

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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

Update Letter 07-02-2022

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

I hope that this letter finds you all well. It's hard to believe that we're already in the final week before the half-term break! I was also surprised to look back at the term and to realise that all my other updates so far have been Covid-19 related!! It certainly has been 'full-on' in terms of managing the pandemic and it is a testament to everyone's tenacity and support that, in spite of high case numbers, we have been able to continue on-site learning for all of our students (well, at least those who are well enough to attend!). I'm not sure where the decline in cases is happening, but it's certainly not here at Holywell. I am, however, relieved to report that no-one in our community has been seriously ill with the virus ... and I sincerely hope that it stays that way.

Meanwhile, at school, lessons have continued as normally as possible. Students have produced some amazing work and, in general, have coped really well with all of the different measures we have had to put in place. We have missed getting together for whole-school assemblies but have continued with our Zoom assemblies. We have also continued with our Value of the Month as a focus for our assemblies and collective worship.

The year started with our value of 'Respect'. We used this -> mnemonic (a use of the letters of a word to help remember something) to think about the different aspects of respect.

Rev Isaac from St Peter and St Paul's in Cranfield has been providing us with a Christian perspective on each of our values which we have also used in our discussions with students. This was his reflection on 'Respect'.

One of the foundational beliefs of Christianity is that every single person has been made in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 states: "God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

Treating others with respect means viewing them as made in the image of God. Just as it would be unbelievably rude to doodle or scribble over the photo of someone's spouse or child, so too is it unbelievably insulting to God to treat with disrespect those who display his image.

Naturally, all of us fail in showing the image of God to one another. However, no matter how far short someone falls from displaying the image of God, that image remains. A crumpled-up, and half-ripped £20 note is still a £20 note. In the same way, even those who we find most difficult to get on with, even our enemies, are still worthy of respect as they remain in the image of God. And, of course, sometimes the hardest thing is to remember that we too are made in the image of God, and worthy of our own respect.

One of the assembly challenges was for tutor groups to perform a poem – either about respect or a favourite poem liked by the class. There were some excellent contributions which we enjoyed watching together. A particular favourite was 8GJ's contribution – which was an original poem written by Andra and 'performed' by the rest of the class ... almost as a stop-motion cartoon:



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Deputy Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead: Miss A Stewart
Assistant Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead / SENDCo: Mrs J Davies – Senior Leader: Mr James Ulph

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every object has a story.

every object has a story,
 whether it's a jewel or a piece of paper,
 written in the moonlight,
 or illumination of a taper.

every object has a story,
 whether made a hundred years ago,
 created in the blossoming summer,
 or in a cold winter's snow.

every object has a story,
 whether a story of sorrow,
 formed in bitter tears,
 or in the day after tomorrow

every object has a story,
 some of which we'll never know,
 a story meant for the whole world,
 or one not meant to show.

We are all still working on being respectful – especially in how we treat each other. We have been trying 'to notice each other' in a positive way, trying to see when people need help, being aware of the impact of what we do and what we say and hoping to support each other to be the best we can be.

Our Value of the Month for February is 'Tolerance'. Two of our Values Ambassadors - Lucas and Bertie - have done this month's definition of what this looks like for us in practice at Holywell and they very much liked the idea of tolerance in the sense of acceptance of others and celebrating each other's differences:

Tolerance is accepting people for their differences
 We can show tolerance by ...
 ... treating others the same no matter who they are or what they believe
 ... learning how to accept everyone
 ... disagreeing well
"Be tolerant with one another" Colossians 3:13

Reverend Isaac had a slightly different take on this which explores a link with patience:

Those who have been loved, find it easier to love. Those who have been forgiven, find it easier to forgive. And those who have been tolerated, find it easier to tolerate. Perhaps the most important revelation of God in the Old Testament is when Moses meets with God at Mount Sinai. Here, God declares himself to be: "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness." (Exodus 34:6). This idea of being "slow to anger", strikes me as being significant to our understanding of tolerance. Christians believe in a God who is, at heart, slow to anger. That doesn't mean that God ignores or trivialises evil, far from it. But it does mean that God is patient and long-suffering with each of us.

A teacher may be patient with a persistently disruptive student, and a whole school may be long-suffering towards that student. Of course, there are limits to what we are each able to tolerate, and what we should tolerate. But Christians should be those who are willing to be patient with those who they find difficult or disruptive, or those with whom they disagree, because Christians know that God has been patient and long-suffering with them.

We will be exploring all aspects of Tolerance with students - both in community time and in lessons ... and here's hoping that we can all be patient and accepting when challenged by whatever life brings to our door.

