

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Headteacher:
Corina Foster



The Valley School
Broadhall Way
Stevenage
Herts SG2 9BN
Tel: 01438 747274
admin@thevalley.herts.sch.uk

Wednesday, 15 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

PLANNING POSITIVELY FOR SEPTEMBER

One of my favourite tasks is to write to you, as each year draws to a close, in celebration of all that has been achieved and to reflect on how well our pupils have engaged with their new teams and are prepared for the new school year. It is delightful to be able to say that I can do the same this year, albeit in a very different set of circumstances. In many ways, I am filled with sadness and frustration for all that has happened in this unique and unprecedented school year. However, the way in which you and your children have managed the changes and disappointments, the fact that you have remained positive and optimistic, the willingness that you have recently shown in engaging with your new team of staff and the compassion you have shown for me, my staff and for those around you remind me of just how amazing our Valley family is.

I have worked very closely with the Local Authority and they are fully aware of the frustration, anger and sense of injustice that we feel in relation to our inadequate buildings. Intensive work is continuing throughout the holidays and they have given me their assurance that, by September, we will have serviceable and reliable buildings to take us through until we are able to have a new set of premises for the long term future of The Valley School.

There are still many practical details to resolve, but my expectation is that all pupils will return to full-time schooling in September. There will be some restrictions on what pupils are able to carry around, changes in the way that we manage social times and rooms will be re-organised to promote safe distancing, with learning activities modified to make that easier. Pupils will not be expected to change for PE lessons. I know that you will work with us to prepare pupils for returning to an environment that needs us all to work together to keep everyone safe. There will have to be some restrictions on liberty, but we will help our pupils to understand and to learn how to comply.

Term starts in a slightly staggered way, to support pupils back into school. On 3rd September, we will open only for years 7, 8 and 10. On 4th September, we will open only for years 7, 9 & 11. All pupils are expected from 7th September onwards. The school day starts at 9.00 and ends at 3.10.



County arrangements for transport and our own arrangements for collecting and dropping off pupils are still to be finalised. I urge you to keep checking our website and your inboxes for greater detail on all plans.

Teachers are currently working on a curriculum that will promote strong and rapid progress academically and will also support the mental and emotional needs of all pupils.

We are looking forward to welcoming 2 new and very experienced teachers, Keith Coughlin and Teresa Heaney, as well as welcoming back 2 previous members of staff, Kelly-Jo Rich and Shannon Faller as Learning Partners in years 11 and 9. Marie Nelson has taken over the role of Assistant SENCO and will work with Iona Varol, EHCP Clerk, in the yearly reviews. Emma Cole continues to develop the Pupil Listener role.

After many years of service to the school, Tracey Hazell and Miar Smith are leaving us at the end of this term, both to spend time with their grandchildren. Ursula Cunningham is reducing her workload and will only be working with us on 2 days per week. She will be working with Kerri McLay to provide small groups and one-to-one learning to support pupils in accessing learning.

Sonya Shears is taking over the role of Learning Leader for year 7 and has already been involved in many transition activities with our new pupils. Chaleen Heller is now Learning Leader for year 10 and Jack Hugo takes on a wider role, supporting pupils in all years.

On your behalf, I take this opportunity to thank my amazing staff for all that they have achieved and provided in very challenging circumstances. I am very proud to work alongside them.

Between now and September, I will continue to find ways of providing the very best for our pupils. I remain at the end of an email or phone call and I am sure to be sending out further letters as we approach the new term. Together, we will find positives, we will find reasons to smile & laugh, we will support each other and we will come through.

Thank you again for your support and compassion.

Yours sincerely,

Corina Foster

Corina Foster
Headteacher

PS – a copy of this letter will also be posted to each household during the next week