



September 2020

Dear Year 6 family,

As your child enters their final year of primary school I recognise that you will begin thinking more about the move to secondary school. This year it is likely that this part of their journey through school is going to look very different in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the pandemic and the government restrictions, we have tried to make sure we continue to offer experiences, though delivered in a different way, that children would have had prior to the current safety restrictions.

This term you would have expected to be visiting a range of schools to decide where your child would like to continue the next stage of their education. Due to the Covid-19 guidelines all schools have to follow, Open Days and Evenings will not be possible this year in the usual way. This saddens us all – both as teachers and as parents ourselves.

You will be aware that secondary schools have to identify “bubbles” in which groups of students now learn. Many primary schools have had to follow the same structure. Schools are also not allowed to accept visitors on site and with the hundreds of children in the current year 6 across the area, it would be impossible to manage any visits without breaking guidelines and the health of a considerable number of people. Our absolute priority is the safety of the young people in our catchment area and their families.

However, we are committed to giving you as “real” an experience of Open Evening as possible and an opportunity to see and learn about our school. Over the summer we met as a Senior Leadership Team to agree how we can present our school to you in the Autumn to replace the usual visits.

We will be producing a short film to replace Open Evening and the tours you may have undertaken. The video will be released onto the school website and social media pages on 1st October and will continue to be available after this date. In addition, we will be sending you our new prospectus via our feeder primary schools and will be launching our new website very shortly. Our SENCo will also be arranging conversations with local special educational needs coordinators in primary schools to ensure any students with particular needs highlighted on an educational health and care plan are able to gather further information in relation to the specific needs highlighted in their plan.

We have also worked with a local organisation to produce a 3D tour of our site and a virtual representation of our buildings. Both of these will be made available to you and your child to help you familiarise yourself with our facilities. Aspects of the software are very new and we are proud to be at the ‘cutting edge’ of such technological developments in education.

Should you have specific queries regarding our school, the transition process or selecting a secondary school for your child, I would be happy to speak with you over the phone at any point. If this is something you would like, please call us at school on 01749 345555 or email whitstoneinfo@educ.somerset.gov.uk

We know that this could never fully replace the Open Evening experience but we are sure you will all understand the difficulty of holding events in our school whilst also maintaining the safety of the families in our area by meeting guidelines set out for schools.

The deadline for submission of secondary school application forms is 31st October. This is an online process which your child's primary school will be able to provide details of but which you can also find on the County Council website <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/secondary-admissions-guide/>.

We hope you will find the film informative and an effective replacement for Open Evenings and look forward to working with you and your families in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Swallow', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Guy Swallow
Headteacher