



St Ives Infant School

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30 October 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

It is with deep sadness that I find myself having to write this letter to you all today and explain my decision to close the school yesterday. To find the right words is extremely difficult but on Monday, Esther, our nursery teacher sadly passed away in hospital after falling ill on Sunday evening.

A loss of any sort has such a huge impact on family, friends and colleagues. However the loss of someone so young and so unexpectedly will have an impact on many people in different ways. I am sure you can appreciate this is a very difficult time for all her friends here at school, and I ask that you respect their personal grief at this time. They are being supported in school and are totally dedicated to presenting themselves professionally and ensuring school runs as normal.

We have informed all the children in school today of this news after seeking advice from Penhaligon's Friends. The language around sharing grief is extremely important to ensure they do not become unduly concerned about family or friends. All staff have shared the same message that *'Miss Leonard Williams was really, really poorly and very sadly died on Monday. She had a very serious but unusual problem with her heart. Nearly always when people are very poorly doctors can make people better. For Miss Leonard-Williams they tried, but sadly couldn't make it better'*. We would advise that, if appropriate, you talk to your child/ren about this and provide them with simple, factual information. All children react differently to sad news, it is important to give your child time to ask questions and that you try to answer

them as honestly as you can and allow them to express their feelings. We will of course, provide appropriate support here at school for the children. We recognise people acknowledge grief in different ways and we will provide opportunities for these to be discussed.

This sad news will leave all of those who have had the pleasure to know Esther with a mixture of emotions. We are a very strong school community and I am sure that everyone will be supportive of each other.

Our thoughts are with Esther's family at this difficult time. A condolence book will be available in the Jubilee room for anyone who would like to write in it. This is something that, in time we will pass on to the family. The children are creating their own books in classes.

As a staff we are also thinking of ways we can remember Esther as a school community. We are aiming to have a lasting memorial to her within the school grounds but feel it is appropriate to consider this carefully before making a decision.

Thank you for your patience during the closure yesterday, I realise it will have caused practical inconveniences, but I do hope you now understand why I chose to do this.

In light of this news, we feel it would be appropriate to postpone the disco, open classrooms and the phonics workshops. We will rearrange these events in the near future and communicate this to you as soon as possible.

Thank you for your continued support at this difficult time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs Farrar', written in a cursive style.

Mrs Farrar

Headteacher