

Valence News

The End!

Dear Parents and Carers

This is the final newsletter of this school year, one of the most challenging in my teaching career and one of the most frustrating because of so many necessary restrictions. However, as I have said before it is all too easy to focus on the negatives of the situation we have found ourselves in and miss just how much good has been done and how much success and achievement there has been. As I have witnessed the Covid-safe end of year events that we have managed to have it is so heartening to see our young people participating, performing, enjoying and celebrating! The talent contest was so much fun and demonstrated just how much talent and enthusiasm our children and young people have and the leavers events too were full of fun and were fitting celebrations for those students who are moving on. I have also been delighted to see some of the decorated flower pots with dahlias which has raised over £700 for the Friends of Valence. Many thanks to Gail for all the growing and gardening which has been a real inspiration for our students — the sunflowers look magnificent!

Students leaving from Year 14: Leo Bartholomew, Sidney Blundell, Matthew Elliott, Eleanor Gabriel, Oliver Lee, Niamh McCabe, Harriet Penfold, Holly Rawles, Archie Sligo-Young, and Aidan Westall. From Year 13 Ellie Kellick and Abbie Staff are leaving and from Year 11 Veer Dogra and Pegky Pothou. Many student placements for future provision have been secured but others are still to be finalised but whatever these young people do I know that you will wish to join me in wishing them every success and happiness in the future. Some have been at Valence for the whole of their schooling whilst others have come more recently but each and every one of our leaving students has succeeded and all of them have grown and developed into fine young people. They should be proud of their achievements and for all that they have contributed to the life of the School.

We are also saying goodbye to some staff: Pauline Cowlard is retiring as the HLTA for Art after 20 years at the School and other leavers are Laura Barrett (Humanities Teacher), Nicola Ackroyd (HLTA Keller Pathway), Mat Bamford (SSA), Lois King (Class Coordinator), Tenisha Withers (Class-based Keyworker) and Vicky Weller (TLA for English). We also have two STLS specialist teachers retiring — Steve Sherrell and Gilly Shankland. We wish all the retirees long and happy retirements and thank them for their enormous contributions over so many years. We also wish to thank all other colleagues who are leaving, thanking them for their work and commitment and for the opportunities that they have provided for our students. We wish them success in their new jobs and best wishes for the future!

We have a large number of new staff starting work in September and we will provide information about them at the beginning of next term. We have been successful in recruiting some nurses and we are looking forward to establishing a really excellent and responsive nursing service from September. There have also been some internal promotions and staff changes and these will also be shared next term.

May I take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues across the School, the Senior Leadership Team, all leaders and managers and the Governing Body for all their hard work during this extraordinary year. We are indeed very fortunate to have such good staff, leaders and governors in the School! I would also like to thank you all for your co-operation and assistance in getting through this year, for your patience and support - it is greatly appreciated! I know that many of you have enjoyed the Coffee mornings and hopefully these will be come even more popular next year - thanks to Jessica Carroll, Governor for organising these! Finally, as always I want to thank all of our children and young people who have had a tough year with much disruption and uncertainty. It is so heartening to see them living out our learning Ethos demonstrating resilience, respect, independence, positivity and for the passion they have shown. I hope that you and them have a happy, enjoyable and safe summer.

With my very best wishes.

Roland Gooding
Principal

IMPORTANT COVID INFORMATION ON PAGE 2

Next term for students begins on Monday 6 September

Covid Information

For track and trace purposes if your child shows any Covid symptoms or tests positive in a Covid test up to Friday of this week please inform the senior on call — Roland Gooding on 07896905605. There is no need to inform the School of any cases or positive test results that occur during the holiday.

NEXT TERM

As you know most legal restrictions have now been lifted and we have received Department for Education Guidance which basically amounts to a return to normal provision from September but with the provision that we carry out a risk assessment. It is clear to us that the vulnerability of our students is such that we cannot simply return to normality in September but until we see what happens with cases and hospitalisations during August it would be unwise for us to take decisions now on how we will manage our provision in September. However, what we can say is that we will do everything we can to ensure that people are safe but clearly the key to this is putting in place measures that will protect people against catching Covid but also by maximising the number of people who are vaccinated.

LATERAL FLOW TESTS

If you wish to test your child and family members test kits can be ordered from the Gov.UK website. We will communicate with you about testing before the commencement of next term at the beginning of September.

VACCINATIONS

The Pfizer vaccine is licensed for use with children age 12 and above but the Government has currently decided that only selected groups of children will be offered the vaccine. The groups include those who have medical conditions which make them vulnerable to severe illness if they contract Covid and those who live with people who may be similarly vulnerable. I would therefore urge you to discuss your child's own circumstances with your GP or consultant. If your child is under the age of 12 you may still wish to have that discussion as sometimes doctors will recommend unlicensed treatments if there is a clinical need to do so. If your child is vaccinated during the holiday we would be grateful if you will email - covid19@valence.kent.sch.uk