchools as our main form of communication and will continue to do so in September. Often we have letters which are individual to children or to groups of children, so we are not able to add them to the school website. This year, your child's end of year report will be shared with you via eSchools too.

I know that online systems can sometimes be a little bit temperamental but I urge you to download the eSchools App. I have it on my phone and have used it now for a year without problems - even Mr Boddy manages it!

Mrs Rowell and Mrs Elliott are more than happy to assist you to get up and running with the system and to troubleshoot if you do encounter any issues.



Saying Goodbye

This term, Miss Humberston, who has led our ARMS unit for a number of years, is leaving us, as well as Mrs Briggs, a lunchtime supervisor.

We would like to thank them both for their years of service to the school and all they have offered our children. We will miss them both and wish them well for the future.



Home Learning

Home learning packs will continue to be shared on our website until the end of this term.

I'm sure some of you will be delighted to know that there will be no home learning packs during the summer holidays!



Staff are continuing to make phone calls home to those children who are home learning. You may receive a call from a blocked number, as it is becoming more and more difficult to keep up with these calls, while also teaching the children who are on site.

Remember, children can continue to contact their teacher through the school email address RGPS@gateshead.gov to share what they have been up to, or send photos of their work. Lots of the home learning shared with the teachers has been uploaded to the school website for you all to see.

When children come to school for their transition visit, this would be a good time to send back any home learning completed and all reading books which have been sent home. All items returned will be appropriately quarantined in school. Then we can get the library and reading boxes set back up for September.

Friends of Rowlands Gill Primary (FORGPS)

Despite the school closure, our PTA have been working hard behind the scenes to secure more funding for us, including a £500 grant from the Co-op for legacy artwork designed by the Year 6 children to say goodbye. The idea is that the children in Year 6 will work remotely with an artist—we are just finalising our plans with a local mosaic artist to support the project. The children who are in school, will create a piece of artwork which can be displayed outside, with the theme of hope and growth.

Friday this week would have been our summer fair to raise funds for the school. If you would like to support the fund raising efforts in a different way, why not join the school lottery. Use this link to join: <https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/rowlands-gill-primary-school>



E-mail: rgps@gateshead.gov.uk

Phone: 01207 549 359

Please note we have 4 pages on this newsletter!

End of Year Gifts

Some parents have asked if the children can bring in end of year presents for staff during their transition visit. This is absolutely fine, if you so wish. The staff will be responsible for their own 'quarantine arrangements' of gifts.

Funky Monkeys Breakfast and After School Club

In line with our official end of term, Funky Monkeys will close on the evening of Tuesday 14th July.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Nichola and the staff of Funky Monkeys for the support they have provided to our key worker families during this crisis and now to our key year group children. They have remained open throughout, including during the Easter and half term holidays and have gone above and beyond to meet the strict safety guidelines under which we have had to operate, while many other wrap around care providers have remained closed.

At the moment, we don't yet know what September looks like or the guidelines under which we will be working and there will be lots of planning and preparation which will need to happen during the summer.

In order to support Nichola with this, we are asking that anyone who may or will need the wrap around care in September, to **email Nichola by the 13th July** using the following email address funkymonkeysoosc@yahoo.com. This includes parents who already use the provision. Nichola will then be in touch with you once we know more about how we can operate safely in September.

September

Some parents have already been in touch to ask about how the school will run in September and if we will be offering after school sports clubs. We await guidance from the DfE and will take all necessary measures to open safely in September, including undertaking another in-depth risk assessment.



At this moment in time, we don't know if we can offer sports clubs, attend the swimming baths or even have normal playtimes. Once we know more, we will let you know. Even then, we are well aware that it is almost 10 weeks until the new school term starts so there could be several changes in the meantime.

However, please rest assured that myself, Mr Boddy and the team here will be working throughout the holidays to ensure we are fully ready to welcome the children back in September.

Class teachers will release a 'virtual tour' of their classroom at the end of the summer holidays, by which time, we hope that they will be set up more like normal and will have up to date displays etc. the virtual tours will also show your child (and you) some of the key things you will need to know, for example where to keep your water bottle, which yard you will play on, where your exit point will be at home time and so on. Please check the website from the 2nd September to view these tours as they are added.



E-mail: rgps@gateshead.gov.uk

Phone: 01207 549 359

Please note we have 4 pages on this newsletter!

This is the letter from the Director of Education, Steve Horne to explain more about the difficulties of wider re-opening.



Our Ref SD/SH/JB

Date: 30th June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am grateful your school agreed to remain open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children since lockdown was announced, including throughout the school and bank holidays.

I also appreciate how challenging it has been for many families not being able to send their children to school.

Happily, each week we are seeing more children and young people safely returning to our schools. Schools have been able to take increased numbers due to the well-planned actions they have taken to reduce the risk of infection to children and adults. Headteachers and Governors, with the Council's support, are regularly reviewing the numbers of children that their school can accommodate. A key strategy to reduce the chance of infection has been to ensure social distancing measures are in place, wherever possible.

As Government guidance on social distancing changes, school leaders will take this into account as they decide on the number of pupils they can safely admit to school. The Government has made it clear that reductions in social distancing should be accompanied by other measures to ensure safety. As it is not practicable for schools to install perspex screens in classrooms or for all children and staff to wear face masks, it is anticipated the majority of schools will continue to retain the 2m social distancing requirements. Where this is the case, schools will not be able to increase their pupil numbers beyond the planning that has already taken place for the Summer term.

Hopefully, we will continue to see Covid-19 cases reduce to the point that, with robust risk assessments, we can welcome all children and young people back into school as soon as school leaders and governors believe it is safe to do so.

Yours sincerely

Steve Horne

Service Director

Education, Schools and Inclusion

