Dear Parents,

Welcome back! I am so grateful to those of you who contacted me through the summer about my son’s health. I cannot tell you how delighted I am, not only to know that you were thinking of us during this difficult time, but also that he is now well enough to return to school and I can come back to work.

It has been wonderful seeing the children back in school today and catching up with them all over lunchtime. They have all made a fantastic start to the term and I’m looking forward to seeing them building on this as the weeks go by.

My assembly this morning was all about ‘Being Incredible!’. This is my challenge to the children this year. Whatever you choose to do in school, be incredible at it. I will see if I can rise to meet this challenge myself as often as possible too.

To all the children and our new families joining us in our Reception class next week, we extend the warmest of Dormansland welcomes. I know that this will be an anxious time for some of you, especially if this is your first experience of sending your child to school. We will be working as hard as we can over the next few weeks and months to ensure that both you and your child feel happy and secure as valued members of our school community.

I would like to bring a number of new initiatives in school to your attention, in order that we start this year as we mean to go on, in the spirit of positive and effective collaboration between home and school:

- As part of our compliance with the latest national safeguarding legislation, we are limiting access to the school building during the day for adults, other than school staff or parent volunteers. Parents are asked to remain in the main school foyer by the office, where a member of staff will come and collect your child directly, should they need to come into school earlier for any reason, such as coming to ‘Get Set, Go’, ‘Early Birds’ or bringing in an oversized piece of home learning that could risk destruction if taken out into the playground. If you need to search for a missing item (shoe, jumper, lunchbox, etc.) at the end of the school day, your child will be let back into school where a member of staff, if available, will help them to search for the elusive item.

- Our playground is open to the children from 8.40am each day, when a member of staff is on supervision duty. Apart from Reception children this term, who arrive directly at their classroom door with their parents, we ask that all other children (Years 1-6) are dropped off in the red area by the school office or at the gate to the playground at the Clinton Hill entrance. The children can then walk around to the playground by themselves and find their friends. We ask that parents do not come through the blue gate or stand at the corner of the playground, as we need the children to be safely in the main playground area in order to be seen and to be properly supervised by the staff team on duty.
Whenever we have a ‘wobble’ on the gate, the member of staff on duty there will take responsibility for delivering them to Mrs Lochhead (or a member of her well-being support team in her absence) in the playground. Please be assured that, if it takes any longer than a few minutes for them to settle down, we will always let you know.

Please be aware that, in order to keep the disruption to the children’s learning to an absolute minimum, the gates at either end of the site will not be opened until 3.10 each day. Please do not attempt to enter the school premises before this time. Classes will be dismissed from their usual exit doors onto the school playground at 3.15pm.

Dismissal from after school clubs and activities. All clubs will now dismiss the children to their parents or carers via either the main school entrance door or the car park entrance door. This means that we ask parents to wait outside these areas and not to come round onto the playground, which will be locked from 3.30pm to ensure the safety of the children playing in Amigos After-School Club or as part of a sporting club. If a club is held in the playground or on the school field, the children will be brought back through the school building and dismissed to parents from the car park entrance door. The point of collection will be made clear for each separate club on this term’s club letter.

As always, we aim to respond to any emails from parents within three working days. Please remember that your first point of contact, should you have any concerns regarding your child, is the class teacher. Senior school staff can be involved if you feel that an issue has not been resolved satisfactorily by the teacher in the first instance. Support staff are not in a position to discuss any events in school with you, so please do not approach or contact them with this expectation.

Finally, a personal word from me to you. I am incredibly proud of my staff team at Dormansland. They work tirelessly to provide your children with the best possible experiences in learning and it is a privilege to work alongside them every day. It concerns me greatly, therefore, when I see the effects of a poorly worded or unnecessarily discourteous email from a parent on a member of my team. In addition, I will not tolerate any approach to any member of my staff by a parent that is aggressive, confrontational or shows less than the respect for this profession that we deserve. We are all working together to provide the best education possible for your child and this will be achieved far more effectively when relationships remain positive.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Stokes