

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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*A Church of England School
providing a Values Based Education*

Update letter 05-06-2020

Dear students, parents and carers

Well, here we are at the end of another week – the end of our first week of ‘Bubbles’ in school! Following the new guidance from the Government and DfE, we have had to redesign the way we do our Critical Worker School provision so that students are in small groups (‘bubbles’) and so that they only work with a limited number of teachers and adults. This reduces the risk of transmission and makes it safer for everyone in school. It does mean however, that we have had to create zones for break and lunchtimes and, from next week, we will have an earlier end to the school day (at 3.00pm). It has been an absolute joy to see both students and staff adapting to another ‘new normal’ and I can only thank everyone all the hard work, adaptability and openness to change. Staff are becoming teachers of all subjects and, like parents and carers at home, are using the online work set on ‘Show My Homework’ with the students in school. It’s been really lovely to see everyone learning together - from Art challenges to Maths tasks and from DT model-making to French lessons and everything else in between (medieval punishments, outdoor learning, reading together ... not to mention the butterfly experience! ... more of that later).

We will use the same format when we welcome some Year 6 students back to school from the 15th June. Following a consultation with Year 6 parents, we can just about accommodate the requests for places safely on site. It will push us to the limit of what we feel is manageable at the moment and, whilst there is still a great element of risk, we believe that the measures we have in place will mitigate the risks to an acceptable degree. We will contact Year 6 parents and students early next week with full details of what is expected and how this will work. We were hoping to get this information out this week, however, we have had to make some last-minute adjustments to our planning in the light of further applications for Critical Worker places.

With regard to Critical Worker places, we would appreciate your support and help with these places. We will continue to provide support for critical workers until we have reached maximum safety capacity ... we do have a finite number of places we can accommodate and, although we have increased this capacity in our planning, we will not necessarily be able to accommodate all requests as the term progresses. We ask that places are only requested where no other alternative is possible and, if places are allocated, these are actually taken up. If students cannot attend or if your circumstances change and places are no longer required, a phone call or email would be appreciated. Where students/parents do not take up the places they have requested, we may need to pass these on to other families.

We are also working closely with both Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Transport Teams to organise transport for those students who need it. The general advice is that if you can avoid using transport and provide your own transport ... please do! Transport Teams need 5 working days to arrange transport and this is organised through us. The coach companies have strict guidance on the number of students allowed on buses (10 on a double decker!) and there can be no double-running of services. This puts a huge strain on the physical capacity of stock available. There is also a finite limit on the amount of transport which will be possible and there may come a point where transport may not be available.



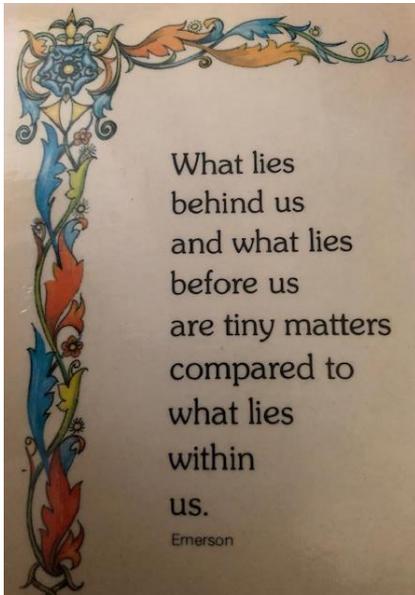
Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Acting Deputy Headteacher: Mrs H Donnellan

Acting Assistant Headteacher / DSL: Mrs J Davies

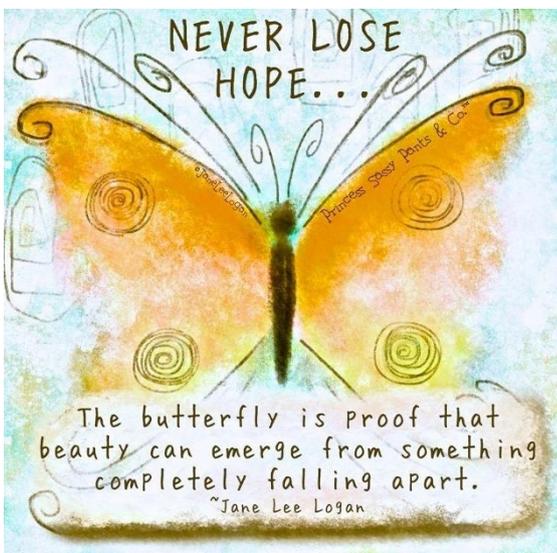
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As you can appreciate, all of this takes a huge amount of planning and reviewing and I would like to publicly thank the senior leadership team, the site staff and the administration team who have worked 'above and beyond' to support me in putting things in place. It may seem as if we are communicating 'last minute' to you as students, parents and carers, however, we are releasing information as soon as is humanly possible given the complex nature of the organisation of everything. We are often reliant on information 'out of our control' and we thank you for your continued patience and understanding.

