



We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together

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Dear parents and carers

We have almost made it – well done!

This has been an extraordinary year (even if we said the same last year) and it is wonderful to have reached a time when we can all begin to focus on refreshing and invigorating. Despite the challenges, this has been an incredibly successful year and we have managed to achieve many things. Thank you for everything that you have achieved in partnership with us to ensure that learning continues to be rich and so that community can be built. I am incredibly appreciative of your efforts in helping to keep us safe; our parent body has been fantastic in implementing and adhering to the many changes that have been put in place this year as we have reinvented the way that schools have been able to operate during a pandemic. Thank you for your partnership.



Next Term

As the government have now removed many of the Covid restrictions, we anticipate that we will be able to operate in a more usual fashion from September. We are, however, awaiting the advice of the Health and Safety team at Hertfordshire County Council before we review our current risk assessment. From September, unless there are changes locally due to cases, we expect to be able to move away from our current bubble system and will be able to review our staggered start and one way system.

Following feedback from parents, we are considering introducing a soft start to the day, where pupils can arrive at class anytime between 8.45 and 8.55 in order to ease the flow of traffic around the school, giving 5 minutes flexibility either side of our 8.50am published start time.

Once the risk assessment for September has been finalised, I will write to you with any further details in relation to the operation of the school.



Pride in our children

We have all marvelled at the resilience and determination of the children this year – they really are a credit to you. During a recent visit from our School Improvement Partner, Mrs Neville, commented:

"In all classes visited, relationships were very positive. Pupils' conduct was exemplary; they were attentive and keen to learn ... Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are polite and respectful to each other and adults. They have positive attitudes to their learning."

It is always a pleasure to show visitors around the school and have missed over the past 18 months the limitations that have been placed upon this. Hopefully in September things will be different.



Pride in our staff team



The entire staff team, including our Governing Body, have done an amazing job over this past year and have gone above and beyond in their approach to absolutely everything. I am so grateful for their dedication, commitment and adaptability. Each person brings something unique to the team that in turn ensures that our children get the very best deal that they can. The resilience and professional determination needed to get through this year has been immense, yet smiles and laughter have been very much at the forefront despite many personal sacrifices this year. On Wednesday, the staff team gathered in a socially distanced manner for an outdoor vintage tea. It was lovely to reconnect as staff have been strictly timetabled for lunches and breaks in different areas of the school in order to mitigate risks and this was our first opportunity in 18 months to be together as a whole team. Having spoken to a number of parents prior to this, I was able to pass on your gratitude to the full staff team as well as my own.

First Holy Communion Celebrations

It has been wonderful that long awaited First Holy Communions were able to occur this term. Following the delays, congratulations are due to 122 children throughout the school made their First Holy Communion in beautiful services in each of our parishes this year. It was a pleasure to see the children receiving Holy Communion with such reverence, having been so well prepared by parents, catechists and teachers. We hope that you enjoyed the First Holy Communion films that we shared recently. These are still available on the school website for anyone who wishes to view them.



Farewell and Good luck to our Year 6 leavers

It has been a week of excitement for our Year 6 leavers. We began their Leavers' Rites of Passage with a very special Mass in St Joseph's (recorded for their parents and the rest of the school community). This has been followed by a competitive morning of activities at Hollywood Bowl followed by a delicious lunch; fun and games in school; and a busy day at Fairlands Valley including boating activities and a picnic. Today we have our traditional Leavers' Assembly, parents of Year 6 accessing this via Zoom, and the whole school will gather to wave and make some noise for our dear friends as they leave the school for their final time at the end of the day.

We wish everyone in Year 6 very best wishes, good luck and every blessing as they begin a new and exciting chapter of life at their respective secondary schools. Year 6, you have enriched daily life at our school over many years. You are ready to leave now, having outgrown us, and although saying goodbye can seem sad, we are all excited for you and look forward to hearing of the many successes and opportunities that are ahead for you. Keep in touch and shine brightly!



