

# OLD PALACE PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Leonard's Street, Bow, London, E3 3BT • Tel: 020 8980 3020  
Email: [admin@oldpalace.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:admin@oldpalace.towerhamlets.sch.uk) • Website: [www.oldpalaceprimary.co.uk](http://www.oldpalaceprimary.co.uk)



18<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

The school will close today for the Christmas break. Tower Hamlets have agreed to offer all their schools an additional Inset Day. Therefore the **children will return** to school on **Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January** and not on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> as previously planned. This will leave 9 full days between the end of the relaxed restrictions on 27<sup>th</sup> December and the children's return to school, which will help to reduce the spread of any infections of the virus picked up during this period.

We have planned full days of training for the staff on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December, but staff other than the school's Senior Leaders will complete this at home, accessing meetings via Zoom. Again this will allow a period of 9 days. In addition, I have also arranged for all Old Palace staff to be provided with a self-testing kit and have requested that they complete a test on 31<sup>st</sup> December, so they will have their results back before returning to work. Again this will help to reduce the chances of the virus being brought into the school.

In the past, the government has changed the guidance at the last minute in response to rising infections. There are rumours that they are considering delaying the opening of schools until Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January. Whilst this is not the case at present, it would be sensible to have a plan in place for this, so you are prepared should they make a sudden announcement in January.

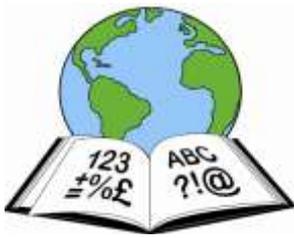
This has been a very challenging year for us all and we look forward to a much happier 2021. However, if you plan to enjoy the Christmas break, please keep safe and **share the moment, not the virus!** For the majority of the holiday, Tier 3 restrictions will remain in place – details of these can be found [here](#). From 23<sup>rd</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> December restrictions have been relaxed to allow up to a maximum of three households to meet in a private home. However, **with cases in Tower Hamlets now at a record high and growing every day**, please consider carefully if it is safe to meet, or whether you can wait a little longer, especially as the widespread Covid-19 vaccination programme is now underway. Waiting a few more weeks to see your friends and family safely will help us to protect one another this winter. The good news is we have a vaccine but rolling this out will take time, which means that for now we must continue to stay alert to the risk of Covid-19: **Wash hands. Cover face. Make space.**

As always, Tower Hamlets will continue to provide support for families throughout the holiday period. Families can find support [here](#) or by visiting [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/safeatschool](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/safeatschool). All the latest information from the council can be found at the site [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/coronavirus), including ways to stay safe this Christmas. Those in need of emergency help can call 020 7364 3030 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm) or visit [this page](#) for emergency contact details, including the police, utility companies, housing associations, and more.

Remember, if you have symptoms call 119 or visit <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

There will be some changes to staffing in January. Miss Millward, gave birth to healthy baby girl on 2<sup>nd</sup> December, a month earlier than planned, and just a day after she was last in work! She has worked tirelessly for the school and will be greatly missed during her maternity leave. On a positive note, Mr Manalo has now been appointed as Deputy Head and I have every confidence that he will be very successful in this role. Miss Kurup will resume her previous role as Designated Safeguarding Lead, as well as continuing to oversee our SEND section, and Mr Heighington will lead Year 6.





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I hope you will join me in thanking all the staff for their continued hard work, throughout this very difficult year. The messages of support we have received from parents are greatly valued and as it means so much to the staff to know parents appreciate all they have done to minimise the disruption to the children's learning and to safeguard their well-being, despite the new procedures in place and any challenges they have had to overcome in their personal lives. Likewise we very much appreciate the way parents have supported the school, adapting to the many new safety procedures and showing understanding when things haven't always gone to plan. The good news is that by working together we have already started to help the children catch up on their missed learning, as shown by the children's December test results.

Finally, may I wish a Merry Christmas to those who are celebrating and a Happy New Year to all. We look forward to the safe return of all our pupils on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Yours faithfully,

Mr G. Palmer  
**Headteacher**



Headteacher: Mr G. Palmer BA (Hons)  
School Business Manager: Michele Walsham