

## A WORD FROM MRS CALLAGHAN...

As we come to the end of the half term, I just wanted to take this opportunity to share a few key messages and thank you all, parents and children, for your support and efforts over the last seven weeks.

As we head into the darker (and probably wetter!) months, I have been reviewing our start of day arrangements.

**From November 2nd, when school reopens, the start times for both Conkers Class and Oak Trees Class will now be 8.50am.**

This should help to minimise waiting times by the side of the road and ensure all of our children are kept safe. The end of day times will remain the same for now (Conkers 3.05pm, Oak Trees 3.15pm). Acorns Nursery start and finish times will also remain the same as they are currently (start 8.55am, finish 3.10pm).

As you may be aware we have busy interviewing for two new members of staff this week. We had a significant number of applications for the KS2 Teacher post and, following a rigorous selection process, I am very pleased to be able to inform you that Mrs Price has been appointed as the permanent teacher for Oak Trees Class. She was delighted to accept and is excited to be part of the Leavening team. We have also appointed Mrs Stephanie Bedford to the post of General Teaching Assistant. She will work alongside Miss Cooke and Mrs D'Arcy in Acorns Nursery and support children's learning across the school. Miss Batty, already an MSA with us, has been appointed as our Kitchen Assistant, with responsibility for serving school lunches and maintaining the kitchen. I am very pleased to have them all on board!

After half term, Mrs Price is excited to be launching a new Maths initiative called Times Tables Rock Stars. This is a fantastic scheme to promote number and multiplication skills, with a focus on speed and fluency, particularly for children from Y2-Y6.

To launch this, we will be holding a Rock Star Day for the whole school on Thursday 12th November, where children can come to school dressed as rock stars! We will have a day full of exciting activities to get the children inspired to become Times Table Rock Stars! Children will not need to bring musical props, as we will be making our own on the day. This will also help us to limit the COVID risks from bringing in items from home. This coincides with Children in Need week, so if you would also like to send a donation for Children in Need, that would be very much appreciated.

Like me, you may be beginning to think about your own preparations for Christmas. Christmas is always a lovely time in school and we still want to make it as special as possible for the children, despite the COVID restrictions. We are currently making plans for how we can celebrate safely in school and will share these with you as soon as possible after half term. Finally, as we approach half term and a time when you may normally be looking forward to celebrating Halloween and Bonfire Night, we have been asked to share with you this message from Public Health England (see below).

A general reminder for PE - long hair should be tied up and earrings removed or taped prior to the lesson.

Have a lovely and safe half term. School will reopen on Monday 2nd November.

My very best wishes. Louise Callaghan (Acting Headteacher)

### We have some tips on celebrating Halloween this year in a fun and safe way.

To prevent further spread of the virus over Halloween and to protect children and others, this year we are recommending people do not go knocking on doors on Halloween, or collect sweets from communal bowls. We're encouraging children and families be creative in coming up with alternative ways of having an enjoyable Halloween. Some suggestions we have include:

- Create a pumpkin trail where you live so everyone can join in without knocking on doors.
- Be active: get dressed up and take a walk around your neighbourhood to see homes decorated for Halloween.
- Be virtual: consider an online party with decorations, fancy dress and themed food. Play Hallowe'en games, bake Hallowe'en treats or tell spooky stories
- Be social: take pictures of your spooky costumes and activities to share on social media
- Be colourful: dress up the outside of your house with Halloween decorations for you and your neighbours to enjoy.
- Be treat-wise: buy your own sweets to give to your children so they don't miss out.
- Be bright: if you carve a pumpkin, use a battery-powered light inside it to reduce the risk of fire



**We also ask that people take care to stick to the everyday Covid-19 safety rules over Halloween and half term. Follow the "Hands. Face. Space" advice, wash your hands regularly and take hand sanitiser if you go out.**

- Wear a face covering indoors where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet
- Stay 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible, or one metre where extra precautions are in place such as indoor ventilation
- When seeing friends and family you do not live with, or who are not part of your support bubble, do not meet in groups of more than six indoors or outdoors
- When meeting friends and family you should also follow social distancing rules, meet people outdoors where practical and limit how many different people in total you see socially over a short period of time.