

Bowes Primary School



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9th July 2021

Dear Parents,

As the end of term approaches, I am delighted to share details of our plans to manage the unity of our two Bowes sites. These plans will take place during the last two weeks of term.

Emerald Class Feedback

As you are aware, we planned for Emerald Class (Yr6) to move from the Southgate Green site to New Southgate in January 2021. Due to the second lockdown, the move was delayed until the 8th March 2021 when school reopened. Despite the delay, the move has been incredibly successful and we have received positive feedback from our pupils. Eager to share their experience with their younger peers, some of the children in Emerald class have offered to talk to every year group at Southgate Green about their journey, as a gesture of reassurance and comfort. We had hoped to hold these sessions in person, but have decided to hold them virtually for safety reasons. These virtual meetings will be supported by Year 6 children from Holly and Hazel, who will also share their experience of welcoming Emerald Class to the New Southgate Site. The Year 6 pupils will lead the sessions, supervised by their class teachers. We know the children at Southgate Green will be delighted to reunite with their older, familiar peers from Emerald class, who will be able to offer them words of encouragement and enthuse them about their impending move, having experienced it first-hand themselves.

Managing Change

All of the teachers at both sites will facilitate a lesson about managing change. The children at both sites will be experiencing various emotions about the merger, so we will offer a sounding board and advice about how to understand and manage their feelings. We have thought carefully about the materials we will use to deliver these sessions, which will be consistent across the school. As part of the activity, the children will talk in groups about their thoughts regarding the move in a controlled and secure environment.

Questions and Answers

The children at Southgate Green will no doubt be feeling some uncertainty about moving to New Southgate and will have a lot of questions that will need answering. In recognition of this, we will provide an opportunity for the children to note down any questions and concerns they may have. These will be collated and shared with their peers at the New Southgate site. Rather than having a teacher answer the children's questions, the classes at New Southgate will be given the time to prepare a response, which they will then go on to share. Ultimately, this will give the children at New Southgate an insight into how they can contribute towards supporting their peers and making them feel welcome. To allow for this exchange, we have planned an additional virtual assembly which will take place in year groups.

Visit to New Southgate

The restrictions on bubbles will be easing as of the 19th July 2021, however we have made the decision to keep them in place until the end of term. Despite this, we have carefully planned for our Southgate Green pupils to visit New Southgate in their bubbles with their current class teacher. There will be activities set up outside in the playground for them to take part in and enjoy. We hope to create a joyful memory that the children can hold onto over the summer holidays. A social story will be prepared for pupils who need additional support. One class at a time, the children will be given a tour of the school led by their teacher, during which their new classroom will be pointed out to them. When the individual classes walk around the school, they will not be allowed inside the rooms to avoid mixing bubbles. The corridors will also be kept clear to enable social distancing.

Meet the Teacher

On the 21st July, we plan to hold a 'Meet the Teacher' session where the children will have an opportunity to meet their new class teacher for September. This year, to organise this safely, the children will remain in their current classrooms and their new teacher will join them. The session will involve initial introductions, various 'getting to know you' activities and possibly a story time session for the younger pupils. The older children may wish to write a letter to their new teacher introducing themselves.

Class Names

To bring the community together we have taken the decision to rename all of the classes. We believe this will further enhance the unity between the two sites. Next week, we will share this information with the children during our 'managing change session' and collectively decide our new class names. The children in every class will be given the opportunity to vote for their final decision. These names will be shared with parents in our end of year letter.

The Start of Term

On the first day of term, the teachers will greet the children in the school playground and take them all up to their new class together. We will share more details on this in a separate letter.

Finally, on the last day of term, **Friday 23rd July**, school will finish at 2pm at both sites. Willow Nursery will finish the day before on the **Thursday 22nd July 2021**. We will be working hard over the summer to move our resources to New Southgate and prepare the building ready for the children to start school on Monday 6th September.

We are very excited about bringing the Bowes community together and hope our plans offer parents, staff and most importantly our children, positive support and encouragement to embrace this change.

Thank you as always for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Effie Demetriou
Headteacher