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Friday 4th December 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

Update on the Expansion

This letter is to update all parents with information on the expansion.

But this will be of particular importance to Year 2 parents who are currently deciding which school their child should go to in year 3.

Has School got the Second “Yes” to Expanding?

For the expansion to go ahead there always had to be a “yes” from the governors and a “yes” to the planning permission. Nothing has even been taken for granted. It was not a fait accompli in July when the governors extensively discussed and deliberated their decision. It wasn’t a certainty when the governors decided to take Year 3 in the demountable classroom and it still isn’t a given that the planning permission for the Junior Block and the demountable classrooms (these are necessarily separate planning applications) will be a “yes”.

The Surrey Project Manager and Design Team are working very hard to successfully submit the planning documents which will then go through the planning process, with the final decision known after about three months, which is the standard length of time for planning to be processed. The Surrey Team are currently facing a particularly difficult issue that is blocking them from submitting the plans and they are working very hard, meeting lots of people and talking to experts to overcome this. I am in regular communication with the Surrey Project Manager and she knows how much I want the application to be submitted. In fact we all want the planning application to be submitted. When I hear I will write again.

If planning is “yes” then we grow to become a primary school. If planning is “no” then we will not become a primary school. Will planning permission go through? No one can guarantee that it will, but the Surrey Team are doing absolutely everything for it to be a “yes”.

The current situation we find ourselves in is hard for everyone: parents, staff, governors and our local community. There are many questions and uncertainties. At the heart of this is children’s lives. Children we know, care and love. Mrs Kennedy and I are planning for Year 3 (and KS2) even though this has not been confirmed, because what we cannot do is to wait, since planning an outstanding Year 3 takes time and energy.

Selecting a Year 3 Place

Immediately the situation with the delay in submitting the planning permission has a direct impact on our current Year 2 parents because they have to decide by January 15th 2016 the order of their four school choices for their Year 3 application. This year all our parents have the certainty of two Year 3 school places, one at Reigate Parish and one in another school of their choice, but this is based on finding out that the planner’s decision made at the end of the planning permission process is “yes” to building the Junior Block.



My advice to new Reception parents when they haven't got the school of their choice is to always accept the school they have been offered because then they know they have got a school place for their child. I then suggest they visit the school they have been offered to see what life and education for their child would be like, often they are pleasantly surprised. I also advise to put their child's name down on the waiting list of the school they do want just in case a vacancy becomes available.

How is this relevant to getting a Year 3 place?

I want the expansion to go ahead and I want your child to stay with us. But I also want you to be aware of potentially what could happen. The planning permission for the junior block and demountable could be refused and we will only know this after the admissions deadline. Please do not think I am trying to worry or scare you, in fact it's quite the reverse. I want you to be in charge as to where your child goes because you know all the facts.

I am available to talk to parents if you want to book an appointment but unfortunately I am not around after school today.

The Year 3 Demountable Classrooms

The Surrey Project Manager has told me that she is planning to submit their extensive and well researched plans for the demountable classrooms planning permission in January / February. The demountable needs to be delivered in good time before the summer holiday and changes need to be made to playgroup's outside area in order to create the link footpath from the Reception's outdoor area to the Year 3 classrooms. I remain in communication with Surrey about this.

The order of submitting and consequently knowing the result from the two planning applications would mean we would find out the outcome of the Junior Block before the demountables.

Plans of the Junior Block

Since September a new Design Team have been contracted to work on our expansion plans. They have tweaked some of the internal spaces to make it more efficient but the location of the rooms are as they were in July. The new Design Team work very closely with a landscape architect who has designed the outdoor space in the wooded area to maximise the different areas to provide different play opportunities. Unfortunately I have not been in a position to share these plans because I have not seen any updated ones for quite a while. When I do have them, I will share them with you.

Changes to the Car Park

Within the expansion project there is the plan to remove the roundabout in the car park to make way for additional car parking spaces. I will be talking to Surrey about the time scale for this change. My aim is to return the bins to the gravel area when that is possible to release more valuable car parking spaces (the exact time space is currently unknown). I do need to look at managing the car parking spaces. We may have a system for cars to be double parked and we may not be able to offer much visitor parking (many schools do not have this facility). Staff will all be asked to consider how we get to school and could they car share, walk or cycle.

Traffic and Highways

In June and July Surrey employed the expertise of a traffic consultant to review the impact of the school expansion on local roads and traffic as well as looking at pedestrian safety walking to school. The Surrey Team have responded by changing the plans so there is better access for pedestrians at the front of the school (giving more space) directly by the pedestrian crossing.

Reigate Grammar School

The Chair of Governors and I are meeting with Reigate Grammar School's Headmaster before Christmas to discuss how the schools can work together and support each other.

Year 3 curriculum, clubs, residential, routines and timetables

Lastly, come along to hear a presentation about Year 3 on either Wednesday 16th December at 7.30-8.30pm, on Wednesday 6th January 7.30 – 8.30pm or on Thursday 7th January from 2-3pm.

Kind regards

Mrs Frances Davis

Headteacher