

**End of Summer Term 1- 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,

End of Summer Term 1

It is hard to fathom that we are at the end of Summer 1, already. I hope that my letter finds you all well and keeping safe. What a roller-coaster few weeks this has been for everyone! Thank you to you all, for your continued efforts and positive attitudes. The messages/ texts/ photographs/ videos, you have been sharing, continue to fill us with admiration. You should all be very proud of your achievements- we are!

Just this morning, I received such a thoughtful video message from Rebecca in Team 2 (who, when asked in her RE work to nominate a positive leader in the community, chose me!) and I've just received wonderful writing from Sam in Team 1, too. Thank you for sharing all of your efforts with me. These lovely messages set me up, positively, for all the letter writing I had on my 'things to do list' today!

School Opening Arrangements for after Half-Term Break (Please see separate letter.)

I have set out the plan, agreed by our Governing Body, separate to this letter. Letters, for families who are eligible to opt for a place, will go out after half-term break.

Thank You Valewood PTA Volunteers & School Families

Last week, the refurbishment of our Reception and Upper Juniors' play spaces was completed. Thank you to all our enthusiastic (and relentless) volunteers who put on the best events for our School community to enjoy, whilst also raising record amounts of funds to pay for all of these much-needed upgrades. The climbing equipment for our Team 5 & Team 6 children is just wonderful. The surfacing in our Reception outdoor play area has given us a real pop of colour and I can't wait to get some Valewood bunting up there, too, along our 'Family Path' - in thanks and celebration, when we can all safely return to School.

PTA Family Quiz- Saturday 23rd May at 3pm

Last month's Family Quiz was a great success. If you would like to join in, please email Mrs Duffy at valewoodprimarypta@gmail.com for your Zoom ID and password. A suggested donation of £2 per family goes towards further equipment for School. Many thanks for your anticipated support, as always.

Transition Arrangements for our New Reception Class of 2020-2021

This week, Mrs Brown (our Nursery Nurse and higher level teaching assistant- HLTA) has been out and about, hand-delivering our Valewood Welcome Packs to our new families. Miss Ainsworth, our Reception teacher from September, also went on a walk-about to greet some of our new 'tiddles' for a socially distant wave and 'hello', to help make the transition into 'big school' a bit easier for some. Miss Metcalfe has also been busy compiling a virtual tour of our Reception learning spaces, including the wonderfully refurbished outdoor play spaces too. This video has been emailed out to all families this week.

Team 6 Transition to Year 7

The latest government guidance advises that there will now be no transition visits to high schools. Each high school will have their own procedures in place, I am sure. Headteachers confirmed in our CAPITAL Headteachers' meeting, this week, that they have contacted/ will be contacting families and will be offering a remote transition package for our children.

Last Week's, Alternative Y6 SATs Week

I have to mention Miss Eglin's 'Alternative SATs Week' in my newsletter. The activities Miss Eglin set out for the children had us all laughing out loud. Activities included: create an iconic scene from a work of art/ movie; the family knot challenge; learn to juggle; cookery tasks; create a camp with a camping menu and the list went on! The children's enthusiasm was definitely ignited and I have shared some of their photos on our Twitter feed. I loved the reproductions of the iconic art. Well done to our Super Buddies and their families.

Home-Learning Weekly Planners

There will be no planners for the week ahead. I recommend that you all take a break from home-schooling over half-term break, as Summer Term 2 is a long term ahead. Teachers will continue to share their Monday video with you all and share the weekly planner for the week ahead, each Friday during Summer Term 2. We also have plans to introduce a weekly, Class Zoom: 'Share, Show & Tell' each Friday. More information to follow.

Five Ways to Wellbeing Focus- Keep Learning & Be Active

During last week's staff meeting, the teachers were able to share with each other all the reading and training that they have been accessing this half-term. These included online learning programmes; podcasts about child development and emotional intelligence; professional texts and children's stories. The focus I gave everyone for this week was 'Be Active'. With an emphasis on physical and emotional wellbeing, keeping active is very important. Teachers' activities ranged from gardening to boxing and many described enjoying an evening stroll with their pet dog- except for Mrs Salzano & Mrs Mills who (instead) have been taking their respective 'Todd' & 'Pudding' on bike rides around their local countryside! Photos also on Twitter! Couch to 5K was also mentioned, but I won't be divulging any names here or indeed any photos- just yet! 😊

Mental Health Awareness Week

Thanks to Miss Clark who shared a menu of activities, for families to take part in, during this Mental Health Awareness Week. We all appreciate that these last few weeks have been hard on everyone, for many different reasons. I really hope that you can all make time for some 'down-time' this next week; taking a step away from the hectic schedules of: home-schooling and learning/ working from home/ anxious commutes to work/ back to the workplace stresses and take some time to re-charge your energy for the forthcoming phase.

Whatever you are doing, take care and stay safe. We are missing you all AND we are equally proud of how you are all coping, during these challenging times.

Grateful Thanks to our Valewood Staff & Governors

As we get to the end of another very busy half-term, I want to thank our teachers, our teaching assistants and non-teaching staff who have been working so hard, and with such good humour, looking after all of our critical workers' children at School for the past nine weeks of lockdown. Thank you to all of our staff who, like me, are working tirelessly from home; my senior leaders; class teachers; non-teaching staff and office staff who, together, make up the machine that helps our School run so smoothly. I am forever grateful- being part of this wonderful School community.

A special mention goes to our hard-working governors, especially our Chair of Governors, Peter O'Brien and Vice-Chair, Gill Bainbridge, who have been in daily talks with me to ensure we get the provision right for ALL of our Valewood children and families, going forward- whether they are at School or at home.

Finally, remember, we are only ever a message away. If anyone requires any support during half-term break, please do not hesitate to contact us via Class Dojo.

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