

Friday 17th July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Today is the last day of this academic year. The new academic year will begin for all pupils in all year groups on Wednesday 2nd September and I am delighted to be able to say that after everything that we have all been through during the last few months.

Most of our Year 6 pupils have been in school since 1st June but a few extras returned yesterday to take part in a Leaver's Party on the school field. They did a treasure hunt, had an ice-cream station, photo booth and music as well as the traditional T shirt signing – all at a safe distance. I spoke with them at the end of the afternoon and reminded them to reflect on their time at Woodloes as a whole and to not let their memories of school be characterised by recent events; a sentiment I would share with everyone in our school community. The partial lockdown and restrictions on our lives has been massive but hopefully we can now move forward, sensibly and carefully and return to a new level of normality in the weeks and months ahead.

Our Year 6 have been a wonderful group of children and every member of staff has enjoyed working with them as they have progressed through school. We know they will go on to achieve great things and we are very proud of them all!

As well as having our Year 6 children back we have also been able to welcome back 80 pupils from year 2, 3, 4 and 5 during the last couple of weeks who have been able to come to school and take part in mini sports days. It was lovely to see how much they enjoyed being back in school and I'd like to thank Onside Coaching for helping us with this.

We have also met many of our new Reception parents in a meeting held this week on Microsoft Teams. It was great to meet so many of our new parents (and some of our children) and we look forward to seeing you again in person after the holidays. Microsoft Teams has been a big part of our communication strategy during the partial closure and this was used to facilitate a 'virtual move up day' on Wednesday this week. There were some inevitable technical hitches, as this was being attempted for the first time on this scale, but overall it was a great success that has given teachers and pupils the opportunity to meet and to look forward to the new school year.

We have written to you this week to share our re-opening plans for September. The model is based on what we have run successfully this term and we know, from the feedback we have received from you, that this has worked well for our community. Staff will be organising the school environment next week and we will be revisiting plans for school operations and curriculum management during our training day on Tuesday 1st September to make sure everyone can make a confident start to the new year. Further details and a copy of our risk assessment are available on our website.

I would like, at this point to pay tribute to the exceptional team that we have at Woodloes. They have shown great versatility and resilience to go 'above and beyond' throughout the lockdown period and have developed lots of new skills along the way. Every member of staff has shown compassion and care for the children in their classes and they have worked incredibly hard to provide the best learning possible. I am very proud of the fact that we have

maintained close contact with our families throughout and have been open through school holidays and bank holidays to support families who have needed us. It really has been a magnificent team effort and I am full of admiration and respect for the way everyone has pulled together to support each other.

A few final notices before I sign off. I wrote to you this week to confirm that Sarah Evans is leaving us and today is her last day. She has been with us since she graduated and has made a wonderful contribution to our school community during the last 8 years. She leaves with our sincere thanks and best wishes for the next chapter in her story.

We have a fantastic new art installation on the front wall of school next to the staff car park that was painted this week by a local artist (Smurf) based on ideas provided by our children to commemorate the things they have been doing during lockdown. It is a great original piece and I would encourage you to look out for this as you walk past the school. Well done to everyone involved!

The summer holidays can feel like a long time under ordinary circumstances and this year will bring further challenges. We have put a school activity passport and other information from the Family Information Service on our website to hopefully provide some ideas and support for you over the summer should this be required.

Finally, thank you to everyone in our school community for the courage and support you have shown during the last few months. None of us have experienced anything like it before and it will have affected people in different ways. My personal observations are that this has brought out the very best in people and communities have come together to support each other, exemplified wonderfully by families and friends at Woodloes. I really appreciate your patience and support, I know it has been difficult at times, but I feel positive with the plans we have for the new year, that we will catch up quickly and move forward together, stronger for the shared experiences we have had together.

Have a lovely, safe summer and I look forward to seeing you all again in September.

Yours sincerely,



Andy Mitchell (Head Teacher)