



Mill Water School

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Friday 22nd January 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

If last week's theme was the raft of changes that we receive from the DfE, I have to report that the theme has continued this week. We have now been informed that the lateral flow testing regime for staff that we have implemented over the last couple of weeks can no longer include daily testing for close contacts. This has meant having to send home staff who had opted to be tested daily following our positive case last week. From next week we are also advised to test staff twice weekly, which will obviously double the time required. We are doing our utmost to comply with all the guidance we get, but you will appreciate that this is not always easy.

Despite the changes to the testing regime and fewer staff being available, we have continued to offer placements, walks out and remote learning to all families, as you require them. Please let us know if you need a change to your offer.

We have also noticed how different this lockdown is compared to the first, in terms of the weather. Some walks out have had to be cancelled because of the heavy rain & cold and for that I apologise but staff can't stay wet and cold all day. Saying that, most have gone ahead regardless and our pupils have enjoyed the puddles and the wet (probably more than the staff!).

I have shared photos of our pupils working really hard with their home learning and many of you have been pleasantly surprised by the effort they've been putting in. I get shown a lot of work in school and I can assure you everything gets seen and discussed. I have sent home quite a few certificates over the last 3 weeks so keep it coming. Don't forget that home learning can be cycling, making a bed, feeding the birds, taking turns completing a puzzle etc. No accomplishment is too small.

Exciting building update-we have finalised the plans for our new sensory integration and physio rooms and with a bit of luck the first instalments will begin during February half term. This has been made a reality by the fundraising efforts of Georgia who got a grant of £19000 for these spaces.

Fundraising was already in a very strong position thanks to the fantastic efforts of our outgoing PTFA committee. We have some new starters-see below.

New Mill Water PTFA Committee

Our new Mill Water PTFA Committee members were voted in last month and they have already been actively supporting the school, with the purchase of new swimming aids for pupils. They look forward to bringing the school together for fundraising activities and raising money for additional resources for our children.

New PTFA Chair Charlie, and mum to Tristan in Class 4.

'Hi, I may be more familiar to some of your children as Charlie Yoga as I go into school a couple of times a week to teach some of your gorgeous children. I have been an on-and-off member of the PTFA since Tristan joined Mill Water 4 years ago. As well as the official side of the PTFA, I've enjoyed the warm welcome of other members and the chat and support around ALL the things our special children bring to our lives.'



'I'm taking over as Chair with Beth and Jitka (also parents from class 3 & 4). The outgoing committee, particularly Maria and Sarah, have done an absolutely amazing job over the many years that they have given to the PTFA. I want to thank them for the money they have raised but also the community they have developed, which myself and the other parents wish to carry on.'

New PTFA Secretary Beth, and mum to William in Class 4.



'Hi, I've had around thirty years of experience in education - primary and secondary, both teaching as well as headship. I am also a former SENCo too and I am currently working as an education consultant as well as supporting vulnerable secondary students who are finding life a little tricky. This is my second time as a member of a school PTFA, but my first as a parent, although I've supported many from the side-lines along the years!'

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the out-going chair and secretary for all their hard work and commitment. What I also would like to add is that in thirty years of being involved in the education profession, working in over eight schools, I can honestly say that, with her integrity and professionalism, Maria has been the best PTFA chair I have ever known.



I am thrilled to be working as PTFA secretary alongside Charlie, especially as her son, Tristan has been in William's classes throughout his entire time at Mill Water. I am really looking forward to getting to know Jitka and meeting other parents, carers and friends of Mill Water at our many future events and fundraisers - and yes Charlie, I will bring cake...'

New PTFA Treasurer Jitka, and mum to Lucy in Class 3.

'Hello, my name is Jitka, I am Lucy's mom (class 3). Charlie is Lucy's yoga teacher and she has asked me if I could be the new PTFA Treasurer. I have a university degree in Economics and related job experience. My main focus has been Lucy's health, wellbeing, communication and sensory needs. I am looking forward to working with the school, parents/families, carers and the community.'



We are also in a very strong position with our governing body and we welcome three new governors this year.

I live very close to Mill Water School in East Budleigh and am dedicated to the local community. I have been a small business owner, running fitness and well-being classes to support people suffering from mental health issues, and I have a passion for art and the outdoors. I very much look forward to supporting Mill Water over the coming years.

Pene Duffelen

For the past forty years (crikey! It really is that long!), it has been my privilege to have worked in the field of Social Work with some of the most vulnerable Adults and children in our society. Helping them gain opportunities to improve their life chances.

Now, on this next journey as a Governor in the field of Education I look forward to learning from all of you. Hopefully in the process share my skills and knowledge so that together we can work in partnership to deliver the vision of the school, and seize every opportunity to continue to enable the Children to learn, and realize their hopes and dreams for their future.

Sue Williams

My name is Cherie White, a recently retired Head teacher with over 20 years' experience in the special school sector. I am a careful thinker, never rushing to make changes without strategic consideration. I am very pleased to be a new Governor at Mill Water School, looking forward to being part of the team.

Cherie White

Have a safe weekend and let's hope the sun shines through...

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S A Pickering', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

S A Pickering
Headteacher