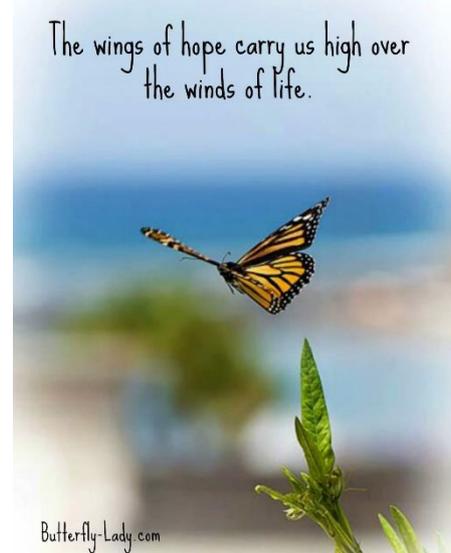


Going through some old photographs and cards, I came across this motto card which my mum bought for me before I went off to university (many years ago!). I thought it was worth sharing particularly in these challenging times. More now than ever, we need to hang on to what we believe and value. Whatever is past is done and we must always learn from that – both the good and the bad ... where we got something 'just right', we need to remember how we did it and keep repeating it; where we got something wrong, we need to choose a different path, make a different choice, do something differently ... learn from someone else. We can get incredibly anxious and worried about what is to come – especially at the moment when we are not in total control of what's happening around us. We were all very anxious about how things would work out in school this week and everything has gone well. This is because we planned everything based on our commitment to safety, our commitment to care for others and our commitment to doing the best we can do. We all potential inside of us ... and we need to make sure that we are always a force of good ...

radiant, positive and full of care. What lies within us is the potential to be brilliant ... just as our caterpillars all had the potential to be beautiful, bright butterflies. Having nurtured the caterpillars and cared for them as they cocooned, Mrs Donnellan and her team of helpers had the joy of releasing them into the open on Wednesday.



The butterfly is such a strong symbol of HOPE and, in this month of HOPE, we can all hold on to what is inside of us and hope for a bright, beautiful future full of colour and potential.



Hope is also the focus of our very first Holywell video assembly! I know that lots of you have been hoping for some Holywell specific videos ... so here is a link to the first offering from the KS2 team (I'm sure they won't mind KS3 having a look too!):



What gives us all hope?

Holywell School
A Church of England School providing a values-based education
Enjoy ... Achieve ... Excel ... Care



<https://drive.google.com/file/d/16KsNPJPX6mbQ0OaM9HUDAs9E2T79k8Pf/view?usp=sharing>

Mr Ulph, Miss Lau and Mrs Purves have worked really hard to put this together and it is the first of a series of videos that will be made available soon. Mr Van Der Merwe has been working with Mr Morris from our IT Team to create an online Holywell Video Library (it's like a private YouTube channel). This will be launched over the next few weeks and staff are experimenting with video lessons and animated Powerpoints (a little bit like the White Rose materials) – all of which will help to support you all with your home learning.

We have also had requests for virtual catch ups using Zoom or Microsoft Teams. We are trialling these next week with a couple of tutor groups and are hoping to roll this out to everyone the week after. We have been sorting out safeguarding protocols as well as all the technical and practical things we need to have in place. We will be using Weduc to send out joining details ... so if you haven't signed up for this yet, please contact Miss Watson via the school office (we'll also back this up with ParentMail to start with).

If you need any help or support, please get in touch via the office ... or use the messaging facility on Show My Homework. Some parents have been asking about having WORD versions of pdfs on Show My Homework, we will try to do this, however, in the meantime, if you get stuck, there are many free converters available online.



... and to finish this week's update letter... a message from Pauline Kendall – our Chair of Governors:

Governor's Viewpoint

We are learning to love the advantages of Zoom as a Governing body! This technology has ensured that we have been able to meet very regularly with Mike and his team, take part in staff feedback sessions and continue on with our essential strategic work of looking at the curriculum, the finances and as well as the all-important Christian ethic and supportive culture of our school. We have been able to discuss and be involved in all the complexity of the current situation - the care for critical worker children as well as the plans for Year 6.

We send our very best wishes to you all as parents and we are so impressed with what we have seen and heard of home schooling and your support for Holywell and its great team.

Please feel free to contact me - details on the website.

Pauline Kendall

Have a good week. Stay safe.
Mr Simpson