

Headteacher:
Corina Foster



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

Wednesday, 30 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021

I am delighted to wish you a very happy new year. I remember the joy and excitement that surrounded the celebrations at the turn of the new millennium and firmly believed that it would remain unparalleled. Who would have thought that saying goodbye to 2020 would be such a shared celebration?

As we launch into a new year and share the hope that the vaccine will allow us to return to a life where we can hug and laugh as we used to, I am writing to let you know some information about how The Valley School is preparing for this optimistic future.

As I write, it is my understanding that, as every Valley pupil has an EHC plan, they remain entitled to attend school from Monday, as normal. We are fully expecting pupils to attend. I am aware that some of you may choose to keep your children at home until 18th January. In order to help our planning, please let us know if your child will **not be attending** at present, by voicemail or by email admin@thevalley.herts.sch.uk as soon as you can and by the end of Friday at the very latest. We will do all that we can to update taxi companies, but please be understanding if they do not get our messages in time.

We are committed to putting voluntary mass testing in place as soon as we reasonably can, although some of the practical details are yet to be ironed out, despite our best efforts since 18th December. We have a team of volunteers to help with the processing of the test results and to encourage & guide pupils and staff in administering the test. You will be contacted soon to confirm whether you wish to consent to this testing. We will embrace any opportunity to facilitate both this and any vaccination plans, as they evolve. We will continue to monitor the health of our pupils and staff and will provide remote learning whenever it is necessary.

Unfortunately, for me this has coincided with having to undergo abdominal surgery on 5th January and I am forced to be away from school for an undefined period of time, probably several weeks. This is very unfortunate timing, given that I was so looking forward to my last 2 terms in post, but I will be back just as soon as I can, once again enjoying being with my Valley family. In addition, three of my staff are required to shield again, in the light of new guidance from the Government. We will



do all that we can to continue as normal, but I ask you to be patient with us, as this puts enormous pressure on the remaining staff.

During the last year, we were delighted to welcome new members of staff and saddened to say some goodbyes. Mrs Mahoney has decided not to return to her post, following a period of illness. She is exploring new adventures, now that she is on the mend. Ms Austin left us in October, to work closer to home. I know that you will join me in wishing them both well. Lisa Kitchener, Katy Stickland, Alicia Garratt, Angie Waters and Corrina Winnett have joined us and allowed us to increase and strengthen our team of Learning Partners. Ms Palfreman is returning after her maternity leave and I know that year 11 are delighted to welcome her back.

Plans are in place for the appointment of my successor. Governors are working with the school and the local authority, advertising locally, nationally and internationally to find the right person to take us into the future.

Taney Howarth and Graham Hawkins will lead the school in my absence, with the support of Governors and the rest of the Senior Leadership Team. There is also another local Headteacher on hand to offer advice and guidance. I will engage with school matters just as soon as I can, but Kellie Ransom, my PA, will be monitoring my emails and letters in the meantime. Please reassure your children that my condition is not serious and that I will be returning. Given the year we have had, I know that some of them become very anxious if anyone they know is unwell.

I can't wait to see you all again very soon. Thank you for helping me to get through the last year.

Kindest regards,

Corina Foster

Headteacher