Road Safety

Some parents have been very community-minded and have brought a couple of concerns to our attention. The first is Road Safety – particularly in relation to bus behaviours: parents have witnessed children running out from behind the bus to cross the road. There have been some

reports of 'near-misses'. We ask everyone to be careful when disembarking from the bus – particularly when not at school and unsupervised. Courtesy to our neighbours in Red Lion Close and on the High Street would also be appreciated. The second issue relates to running car engines when picking up and dropping students off at school. Whilst we would all appreciate a more environmentally-conscious approach, it is also worth noting that cars should not be on the school site, unless in an emergency.

Eco-Club



Our in-school eco-club has been working hard to promote environmental issues and doing some recycling through collecting crisp packets. Before Christmas, as a school, we collected over 10kg of crisp packets! These were sent off for recycling. Holywell even made some money from this. The money raised is being used to fund our Eco club. The overall winning form was 5DS who collected 2,669g. The winners for the other year groups were: 6AJ – 1,527g; 7MBS – 305g; and 8ABA – 585g.

Bird-Watch

Another well-supported and environment-linked club at school is our Birdwatchers' Club. The students and Miss Saunders have asked to raise awareness of the following events in which families might like to get involved:

1) The big school birdwatch

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-teachers/schools-birdwatch/>

2) The big garden birdwatch

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/>

3) Nestbox week – this is actually in half term week but we have some new nestboxes for school which we will try and get installed as soon as possible in the next half term in the hope that some might be used this year.

<https://www.nestboxweek.com/>

Staff Updates

I'm delighted to inform you that we have appointed a new Science teacher – Mrs England - to replace Miss Blissett. Mr Johns has been doing a great job for us in the meantime and will continue with us until Mrs England is able to join the Holywell team. At the end of this week, we will be saying farewell to Mr Griffin who is leaving to take up a post teaching Sports Studies at a College in Northamptonshire. For the rest of the academic year, Mr Wade will be teaching PE and Mr Armitage will be taking on the Maths classes. We continue to be blessed with great staff to support our students in their learning journey.

Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

This week is national Children's Mental Health Week. I think that we all appreciate that Covid-19 has had a huge impact on everyone's wellbeing. When we reviewed how well we were doing in realising our school vision of 'Living Life in all its fullness' by 'Living our values and being the best we can be in community', one suggestion which came from Lily and the rest of her tutor group (8BS), was that it would be good to have a Mental Health Day. Others in the form thought this was a fantastic idea and really latched onto it! They suggested workshops about managing anxiety, stress,

relaxation techniques, baking, mindful activities, sporting activities and sporting values activities.



The form thought that often behaviour/friendship issues were linked to stress and anxiety. The form viewed this as rather like Values Day, but having options that students could choose for the day around the umbrella of Mental Health. We thought this was a brilliant idea and Miss Stewart and Mrs Johnson took on the challenge of organising it. As this week is Children's Mental Health Week, we thought it was a great time to have such a day ... so, on Friday, all year groups will be having a variety of different workshops and activities to help support our mental health. Thanks to support from the PTFA and a donation from a local firm (GXO), students will be experiencing everything from a musical theatre workshop with West-End performer Hugh Maynard (The Lion King, Miss Saigon), to a choice of workshops ranging from 'Laughology', a sport-



related workshop, to Circus Skills or Mindful Art and Origami! The day will also feature our traditional 'Marston Thrift Sponsored Walk'! We haven't been able to do this for the last two years and we will be staying Covid-safe by doing this in year-group bubbles – it is outside of course, so less risk of virus transmission. Please help students to raise as much sponsorship money as possible – we will be donating to the PTFA and mental health charities MIND and CHUMS. NB. It is



also a non-uniform day with the theme: WEAR BRIGHT, SHINE BRIGHT. We are hoping for good weather and a brilliant day to conclude our first half term of 2022.

The theme for Children's Mental Health Week 2022 is Growing Together. As part of the week, [Place2Be](#) is encouraging everyone – children, young people and adults – to consider how they have grown, and how they can help others to grow. Human beings change and grow – we do it all the time and in many

ways. Emotional growth is often a gradual process that happens over time, and sometimes we might feel a bit 'stuck'. At these times, we are reminded of how much we need others in our lives to help us to keep growing. In exclusive interviews with presenter and Place2Be Ambassador Josh Smith, familiar faces from the world of TV, music and sport have shared their stories of emotional growth. Celebrities include Mandip Gill (aka Doctor Who's companion – Yaz), presenter, youTuber and real-life doctor - Dr Alex George - and skateboarder and Team GB's youngest medallist – Sky Brown. We will be hearing some of these stories in school – have a look at others yourself <https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/growth-stories/> ... or, even better, share your own stories of how you have overcome challenges and difficult times. It's also important that we all look after our own mental health and wellbeing. The 5 steps to mental wellbeing promoted by the NHS are:



More details are available on the school website and from: <https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/self-help/guides-tools-and-activities/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing/>

Stay safe and have a great half-term when it comes. Watch out for our full Newsletter on Friday too!

Mike Simpson
Headteacher