



# Garlinge Primary School and Nursery

22nd July 2020

## Newsletter July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to you at the end of what is, and probably always will be, the strangest year of my career. What started as a completely normal year, with our pupils making their usual excellent progress, competing in their clubs and competitions and continuing to work hard in their classes, was brought to a premature end for many in March. Whilst there is no doubt that this is not the year that any of us wanted, it also enabled us to reflect on the way we work, put in new systems to try and become online learners and brought teamwork at Garlinge to a whole new level. I would also like to thank parents and carers for all of your efforts in assisting your child with their Home Learning over this time. I know that all of the staff have been pleased to hear from the children and enjoyed some of the learning that has taken place through emails and photographs.

I am very proud of so much that the school has achieved; over the past four months in particular. I am proud of the support that our staff gave to Key Workers and their children when we were asked to provide childcare at little over 48 hours' notice. I am proud of the way that when we were required to 're-open' at the beginning of June, we did so to over 250 pupils, including all the year groups that we were required to as well as Key Worker pupils. And I am proud that despite all of the upheaval, uncertainty and change that was happening around them, there hasn't been a day that I came into school over the past four months and didn't see happy, smiling and eager faces waiting to accept the challenges ahead. This period has truly underlined what a special place Garlinge is.

Whilst reflecting on the year and our achievements I also need to pass on a great deal of thanks to other members of staff. The work that went on behind the scenes, led by our Facilities Manager Mr Lotter, was hugely impressive to see and greatly valued by everyone that he helped to keep safe and secure. Mrs Newing and Mrs Bishop also did a fantastic job in keeping the Admin Team functioning throughout the whole time, answering questions and organising our systems at all times of the day, including throughout the holidays. I would also like to thank my Deputy Heads, Mrs Northrop and Mr Cope, and the wider Leadership Team, for their support. Garlinge is a very large school and without the evenings and weekends that they gave freely, it would not have been possible to achieve what we have.

As we now look towards the next academic year and our return to a more normal outlook, I would like to say how pleasing it has been to see so many of our pupils attending school this week for our Transition Days. I have really enjoyed seeing so many familiar faces over these three days and I am in no doubt at all that for those children who have been unable to attend since March, the time spent with their new teacher in their new class will be an excellent springboard to success come September. It has also been lovely to speak to teachers about how good it has been for them to meet their new classes and how much they are looking forward to September.

Everyone is aware that things are still far from being back to normal and whilst rules and regulations are being relaxed in society, the same can be said of schools as we make plans for all pupils to return. We have put a huge amount of work and thought into our plans to keep things as safe as possible and I would like to outline some of the major things in place for Garlinge after the summer break. Many of these are not greatly different to how we have been operating over the past seven weeks, but clearly we now need to prepare for classes getting back to their usual sizes. In order to do that we intend to employ the following changes:

### **Start and end of the day**

- A 'fluid' start of the day. The doors will be open between 8:45am - 9:05am allowing for a flexible drop off time to spread the amount of people on site at once.
- Wherever possible we would ask that only one parent brings children to and from school and also that other siblings are not brought onto site unless absolutely necessary. We also need pupils to make their own way into their classrooms each morning.
- We have added some additional lines and floor markings around the school to create one way 'loop' entrances and exits at both the Westfield Road and Caxton Road entrances. We would ask you to observe these markings and routes to ensure the safety of all and we will have staff at these points when you return.
- If you need to speak with your child's teacher or another member of staff, please contact the school office by phone to arrange this. Wherever possible we will be communicating with parents over the phone or by email.
- If you wish to send in your child with a small bottle of hand sanitiser for their own personal use, please do. However, we have got plenty in stock and it will be freely available for children to use, in addition to regular hand washing. Other than that, we will be following government guidelines and no other PPE will be used in normal circumstances.
- A staggered end to the day: Reception 3:05pm, KS1 3:10pm, KS2 3:15pm

### **During the school day**

- Classes will create a pod. They will stay together for the majority of the week with the same teacher and Teaching Assistants.
- Children will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly throughout the day and hand sanitiser will be available.
- There will be no Key Stage assemblies. The children will have class assemblies, circle time and access 'video' assemblies led by the Senior Leadership Team.
- During morning playtime pods will not mix with other pods. They will have their own Active Play equipment to play with.
- Children in years 2-6 will face forward at their desks to minimise the risk of transmission, as per government guidance. Due to their age, children in Year R and 1 may sit in small groups at tables.
- We will try to minimise items coming to and from school. If children wish to bring a pencil case we would prefer for this to be left at school, solely for their use.

### **Lunchtime**

- All children will wash their hands before and after lunch
- Children bringing packed lunches may do so in their normal lunch box. Please ensure that lunch boxes are washed and sanitized daily to reduce risk of transmission.
- In Reception all children will eat in the KS2 hall.
- In years 1 and 2 children will eat their packed lunch in the KS1 hall and hot dinners in the KS2 hall
- In KS2 children will eat their packed lunch in class and their hot dinner in the KS2 hall (year 6 will eat their hot dinner in class).
- While in the dining hall children will be sat with their own pod, socially distanced from other classes.

### **PE**

- Children in year 1-6 will wear their PE kit to school on their PE days. You will be notified which day/s this will be on by the end of the first week back in September.

## Breakfast Club and Tea Time Club

- We will be providing our wraparound care from 7:45am – 5:45pm, to meet the needs of our working families.
- As per government advice this provision will be available to use, however there is an acknowledgment that we are unable to keep children within their class pods during this time. Where possible we will be limiting the contact between children from different departments, keeping them in small, consistent groups.

To conclude, it is with sadness that we see an end to their time at Garlinge for our current year 6 pupils. It has been our biggest year group ever at Garlinge and I know that they would have done brilliantly in their SATs, but that was not to be this year. Whilst restrictions made it impossible to hold some of the usual 'rites of passage', it was lovely to spend time with them at their goodbye picnics and present them with a parting gift. I wish them all the very best in their new schools and it will be lovely to see them if they want to come back and say hello in the new academic year.

It is also time to say goodbye to some of our staff at this time of year. Mrs Mulhall has been a Teaching Assistant at Garlinge for almost twenty five years and during that time worked tirelessly with a huge number of pupils. We wish her all the best in her retirement and know that she will continue to stay in touch. We also say goodbye to another Teaching Assistant, Mr Newby, who is off to train as a teacher. I know that he will have a fantastic time in training and have a lot to offer his future classes – I hope that his two years at Garlinge stands him in good stead! We also say goodbye to Mrs O'Donnell, Miss Stone and Mr Tullet, Teaching Assistants, and we wish them all the very best in their new adventures.

I sincerely hope that you all have a safe, enjoyable and restful summer and I look forward to seeing you all back and raring to go on Wednesday 2nd September.

Yours faithfully,



James Williams  
Headteacher