

Dear Parents and Carers,

As the school holiday fast approaches I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.

This first term has been full of highlights and we're exceptionally proud of your sons and daughters for doing so well in such challenging times. Covid-19 has impacted heavily on staff and pupils but the resilience I've seen has been astounding. As I'm sure you will agree, news of the Omicron variant has come as a real blow, however, we will continue to do everything we possibly can to minimise the impact that Covid-19 has on our school community.

Our risk assessments are robust but we will continue to monitor updates and implement any new measures as swiftly as possible. You can all help to minimise the impact that Covid-19 has on our school by keeping a careful eye out for symptoms. If your child has any of the symptoms below, please keep them at home and arrange a PCR test:

- a temperature
- a new persistent cough
- a loss of taste / smell

If the PCR test comes back negative then you can send your child back in to school when they're well enough to meaningfully access learning. If the government changes any of its guidance over the holiday we will aim to circulate an update prior to the beginning of term.

As some of you know, our wonderful assistant head Suzanne is due to go on maternity leave in mid-January. Some of her responsibilities, including looking after Pod 2, will be overseen by our new assistant head; Tim Elliston. Tim joins us with lots of experience and I am confident that he will add significant value to our school. I'd also like to introduce Samira Choaibi. Samira will be leading Willow Class after the holiday and we're delighted that she's joining the team.

I'd like to say a very special thank you to Zainab Ahmed whose term as parent governor came to an end earlier this month. Zainab has been a governor at Manor School for a number of years and has done an excellent job as Chair of Manor School's Local Advisory Board (LAB). Zainab has advocated on behalf of every pupil and has helped to ensure that standards have remained exceptionally high throughout these turbulent times. We are now looking for a new parent governor and will share more information in due course.

As you know the local authority has asked us to open a secondary (Key Stage 3) provision on the site of Newman College to help meet local need for specialist places. The formal consultation process ends this Friday (17th December 2021) and feedback so far has been overwhelmingly positive. Thanks to those of you who attended the consultation meeting and/or completed the online survey. Your comments, questions and feedback are much appreciated. More information about the expansion will be shared in the New Year.

Finally on Christmas, we made the difficult decision not to invite parents and carers to Christmas assemblies this year; and moved our small scale assembly and Santa visit to Zoom. The children have been thoroughly enjoying the magic of the festive season.

I'd like wish you and your loved ones a healthy and happy festive period, and a wonderful start to the New Year.

Kind Regards, Steve

Literacy update

The winter holidays are a great time to read with your child. It is also a good time to make reading (and writing) fun! Try some fun activities mentioned below. The activities can be done in either English or your home language.

- Set aside time just for reading. Curl up on the couch together and read aloud an old favourite or check out books about another culture's winter celebrations.
- Start a story-telling tradition by revisiting holidays of the past. Old family photographs at holiday gatherings will help prompt stories about your own life and family traditions. Storytelling helps children become better readers.
- Look together at some comic books, magazines and catalogues as some of these might be connected to your child's interests.
- If you are travelling during holidays, look for some maps and tourist books about your destination.
- Listen to audio books while you are traveling to visit family.
- Listen to and/or sing holiday songs together. Rhymes within songs help develop children's awareness of phonemes.
- Help your child to write notes, letters or e-mails or draw pictures/make marks to relatives and friends.
- Plan holiday meals by reading cookbooks together, writing or drawing the shopping lists and finding the needed items at the supermarket by reading signs and labels. Read the recipe and cook together.

Maths update and activities

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This term pupils were exposed to hands-on and engaging activities involving counting, adding/subtracting, data handling, measure, shape sorting and lots more that correspond to individual pupils' intervention plans. We also explored capacity when making smoothies or cookie dough in Life Skills and were exposed to financial activities within our School Shop sessions or pretend play sessions in class. We had fun exploring large Numicon shapes in the playground and performing specific number of actions (e.g. jumps, hops, claps etc.). We're delighted to announce that we have been awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status for our Financial Education offer – thank you to our staff for their hard work and dedication to providing such an excellent offer to our pupils.

Lastly, the Maths team are in the process of organising a training session for parents to explore ways that we can support the development of early mathematical skills for the children at home. More details on these will follow in the spring term!

Activities

- Numeracy: Find some small tangerines and practise counting while pointing to each one. Practice placing the tangerines in separate compartments of a baking tray or egg box and count again. Count all the fruit that you have at home. How many apples? How many bananas? Use the fruit to make a fruit salad.
- Shape: Find items in your food cupboard that are shaped as a cube (e.g. tea box, chocolates box), cuboid (e.g. cereal box, different spice boxes), cylinder (e.g. jam jar, Pringles crisp box) and practice placing them in draws that have items that correspond to each 3D shape. Can you find more 3D shapes at home?
- Measure: Lay down number cards 1-5 that are in 1 metre distance by using a measuring tape. Start from 1 and take turns to hop on one leg, jump or hand-walk. What number card did you reach? How many metres did you cover? You can do this at home or at the park.

Science update

The children have been working hard in their science this half-term and all the classes have received bulbs to grow. These will then be judged by the London Children's Flower Society. In the spring term we have Science Week to look forward to and this year the theme is 'Growth'. This can be the growth of plants and humans and the growth of countries or urban areas. There have been Christmas experiments for the children to do and learn from. Have a lovely holiday!!

Computing activities

- There are a range of activities to explore on Purple Mash over the holidays, including winter and Christmas themed tasks.
- Some simple Christmas coding can be practiced here: <https://santatracker.google.com/codelab.html>

Please keep in mind the 5 key rules we use to keep safe online. Symbol support to help learn the rules can be found here: <https://www.childnet.com/resources/kia/know-it-all-for-teachers-sen/symbols-based-smart-rules>

Diary dates

- INSET day for staff: Tuesday 4th January 2022 (School closed to pupils)
- Term starts for pupils: Wednesday 5th January 2022
- Last day of half term: Friday 11th February 2022

Trust rebranding

As many of you know, the trust (Brent Specialist Academy Trust) of which Manor School is a member, recently undertook a review of our name, vision, and mission. Following stakeholder consultations involving discussions about who we are as a trust, what we offer to our pupils, families, staff, and the wider community, the trust has now formally adopted the following:

- **Name:** The Rise Partnership Trust (RPT) – you will now see this on letterheads, text messages, e-mails, and more. The new trust website will be launching in January.
- **Vision:** Championing unique potential
- **Mission:** Our trust is committed to pursuing excellence in all that we do; providing the most effective education, therapy, support, and provision for all
- **Motto:** Love, Learn, Laugh

• **Logo:**

