



Welcome to Summer Term 2- Letter to our Valewood Families
Please check Whole School & Class Story at Class Dojo for regular updates.
Shares- pictures/ videos will be posted on Twitter at @ValewoodPrimary.

Dear Families,

Welcome Back to Summer Term 2

I hope that you have all managed to find some time to relax, albeit a little, over the School half-term break. I know many of you were, and are, still working hard from home or going out to work. I really do hope that you all managed to, at least, sit in the sunshine for a time, last week. What wonderful weather we were lucky to have. Although, sun hats have now quickly been replaced with umbrellas!

Week 1 & Week 2 Childcare

Next week will be the final week of childcare at Valewood. In total, School has been open to our critical workers' children and vulnerable children for 11 out of the 12 weeks. I want to thank all our amazing staff: teachers, teaching assistants; our non-teaching support staff; office; kitchen and site staff who have been in School since March 23rd. From this week, Mrs Parr has been our most senior member of staff on site every day and this will continue next week too, as we transition into Week 3 when more children will be joining us and all available staff will be back in School full-time. I want to also thank Mrs O'Brien who has been the mastermind behind the logistics of rotas and staffing ratios; making changes as and when families have notified us- sometimes (understandably) at very short notice. I also thank all our staff who are working from home and getting ready to return to School. I thank all members of Team VPS for all of their continued strategic, logistic and operational hard work.

Week 3: Back to School for Critical Workers' Children- Teams from 15th June 2020

Thank you to the critical workers who have responded to confirm they would like a place for their child from Monday 15th June 2020. We are now up to capacity. I can inform you that we have organised five individual teams as follows:

- Team Reception led by Mrs Brown
- Team 1 & Team 2 led by Mrs Parr
- Team 3 led by Mrs Salzano
- Team 4 led by Mr Burns
- Team 5 & Team 6 led by Miss Clark.

Each team will have additional teaching assistants for support. A letter, explaining the new School protocols, will go out on Monday to everyone who has opted for a place. This letter will confirm your child's place; outline the staggered start times and finish times; describe how the teams will operate in isolation to each other and it will also reiterate our control measures. We kindly ask that parents and carers acknowledge these changes and accept the new procedures, by signing and returning the reply slip before School reopens again on Monday 15th June.

Potential Return of Team 6

Following the responses from families in Team Reception, Team 1 & Team 6 and also following our Governing Body meeting, it has been agreed that Team 6 children will be next on our priority list. We appreciate and acknowledge that many of our Team 6 children are understandably very sad that their School life came to such an abrupt end in March and many families have been asking Miss Eglin: Will Team 6 be back before the end of term? Please know that it is our intention (staff capacity and space allowing) that Team 6 children will be invited to come back to School before we finish the School year on Friday 17th July. This is all reliant on many factors and when I have more to confirm, I will communicate this directly with our Team 6 families.

Staying at Home & Continued Home-Learning in Summer 2

I know that many more of you will be at home for the duration of this School year, given the government's current priorities and I know there are mixed feelings amongst you all. Some of you are relieved that the decision to agree to your child's return to School has been taken away from you, whilst others are concerned that you have not been given any other option than to stay at home and continue with home-learning. I acknowledge all of your messages and understand that you all have different considerations to make. There is no judgement, on our part, if you have accepted/declined your child's offered place. These are difficult times that we have all been challenged with and I know you all only have your child's and your family's best interests at heart- as do we.

As a teaching staff, we have endeavoured to make things as easy as possible for those of you who have the time to home-school your child/ren. From the very start of lockdown in March, I asked teachers to rationalise weekly planners to include video links etc. on there that may be of help, rather than bombard you daily with messages/ attachments/ files etc. There have been words of encouragement and guidance all along and I am pleased to report that the feedback has

been very positive overall. Where parents/ carers have needed more support/ direction, they have been in contact with teachers and teachers have been happy to help. There has also been no pressure on families to get through everything that has been shared on weekly planners and I have received messages of thanks from full-time working families who have appreciated this.

Friday Class Catch-Ups

Going forward, from next Friday 12th June, each class teacher will be hosting a Class Catch-Up via Zoom.

This will be a chance for children to come together as a team. Teachers will share the Zoom login details with parents and carers via Dojo Message. So, to confirm, our home-learning will continue as follows:

1. Fridays: Weekly planners for the week ahead to be posted on Class Dojo/ Class Google Drives.
2. Mondays: Teacher video message re: the week's work for the whole class via Class Dojo.
3. Fridays: Class Zoom Catch-Ups (different times for each class) as follows:

Team 6	Team 5	Team 4	Team 3	Team 2	Team 1	Reception
11.30am	11am	10.30am	10am	9.30am	2.30pm	2pm

I will also endeavour to join you all each Friday. I hope that you will all embrace this new opportunity for the children to get together, albeit online. A code of conduct will be shared with you, ahead of the on-line catch-ups, as each child will need to be accompanied by an adult. We are looking forward to seeing you all!

Virtual Tour of Team Reception's Learning Environment for our New to Reception Children

In the absence of transition days, I asked Miss Metcalfe and Mrs Brown to share a virtual tour of the children's learning and play spaces in Reception. I hope the video, that has now been shared with you all on Whole School Dojo, is helpful to you and to our new 'tiddles'.

Five Ways to Wellbeing Focus

During this week's staff meeting, I asked the staff to share something they had watched on TV over the half-term break. We also had the pleasure of seeing a video of Mrs Parr's youngest learning to play the piano during lockdown. (Learning to play the piano is still top of my list of new things to learn!) We are all so busy with work and family commitments (and this has been so much more challenging during the pandemic) that we sometimes need a gentle reminder to 'switch-off' from work and take a break. What have you been watching that you can recommend to a friend? Have you learnt a new skill over the past 11 weeks or have you taken up a new hobby? If so, I'd love to hear about it.

Being Outdoors is Good for the Soul- Stay Safe

As the weather has been so glorious and the Summer months are now upon us, please remember to be safe outdoors in the sunshine: keep hydrated; wear sun cream; wear a sun hat and remember to follow the government's guidance regarding meeting up in each other's gardens. We are so fortunate to live along this wonderful coastline and we must endeavour to keep ourselves and others safe when we are out and about at our local beaches/ beauty spots etc. I was very saddened to hear that there had been fires on the sand dunes near our Forest School base in Ainsdale and I was appalled at the photos of the rubbish left on Crosby and Formby Beach over half-term break. I know our VPS Families are ECO champions and you always do your bit for our local environment, as you all do at School too.

I don't think any of us could have anticipated 12 weeks of School closure, when we went into lockdown on Friday 20th March. I know it's been very difficult (for so many reasons) but please know that we are doing everything we can, to make things as easy as possible for you all- no matter what your circumstances are.

Finally, remember, we are only ever a message away. Keep up the great work, everyone. I will keep you updated with School developments.

I am sending you all my best wishes. Take care and stay safe.

Thinking of you all,

Helen Tantouri

Headteacher

Guidance for parents and carers:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>
PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE LATEST GOVERNMENT ADVICE re: COVID-19