Farewell and good luck to our adult leavers too

This year we say farewell and good luck to Mrs Essex and Mrs Blythe.

Mrs Essex has worked at the school for 15 years and has helped many children in their early steps of reading as well as helping our little ones navigate the ups and downs of playground life. We will miss Mrs Essex's great sense of fun and her creativity. We wish Mrs Essex every best wish as she begins an exciting early retirement.

Mrs Blythe has worked for 5 years at St Vincent de Paul School as class teacher and then as Assistant Head for Key Stage 2. I know that parents have always appreciated her commitment to the achievement and progress of every child in her care and her innovative ways of keeping parents in the loop. Mrs Blythe



leaves us to take up a new position at Wilshere Dacre School. We thank her for all that she has gifted the school over the past 5 years and wish her all the very best in her new career path.

We also say farewell and thank you to Miss Gibbs and Mr McAdam who have spent the year with us on long term supply. I am sure that we will see them both again as they are great friends of the school. In September we welcome back Mrs McCarthy to the teaching team (Year 1 Mistral) as well as Mrs Bishop (Year 4 Bonifacio).

And finally ...

I wish you all a great Summer Holiday, with space to relax, rejuvenate and refresh and the enjoyment of family and friends. We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Thursday 2nd September 2021.



May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Jon White
Headteacher

Important dates for your diary:

Fri 16 th July	Final day of term (school finish at 1.40pm for Y6 and 2pm for everyone else)
Mon 19 th – Wed 21 st July:	INSET Days (teachers only)
Wed 1 st Sep:	INSET Day (teachers only)
Thurs 2 nd Sep:	School starts for children
Fri 22 nd Oct:	INSET Day (teachers only)
Mon 25 th – Fri 29 th Oct:	HALF TERM HOLIDAYS
Tues 21 st Dec:	Occasional Day (no school)
Wed 22 nd Dec – Tues 4 th Jan 22:	Christmas Holidays
Wed 5 th January:	Spring Term begins



Hertfordshire County Council have us to share the following update with you ahead of the end of term.

Dear Parents and Carers

Firstly, we would like to thank you for the efforts and sacrifices you have made to keep your nursery and school communities safe over the past 16 months. As we head into the summer holidays, we'd like to remind you of some of the ways we can all enjoy a safe summer together.

While people will be excited at the prospect of restrictions being lifted on 19 July, others will be fearful or apprehensive. Remember, rules around self-isolation of close contacts for under 18's do not change until 16 August 2021. We all need to be kind to each other as we move into this next phase.

Covid-19 won't end when the rules change, in fact cases are rising and we need to keep being sensible. It's important to recognise that everyone's circumstances are different and what feels comfortable to one person might not feel that way to another. Let's keep looking out for one another and recognise that we're all going to be moving forward at our own pace.

What you can do to keep yourself and others safe

Get vaccinated

Vaccinations are now available for everyone aged over 18 who is eligible, you don't need a GP and often don't even need to book an appointment. Visit <https://covid.healthierfuture.org.uk/> for local sites and regular pop ups. If you or children have medical conditions, please speak to your GP about your Covid-19 vaccination.

Keep testing

Regular rapid testing, including for those who are vaccinated, for everyone in year 7 and above (tests are not designed for use on children younger than this) can make a big difference, as most people don't know they're infected until they have infected others. You can order or collect free rapid tests locally, visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rapidtest for more information. If you have symptoms get a PCR test and self-isolate.

Look out for one another

Give people space, wear face coverings in crowded indoor areas, keep your windows and doors open when you have people round, wash and/or sanitise hands. These measures have kept us safe and will keep us safe still.

By looking out for one another we can help us keep infections low. There are many people needing healthcare for non Covid-19 reasons who have been waiting for some time. If Covid-19 cases continue to rise, people will have to wait longer for hospital and health care so let's try to stop that by working together.

We hope you all enjoy a safe and happy summer!

Hertfordshire County Council

