

# Whitehill Junior School

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Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

With just a few days to go before we break up at the end of an academic year which has brought about numerous challenges, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you.

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 only feels like a few months ago in some respects but it was halfway through last academic year. This time has flown by, with pupils, teachers and parents alike all working so hard to ensure the very best outcomes for all. I am extremely proud of every single member of our school community and know that we have achieved so much despite the obstacles placed in our way.

As another group of Year 6 pupils move on, I know they leave having had wonderful opportunities and having made so much progress across all aspects of their learning. Without doubt they have all been able to demonstrate our core purpose of 'Profound Individual Growth'.

As well as saying goodbye to some pupils, we also say goodbye or 'see you soon' to several members of staff. Mrs Beresford, my Deputy Head, is leaving after over 19 years, to work in a school much closer to her home in London. I know the morning commutes over recent weeks have been hard work and she is looking forward to a much less stressful journey.

Mr Miley, who I have known since he was a pupil in my class for two years as a Year 5 and Year 6, leaves after six years at Whitehill to finish his teacher training at Hitchin Boys' School. Again, what an amazing example of our school's vision this represents. I have no doubt he will go on to be a very successful PE teacher working alongside Mrs Cornell's husband. It is such a small world!

Mrs McKenna and her family are moving to Ireland to start on their next adventure and we wish them all the very best, including Isla and Aidan who will be leaving their Year 4 and Year 6 friends respectively.

Miss Mills leaves her role in Year 3 as the pupil she has been working with moves to his new school from September. She will be taking up a similar position at Hitchin Girls' School, despite originally stating she never wanted to follow in the family footsteps within education. I am sure she will have the opportunity to travel and put her ocean sciences degree to good use soon.

Finally, Mrs Cornell will go on maternity leave at the end of the term and I know you will join me in wishing both her and her husband, all the very best as they prepare to welcome their first child. I am sure we will be able to share the news of their baby at some point over the holiday.



## Final Assembly

I will be talking about our leavers on Friday when we hold our final assembly. If you are free, you are welcome to join the school for this celebration through the Teams link below. This is something that parents don't usually get to see but one thing the last 16 months has taught us is that there is always a way.

### Final Assembly - Microsoft Teams meeting – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> July @ 10.30am

#### Join on your computer or mobile app

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

[Learn More](#) | [Meeting options](#)

Not only will be saying goodbye, but we will also be presenting a number of awards to pupils across all four year groups and so all parents are welcome to attend. As I mentioned previously, we will not be able to provide any technical support once the assembly has started and I would ask that you remain muted throughout.

## End of Term

All pupils will finish at the same time on Friday at 1.30pm. They will come out via the usual doors and parents are asked to wait where they would normally.

## Looking Ahead

I know this term hasn't quite come to an end but it is worth sharing a few thoughts about September and the start of the new year, particularly as I received the guidance from the DfE at the beginning of last week.

The guidance for primary aged pupils is much simpler to follow than perhaps it has been in the past. From the start of the Autumn Term, schools are no longer required to maintain 'bubbles' across the school. This means that many of the things we have missed over recent times can resume.

Whole school assemblies can start again and there will be no need to separate the four year groups out at lunchtime in the dining room. It also means we can reintroduce the different themed playgrounds rather than having to zone them off for different pupils. We can be sociable again!

Whilst it is likely there may be positive cases going forward after the summer break, we will not have to send a whole class of pupils home if this happens; only the pupil confirmed positive or awaiting test results if symptomatic, will need to be at home. This will also apply to staff members who have had both vaccinations and so there should be minimal disruption to learning.

Schools will still need to have appropriate 'outbreak management plans' in place should a significant number of positive cases occur within a short space of time. Only then might we be instructed to switch to some form of remote provision but we are expecting (and hoping) this to be highly unlikely.

So, from Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, when pupils return to school, the timings for the school day are as follows:



8.35am – Pupils able to come into school and straight into their classrooms for our now well established 'soft start' to the day.

8.50am – All pupils to be in school by this time. Arrivals after this time need to go via the main office.

3.15pm – School finishes for all pupils.

It goes without saying that there could be some further guidance over the summer holidays which supersedes the above. I am hoping this isn't the case and we can get back to 'normal' which we will have, of course, adapted from the pre-pandemic normal.

Finally, you will be aware that the government have given over another day as a bank holiday for the Queen's jubilee next year. In response to this, schools have been given an additional occasional day to add into their calendar for 2021/2022. Mrs Avey and I have decided to add this onto the May half term and so pupils will break up on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May and will not return to school until Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June. I will add this extra day to our school date lists on the website.

I am sure I will be in contact with you again before Friday but just in case, thank you all for your incredible support over the course of the year. Despite everything, it has been exceptionally successful and I am delighted with all we have achieved.

Have a great summer and I will see three quarters of you in September.

Best wishes,



Steve Mills  
Headteacher

