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WETHERBY

SENIOR SCHOOL

20th March 2020

Spring Term Week 10



Dear Parents,

It has been a challenging week with a lot of uncertainty for us all, but I really appreciate the emails I have received over the last few days, thanking the school and its staff for all they are doing to support the boys. I will deal with any announcements made by the Education Secretary in a separate letter as, at the time of writing, nothing has been confirmed.

There have been things I have enjoyed about this week – working through a Chemistry GCSE paper with one of the Year 11 Science groups. I rattled through the first page pretty quickly but soon found myself stumped by questions on the properties of Lithium – I could feel Mrs Ataii's disapproving stare as I bumbled through it. I have also enjoyed seeing the staff respond to the challenges of moving over to remote learning. There have been groups forming at different points throughout the last couple of weeks to meet and share ideas or work out how to solve technical problems collaboratively. Whilst silver linings are scarce, that the staff have been employing some of the technology in their usual lessons, means the School will restart with staff having a new range of tools at their disposal to enhance the boys' education. The teaching staff's enthusiasm and willingness to rise to the challenge has been inspiring and I am looking forward to hearing about how things go next week. Please remember that this is a new venture for many and there will be a variety of approaches and I would ask that you are understanding as staff start to use the technology in practice. There will be a chance for the boys to give us feedback on what they feel works best after a couple of weeks so we can use it to inform the work we do after the Easter break.

Of course, there was the news that GCSEs and A Levels would not take place this summer. I wrote to all the boys affected on Wednesday evening to encourage them not to lose heart and also to try to stay focussed as we do not yet have a clear idea what

might replace them. The boys were not downhearted, but they were frustrated and annoyed that they were not going to have the chance to show how they had improved and what they had learnt since the mocks. But again, there were moments that made me very proud of the boys – bumping into a Year 11 at 8.00am and a member of Year 13 after 5.00pm both of whom were at school to keep going with their coursework as this could form part of the revised assessment. I feel particularly for the Year 13 as it appears likely that they will miss out on some of the major rites of passage that come with leaving school and moving to university. It pains me that, if the outbreak is not brought under control, it may be their last day at school. Their contribution to the school and community has been so great that we will find the time to celebrate as a group their contribution, reward their achievements and wish them well as they move on to their university.

I cannot pretend that shutting the doors today and heading home on the bike are going to be easy. It is hard not to think of the opportunities missed or the events that have become part of the fabric of the school which now won't take place. I have however been heartened by the willingness of my colleagues to take on extra work, to rise to the challenge and help others to do so, I have had my spirits boosted by the offers of help from parents and the ideas they have put forward to help the school and I have been impressed by the resilience of the boys and the willingness of those I have spoken to not to let the disappointing news put them off their stride.

I hope that we will be back together as a community soon but in the meantime, these newsletters will keep coming so please send me any good news you have so I can share it with the rest of the community. Until we meet again, I hope you and your family remain in good health. Please help your sons to find the right balance between work and relaxation – mens sana in corpore sano – and let us know if you have any concerns or issues we can help with.

With my very best wishes,
Seth



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