

9 July 2020

Dear Parents

Little did I believe in March that I would be writing this 'end of term' letter in July with 98% of our children back in the classrooms. What a joy it's been to see the children return, skipping in the corridors and smiling at the start of each new school day. It's been a real eye opener to witness and experience the tightrope walk that the government have had in trying to satisfy those that just want to get back on with their lives and get the economy working again and let Covid19 do its worst, and those that with good cause are extremely cautious and nervous. Trying to provide a safe return for all children has been a gargantuan task and I could not have achieved this without the support and enthusiasm of the staff to return, and look after your children as well as the confidence you have in us as a school to provide a safe return.

Nevertheless, our lives will never be the same again and there are aspects of change that will stay with us for a long time to come. Family and community life has become more precious and meaningful, and we have had the opportunity to spend time with our children and do things together that work commitments have not allowed us to do in the past. However, there is always a trade off and that being the distance we have had to keep with loved ones like grandparents and those with underlying health issues. We will now appreciate and savour our friends and relatives much more and build on our neighbourhood, school, family and friendship communities for years to come.

One of the most significant developments following this whole spectacle has been our dependence on IT through all aspects of life and for all ages, from shopping to working from home and having to deliver education to the masses. Most primary state schools have failed to deliver an education and been unable to open, as opposed to independent schools who have battled on and continued with lessons, and opened as soon as they are safe to do so. All this coincided with a plan we intended to implement 12 months ago, to provide a firmer foundation and deeper understanding of IT for our children. With that in mind our Year 4 cohort next year will be piloting the new 'One to One' IT strategy for the rest of the upper school with their own Surface-Go's. Within the next three years we will see our three top year groups involved and working this new curriculum.

For some of us it's been the longest term ever, stretching from January to July with having to look after key worker children throughout. But again, I've had moments to enjoy by reverting back to my old role of PE teacher as well as exploring and investigating mystical aspects of our nature garden.

Sadly, we say goodbye to a loyal and dedicated trio of staff who have taken stock and decided to retire. Heather Gibbs, Hilary Rosenz and Helen Stokes almost clock up 70 years between them and we will miss each of their inimitable styles of teaching. It was a great relief to me that we were able to celebrate their years of teaching on Speech Day and thank them whole heartedly for all they have done to ensure that hundreds of children have left St Faith's fully rounded and successful individuals.

It's been heart-breaking to see our school so ready and welcome for our purple and gold masses but so empty and like a ghost town with a skeleton staff and two or three children. But now we are back and at the end of term with a light at the end of the tunnel. September looks promising for a relatively normal return for all year groups but there will be guidelines in place that we will all have to align to and we will inform you of our procedures to return at the end of August. Have a lovely summer holiday.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L B R Groves', written in a cursive style.

Lawrence B R Groves
Headmaster