



Summer 1 Week 3

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Letter to our Valewood Families**

**Please check Whole School & Class Story at Class Dojo for regular school and class updates.**

**Shares- pictures/ videos will be posted on Twitter at @ValewoodPrimary.**

Dear Families,

As another busy week, at home and at school, comes to an end, I trust that this letter finds you all well and keeping safe. Thank you to all our staff, governors, families and children for all of your continued efforts.

**Are You Ready for Love?**

Thank you to all our staff who were able to join in on our (first) whole school video/ song/ message to all our families. We really did have great fun planning and executing the clips last weekend. Thanks to Miss Metcalfe who was the mastermind behind putting the clips all together. We were inundated with lovely messages of gratitude from you and the children and these were so welcome at the start of what has been Week 7 of lockdown. It seems unreal, even just typing this. In the words of one of our Team Reception parents, 'Thanks for the energy boost!' We needed it as much as you all did.

**Transition Arrangements for our New Reception Class of 2020-2021**

As I mentioned in my previous letter, unfortunately, we are unable to host our usual meetings and transition activities which we had already planned for this Summer term. However, we have emailed information to our Reception 2020-2021 families today and we will be sharing our welcome packs next week. What I am able to confirm is, last week, we successfully appointed a teacher to cover Miss Metcalfe's maternity leave. Miss Metcalfe is expecting her baby in August and so the governors and I had already shortlisted applications prior to the school's enforced closure. I am pleased to say that, after a successful interview process, Miss Ainsworth will be joining our Valewood team from September and she will be supported in class by experienced nursery nurse: Mrs Brown and teaching assistants: Mrs Rudkin and Mrs McCombe. Miss Ainsworth's specialist degree subject was Early Years' Education and she is full of great ideas for the year ahead. Together, the staff will make up a formidable team! We are all very excited. I am sure that you are too.

**Team 6 Transition to Year 7**

As we await to hear from the Prime Minister on Sunday, we are already anticipating what going back to school will look like, not least of all for our Team 6 children. I know many of our families, all of you in fact, will have differing beliefs and opinions on what is best/ safe for your families and I would expect nothing less from you all. People's circumstances are not all the same and we appreciate that. As a staff team, we are putting our heads together to ensure that any transition will be as safe as possible- back to our school and also up to high schools. As I have previously mentioned, all the secondary schools are working closely with us and I hope to be able to share more information with you in my next correspondence. Crosby Area Partnership in Teaching & Learning schools' (CAPITAL) primary and secondary headteachers are scheduled to meet on Monday to flesh-out an informed strategy. Let's see what the news is from the government's next phase of the action plan.

**100 Years Young- 'Colonel' Tom Moore**

What a lovely birthday Tom Moore enjoyed. It is amazing to know that the actions of one person can ricochet across a nation, in fact across the world, in a force for good. With so much daily news that can cause real upset and concern, it is so heart-warming to hear something so up-lifting. It demonstrates that you are never too old to make a contribution, to make a difference and to have an impact on so many in need. To date the newly honoured and promoted 'colonel' has raised a magnificent £32,000,000! To recognise his citizenship, he was also, yesterday, awarded the much-coveted Gold Blue Peter Badge! Thank you to all our children, families and staff who made cards and wrote letters to Colonel Tom. I am sure it will take him many months to read them all!

**News of Residential Trips for Team 5 & Team 6**

Next week would have been the week our Team 5 class ventured to Robin Wood Outdoor Adventure Park. I know families are eager to hear about refunds. We are working closely with the outdoor pursuits' centre to book an alternative date for next Summer as a full refund may not be given. Further communication from Miss Clark will follow, as we get some more answers from Robin Wood.

Unfortunately, the Team 6 residential to York has been cancelled and we are having to claim through our insurer to be able to refund families. As soon as we have more information, Miss Emlin will be in contact with families. I know this is a frustrating wait for many of you. Please know we are doing all we can, from our side, to resolve the matter for you all. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

## Y6 SATs Week

Next week would also have been our 2020, KS2 SATs week. I know this fills everyone with mixed emotions, me too, to be honest- because although we abide by the DFE's statutory tests (and believe that these tests do not celebrate a child's full-worth) I know the children always dread but end up loving this week in School. It has been heard said, many times, by our Team 6 children: 'That was the best week, ever, in School!' (We don't know how to take that, really?! 😊)

## Bad Press for School Closures

There is a lot of speculation in the media at the moment, which is understandable. However, there is also some negative press about school staff and the fact that some people obviously think school staff are having 'a holiday.' I can speak on behalf of all my staff and say that this is nonsense and also quite insulting to all of us who haven't stopped since 18<sup>th</sup> March when the PM announced that schools would close on 20<sup>th</sup> March. I want to reassure all our families that we are working hard, just as you all are, following guidance and making sure that the spirit of our school community is lifted, wherever possible. We are all in this together- as always. Thank you for keeping in touch via Class Dojo, we are only a message away. We are constantly monitoring and improving our provision and we are open to your evaluations.

## Five Ways to Wellbeing Focus #GIVE

This week's focus in our 'Staff Meet Zoom' was #Give. Teachers were able to share lovely stories of surprise parcels/ cakes left on families'/ neighbours' doorsteps; care-packages for NHS workers; completing and donating to the WWF 2.6 Challenge; organising a term's worth of professional development tasks for teachers and TAs; spending time talking with families and spending money on children who are stuck at home, amongst other things! A little kindness really does go a long way and it doesn't have to cost a penny. Have you all taken note of how much you have achieved, given our Five Ways to Wellbeing? If you stop and make a conscious effort to think about them all, I am sure that you will surprise yourselves: Take Notice/ Connect/ Give/ Keep Learning/ Be Active. Today, Mr Burns shared photos with me of Team 4 Luna who has given her time to painting pebbles for passers-by. (Photos on Twitter.) Her painted, positive affirmations will be much appreciated, I am sure. Thank you Luna. Next week our focus is Keep Learning. I have asked each teacher to share a book recommendation with us all. What are you all enjoying reading? Please do share your stories and photos with us. We love to see them.

## Bank Holidays: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May & Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2020

**Please know that School is closed tomorrow and also on Bank Holiday Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May.**

I hope that you will all 'switch-off' from home-learning tasks this coming, long weekend and maybe talk about the importance of VE Day, as we mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary tomorrow. I have heard that families have plans to celebrate this occasion in their front gardens by hosting (household only) 1945-themed tea parties. If we were in School, we would have also marked this occasion in true Valewood style. However, I trust that you will all do us proud and continue to celebrate in a spirit that we have become accustomed to...in the true #ValewoodWay.

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.

As my favourite character from *'The Boy, the Mole, the Fox & the Horse'* replies to the boy who sighs, 'We have such a long way to go...'

**'Yes, but look how far we've come,' said the horse.**

## Thinking of our Valewood Community

For those families who are grieving the very sad loss of family and friends, we send all our love and condolences at this difficult time. We are thinking of you and also sending you some Valewood strength of spirit. You are in our thoughts and in our prayers at this very sad time. Take care. We are here for you when you need us.

Be kind to yourselves and to each other.

With every good wish,

**Helen Tantouri**

**Headteacher**

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**PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THE LATEST GOVERNMENT ADVICE re: COVID-19**