

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Dear Parents/Carers,

I just wanted to take the time to introduce Mrs Edkins to you. She has been working in school alongside me since January and will be continuing to support children in the next academic year.

As well as working in school, Mrs Edkins is training to be a counsellor at Salford University. Prior to starting counselling training, Mrs Edkins worked as a senior leader in several large organisations in the North, before starting her own consultancy business in 2015 which focuses on Business Change and Executive coaching. Gemma is also a professional chaperone, working with under 18s in the entertainment industry.

Outside of work Mrs Edkins has a 14 year old daughter and husband who share her love of animals and together they look after cats, dogs, hens, goats and alpacas.

At West Vale we are committed to supporting and developing our children's well-being and mental health. Mrs Edkins role further strengthens the pastoral team we have in school, to support children and families. Mrs Edkins has settled in well and established her role and developed great relationships and links with the children, adults and classes in school. We both currently work with children over both Key Stages covering friendship issues, providing emotional support and helping some children to develop their social skills. Our work further supports the PSHCE learning done in class throughout this term.

We have an open-door policy here at West Vale Academy and we are happy to meet with any parents who would like to share any feedback given in the recent parent survey particularly around the issues of friendships and bullying. We value your opinions as parents and recognise the importance of feedback in our continued development as a school. If you would like to have a discussion with me or Mrs Edkins, please email or ring the school office to make an appointment.

In the meantime, we are really happy with how the children have settled back into the routines of school life and we hope they continue to thrive.

Many thanks for your continued support

Mrs Dawn Roebuck

Parent Support Worker