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Principal: Siobhan Kent

5th February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach our last week of the half term, I hope that you are coping and have found routines that suit you in the lockdown. It has been a highly challenging couple of weeks, no doubt! The arrival of overnight snow ensured that travel to school on Tuesday was nearly impossible. That was coupled with a power cut which disabled our entire network and internet systems in school for a number of days, including our text message and communication system to parents and carers. I am hoping that we have now had our fair share of challenges! Everything is now restored and I look forward to a slightly quieter week next week! Thank you so much for your patience and support.

Our Year 8 students have been involved in their Options Process over the last couple of weeks and it has been an absolute pleasure to hear how mature they have been in discussions about their futures. Even with the demands of the lockdown, they have been able to work with us and take really well considered decisions about their GCSE subjects – thank you to our families who have supported them in this and have given up their time to join us for meetings and discussions.

Our students have displayed great engagement over recent weeks in their Remote Learning. As you know, we were a little concerned that our KS3 students were somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of work that they had to complete, so we reduced their content this week to support them further. I hope that this has helped them to have a healthy work life balance at home.

We encourage our lovely Year 11 students to maintain their efforts with their work as we move forward into next half term. I know how difficult it is for them to be working towards their qualifications in these circumstances but please ensure that they are reaching out for support whenever they need it.

Next week, the students will be given consolidation work to complete in their Remote Learning. This is so that we can help the students to recap their learning over recent weeks, close any gaps in their learning and ensure that they have time to reflect on their subjects.

We continue to await news of when schools can begin planning for the return of our wonderful students back to school and into their normal routines. We hope to have some guidance at least by the end of the month so that we can begin to plan with you as families. I want to reassure you all though that we are calmly and robustly planning our children's education over the coming months. We are confident that we



can resume our curriculum in school with strong classroom delivery and effective interventions where they are required.

As we look to the half term break, I am concerned by the media portrayal of our young people being the 'lost generation'. Young people who will be forever wounded by this experience.

I disagree.

Of course we wouldn't choose this life as the way that we want to live and absolutely we have many students who continue to find these times a significant challenge. However, any harm done by the pandemic will be addressed and erased as we return to normality in school, with friendships, quality teaching and learning and intuitive mental health support.

I believe that our children will be forever strengthened by their experiences. They will have grown immeasurably in reliance, in character and in compassion. They will have learnt life lessons that can only be learnt from such challenging times.

I believe that our children should hear us talking about how amazing they are, how they are overcoming challenges that we would never have expected for them and how proud we are that they are soldiering on.

Please pass these thoughts on to them and enjoy a half term of relaxation, away from the monotony of screens and together as a family!

As soon as I have any updates for you, I will let you know.

Take care, stay safe and God bless,

Mrs S Kent
Principal