

27th March 2024

Dear Riverside families,

I hope that you are all well. Today marks the end of the Spring Term and, yet again, there are many things to look back on and smile about. Amongst many highlights, we "brought our bright" on Blue Monday to promote mental health awareness and self-care; we marked World Book Day by sharing stories in a multitude of different ways and alongside these whole school events, we continue to notice, capture and celebrate the small (and huge) steps of progress that your children make across the curriculum on a daily basis. Whether these are in traditional subject areas or more personalised aspects of their school life, they all really matter.

We ended the term with our Secondary Show, The Campaigners: Stronger Together, and we look forward to sharing the films from both Lower Secondary and Upper Secondary phases with you via social media tomorrow. Without giving away any spoilers, I wanted to include a section of the narrative from one of the pieces. Speaking directly into the microphone, our reporter proudly says: "Everyone, please listen. Let's imagine a world where compassion overcomes indifference. Our world should be about togetherness, not conflict. Let's celebrate our differences, our strengths and let our voices be heard. Let's not focus on what divides us, let's focus on what brings us together. Together we can build a brighter future".

It seems apt to relate this to our own School Development Plan, which can be found at: <https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=1688&type=pdf>

In it, you will see that we have made 10 key pledges and I would like to share these with you here:

Pledge 1: We will equip our pupils with a profoundly personalised curriculum framework so that they succeed, flourish and leave their mark on the world.

Pledge 2: We will improve the emotional wellbeing of our pupils and their families by placing The Pursuit of Happiness at the heart of our multi-agency work.

Pledge 3: We will ensure current and future pupils make remarkable progress by attracting and developing the highest calibre special educators at Riverside School and beyond.

Pledge 4: We will shift mindsets, shape policy and change practice to secure system-wide school improvement at a local, national and international level.

Pledge 5: We will ensure that families have their lived experiences acknowledged and their voices heard in order to bring about positive change for themselves, their children and other families.

Pledge 6: We will improve community access, inclusion and participation for our pupils and their families and create a ripple in communities up and down the country.

Pledge 7: We will make the seemingly unachievable achievable by engaging, energising and mobilising our whole school community to Build a Brighter Future – The Riverside Way.

Pledge 8: We will consciously, deliberately and systematically ensure that our school and the local community is a more sustainable and greener place.

Pledge 9: We will campaign tirelessly with, and for our pupils and their families to amplify the voices of disadvantaged and marginalised communities and create a society which is more equal, just and fair.

Pledge 10: We will promote inclusion and celebrate diversity in all its forms to ensure that everyone in our school community feels a true sense of belonging.

I hope that our pledges resonate with you and match your experiences of Riverside School and, as always, we welcome any feedback.

Looking ahead to the Summer Term, I am delighted to say that we will be opening our hydrotherapy pool in the second week back after Easter, following an extensive programme of repair and refurbishment over the past year. Whilst we had hoped to be in a position to open before the end of this term, final safety checks needed to be undertaken and we would never place your children at risk, hence the slight delay. As shared previously, pupils who have hydrotherapy identified in their EHCPs, or use the pool to support their physical development will be prioritised on our return and we will continue to access community pools for children whose swimming requirements are best suited this way.

In the same week, we are all looking forward to hosting our Annual Riverside Family Conference and have pleasure in sharing the details with you overleaf. Please feel free to invite any other families or friends whom you think may like to attend – all are very welcome.

Thinking even further ahead, you will be aware that we were able to offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend the Paralympic Games and from the 17 Riverside families who applied, we had three lucky winners. This opportunity has been made possible through one of our parents who works for VISA, a company we have established a really positive experience with through their previous fundraising and volunteering work. I would like to say a huge thank you for making this possible for three of our families. I am sure you will have a great time!

Which just leaves me to wish you all a healthy and happy Easter and we look forward to seeing your children again on Monday 15th April.

With very best wishes,



Steve Solomons
Headteacher

Family Conference

Wednesday 24th April from 9:45am - 2pm

Venue: Riverside St. Paul's Cray

You are warmly invited to this year's Riverside School Family Conference.

You will have the opportunity to listen to a range of speakers, meet new families and explore practical ideas that we hope will make a positive difference to you and your child.



10:00am - 10:15am: The Riverside Way

**10:15am - 10:30am: Our Curriculum Framework;
The Pursuit of Happiness**

Introducing our new curriculum pathways.

10:30am - 11:15am: Understanding the Sensory World

Identifying ways in which we can understand and support all 8 senses. We will focus on the 8th sense - interoception - and how this can affect children and young people's regulation.

11:15am - 11:30am: Break

11:30am - 12:00pm: Belonging

Introducing the 'My Life, Culture and Community' page within our Happiness Passports. What do they mean to us and to you? How can we further hear and respond to your voices through all that we do?

12:00 - 12:20pm: Moving on

Supporting young people and families through transition to adulthood.

12:20pm - 2:00pm: Lunch and Professional Table Talks

A wide range of professionals will be available for you to find out more about their services.

A sandwich lunch will be provided, made by the pupils. Please feel free to also bring your own lunch if you would prefer (please be aware we are a nut free school).



To confirm a space, please [CLICK HERE](https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/form/?pid=5&form=289) or visit <https://www.riversideschool.org.uk/form/?pid=5&form=289> and feel free to invite wider family members and friends.

We look forward to seeing you there.