



PARKWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

DEANWOOD DRIVE
RAINHAM
GILLINGHAM, KENT, ME8 9LP
HEADTEACHER: MR A MOIR



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Dear Parents and Carers,

It is with the deepest regret that I must write to you to tell you that Alex Moir, our Headteacher, will be unable to return to school for the new term.

He is fighting an extremely aggressive form of cancer and wants to spend time with his family and undergoing treatment which could give him more time. Our thoughts are with Alex and his family as they come to terms with this awful news.

Alex sent a postcard to his friends on Facebook, and I felt it is appropriate to share some of it with you. There are words that we often throw around quite glibly such as, 'be here now', 'be present', 'tomorrow isn't promise' etc. Nothing has ever brought this home to me as much as these words.

"Everything else can wait. Nothing else is important. I lost track of how many times I said to my children 'can you just give me a second' about some pointless bit of work, some stress, some worry. Now that every second counts and every minute earned by treatment is a potential magic memory to be made, all those lost seconds feel like a regret. So, I'll finish my postcard to you all (the first of many I hope) by saying, PLEASE don't be sad. PLEASE don't treat me differently (especially not with pity, unless I want pity, or a hug, or some company). PLEASE don't ignore little aches and pains yourself and PLEASE don't ask me (even in roundabout ways) how long I have. I don't know. I wouldn't accept it even if I did and my only focus is on 'one step at a time'. Next hurdle, next challenge, next treatment, next postcard. I'll do all I can for time with my wife and the children, Until the next postcard..."

Alex

As you can imagine, this news has come as a huge shock to the whole school community and has affected us all very deeply. Alex has been here for twelve years, and before that has taught in Medway and Kent for twenty odd years. We are ensuring that mental health support is available for any staff member needing it, and of course this will also be available for any child that needs it.

As always at Parkwood, we will pull together and support each other so we can continue to give your children the best possible education in a kind, nurturing environment, just as Alex would want us to do.

Mrs McCormack will be stepping up to Acting Headteacher, and all the other members of the Senior Leadership Team, along with some of the teaching staff, will take on additional responsibilities to take up the slack. I, and the Governing Body, have complete confidence in her ability to steer the ship, and we will have support from the Local Authority too. I know that many Headteachers from local schools, who have benefited from Alex' counsel and advice over the years, have already contacted the LA to offer support, and we will gratefully take what we need to keep going forward.

We will do our best to make sure that the children don't see any difference at school, other than the Alex Moir sized hole that we will all be missing. We have taken advice from our Educational Psychologist so that all staff can discuss why Mr Moir isn't in school in an age-appropriate way.

I know he asked us not to be sad. I'm afraid I can't manage that, and I suspect many of you, and even more of the children, will struggle with it too. What I, and all of us can do is model the examples of positivity, kindness, inclusivity and cheerfulness that Alex has lived his life by, and make sure that our children use that as their basis for life...it's a brilliant platform to build on.

Yours sincerely,

Terry Wildman
Chair of Governors