

Friday 16 September 2022

Dear Everyone

It has been quite the start to the new academic year, and as we mourn the death of Queen Elizabeth, London has a thoughtful feel to it as people come together in a common grief. I know some of you have queued through the night to visit Westminster Hall, and as you know, school will be closed on Monday to mark our respects. As world leaders gather in unprecedented numbers, we might also pray for peace in the world.

Returning to the quotidian, a parent has flagged some questions about lunches and snacks.

It is important that children are properly fed through the day. There is a mid-morning snack, and lunch is cooked fresh each day.

It always takes a little while for the routines to settle. With new children, children moving up a year and new staffing rotas to manage the lunch sessions, it takes a few iterations to catch our rhythm. Children are also prone to linger and dither about what they want, so initially this can truncate their time for eating, and of course they are very excited to see each other again, and conversation is lively while they eat.

The same phenomenon of adjustment is true for portion sizes, as we calibrate for the needs of different children and in different ages, and we do keep a close eye on trying to ensure children have enough to eat. We balance that against food waste, which continues to be a challenge.

Time slots for lunch are tight, as we move over 300 people through the dining room. Again, this takes time to settle, and getting the balance between efficiency and sociability is a real test for us all. COVID is no longer a consideration, so the salad bar is back.

For the younger children, food is pre-plated.

Despite the variety, there will be days when children dislike their meal. We try to encourage children to eat what is there for them. Some parents have commented in the past that our children are exceptionally lucky have a choice at all!

If you have any concerns about your own child, please let me know. There is almost always another side to any situation, and I am glad of feedback, and to provide clarification where any is needed. As with all these things, working together is important.

Which segues neatly to the role and function of the PTA. We are very lucky to have a wonderfully supportive and engaged PTA. It exists to help build community through fun activities, and to fund raise for those extras that help support the school. It is important to note that the PTA is not a lobbying organisation. If you have specific concerns, raise them with me directly or any member of staff. And if uncertainly does the rounds over WhatsApp, a quick check in with school will answer the question.

The AGM for the PTA has had to be postponed, and is now in the diary for Tuesday 11 October after school. See the last circular for details.

At that meeting, the new PTA team is elected. Of particular importance is the election of a new Chair. Jules, who is and has been magnificent, is stepping down. So far, no one has stepped forward, and I would encourage you to consider this important and satisfying role. It's not that onerous, and is enormously rewarding. Systems are in place, with a very supportive group around you, so do let Jules know if you would like to be considered, or just want to chat to her about what it entails.

Moving to matters of transport, it would be helpful to get a sense of how you get to and from school and work. To that end, a very short poll. Please complete it here:

<https://forms.gle/MY7ksHLPonpfo9heA>

And as autumn's soft breath begins to stir, we have the first of the seasonal events coming up. Pre-Prep Harvest Festival is on Friday.

Today I have had the pleasure and privilege of visiting other prep schools, from which I learn a great deal. While on the road I heard Michael Morpurgo's *Reflections on Her Majesty*. It is a magical account and can be heard here. Suitable for children and a complete delight.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p09mdldf>

Some of your children may also be pleased to hear that today is Parker's second birthday. We did consider getting him a birthday card, but his reading is not that good.

May peace be with you on this very special weekend.

Best wishes

Simon