

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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

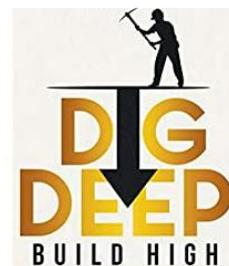
11th September 2020

Welcome Back Letter

Dear students, parents and carers

Welcome to the first update letter of the year. It has been quite a week! After many hours of planning, preparation and adaptation, it has been such a joy to welcome our students back to school. Everyone has been absolutely fantastic – from our excited new Year 5 students - all the way through to our suddenly-much-taller-and-grown-up Year 8s! They have all coped with our new routines and expectations, adapting and learning as the week has progressed ... as have staff! Thank you for all your support and encouragement as parents too – our partnership with all members of our community is of great importance to us and we thank you for all you have done to get the students ready for learning in this new, alien environment.

Last year, we talked about ‘Cathedral Thinking’ – the need to plan with the big picture in mind. We continue the building theme this year, where our motto is ‘Dig deep to build high’. We will all need to draw on our inner strength to get through these challenging times and, in such times, our values and faith will carry us through. In our assembly this week (virtual of course!) we looked back to April 2018 when work started on building the new sports hall and at the deep



foundations which were laid to support the new structure. The sports hall was completed in December 2018 and it now seems like it has always been there. Our core Christian values form the foundations of everything we do at Holywell. The values of ‘endurance’, ‘patience’, ‘hope’ and ‘happiness’ saw us through lockdown and I’m sure the values we have chosen for this year will guide us forward too.

Dig deep to build high

When you dare to dream:

Dig deep to build high.

In the darkest moments,

Dig deep to build high.

Reach inside your heart,
Find hope, kindness and love;

Follow the light

And soar high above.

Dig deep to build high
With the Lord's guidance
There's no limit to our sky:
Dig deep to build high.



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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The students in this photograph were the first group to use the sports hall and they are all now in Year 8. They started at Holywell at the same time as I started, so this is the beginning of our fourth year together. The students never cease to amaze me – they are caring, kind, funny, studious, serious, supportive ... sometimes challenging and in need of support, but always surprising and thoughtful. I was talking to some of them today about the values that are important to them and their answers were very incisive. They demonstrated a real understanding of what is important, listing values such as: respect, equality,

happiness and friendship. Friendship is our value of the month for September:

"A sweet friendship refreshes the soul" -Proverbs 27, verse 9.

How many of you have said that the thing you missed most about school was seeing your friends?

We used to take it for granted that we would see our friends every day.

When we were not able to see them, we learned to value our friends even more.

Now in September we must dig deep to build our friendships by following the rules to keep each other safe; offering a smile to those who are sad or anxious; helping each other meet the challenges school brings.

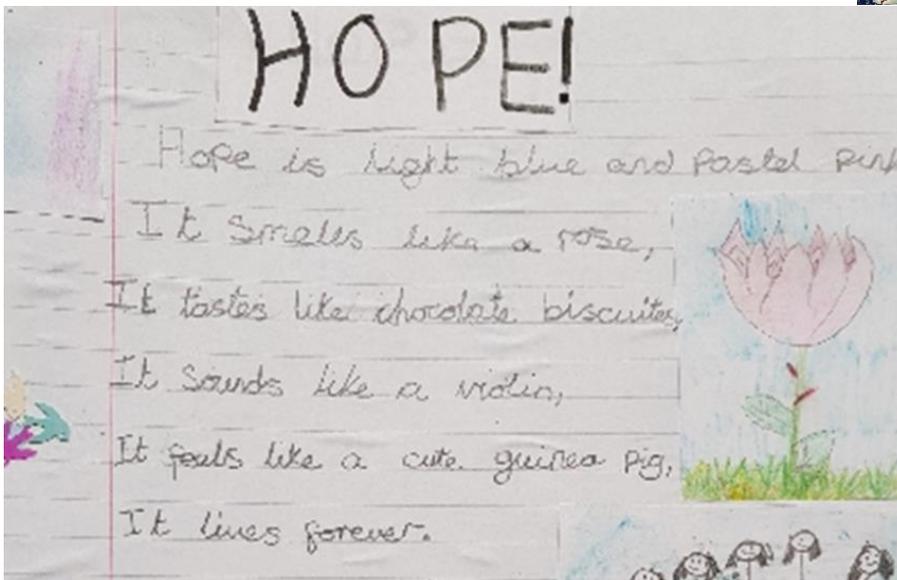
On a practical note, our organisational plan will be updated over the weekend in the light of the changes we have made this week in school. The revised version will be on the school website early next week. All of the amendments are internal (mainly related to the organisational logistics of lunchtime and the practicalities of moving around school).

We have been working in collaboration with our transport services to ensure that when students travel to and from school by bus, they are seated in year groups (KS3 on the top deck and KS2 downstairs). This is now in place. We now have a system for boarding the buses at the end of school. I'd also like to thank you all for not coming on site to pick up students at the end of the day – it has been a huge help at a really busy time. We're also grateful to all the parents of children who walk to and from home for meeting them away from the site (the park seems a popular place to meet).

We have also had several enquiries about 'what to do if ...?' scenarios. Central Bedfordshire have put together a helpful flowchart with key information which is being sent out with this letter. We will also compile a 'Frequently asked questions' document and that will be on the website later next week.



Let me finish on an optimistic note from one of our students: Emma wrote this lovely poem about 'Hope' and what it feels like:



My hope for us all is that we stay safe and well over this next term. We will need to 'dig deep' and continue to do the right thing both in school and outside of school to ensure we do not catch or transmit Covid-19. I hope that we all stay well. We will do our best here at Holywell to ensure that students are still able to be the best they can possibly be in as secure an environment as possible.

Take care – all best wishes
Mr Simpson