5th May 2020

Dear Students,

As we enter the fifth school week - seventh week in “isolation” - I wanted to reach out to praise you. We will get through this time, and the signs look promising. I know this feels like a lifetime but, in reality, this is a small moment in time and there is so much hope for the future.  I know the impact this must have on your lives - some of you might feel lonely, some of you might feel anxious and you may know people who have endured this horrible disease. The mental strain of being isolated is exceptionally tough. It truly doesn't matter how "strong" we think we are; no words can capture the challenge of this period.

You, my wonderful students, are entitled to your feelings, whatever they may be, but please find support somewhere; family, friends, teachers or the support agencies that we have sent you each week.  On top of the normal feelings of being isolated, ALL people (teachers and support) who work in education then have the "guilt" factor to deal with. We want to be with you, to laugh with you, to interact with you, to banter, to teach, dare I say it – we even miss the conflicts!  I didn't sign up for a solo desk job or to meet with people via technology. We all see, talk, function around thousands of people every day - so we need and crave that. Believe me when I say we know how you feel. We are all humans at the end of the day. We miss you as much as you miss us.

There will be lots of speculation and scare-mongering about the schools’ reopening. Promise me that you won’t stress about this. We will be given a road map by the Government later in the week. Our Trust and myself will be guided by the Department for Education. The key thing right now is to trust the mechanisms surrounding education and let the course of action play out. I haven’t let you down yet, and I certainly don’t intend to start now. The main comfort I feel is because we have been promised a three week lead in time to whatever the government proclaims. So unlike the lockdown, it won't be us reinventing the education system in one day. I am not sure many other systems could have done what education have. This is not over - far from it - but I repeat; we will get through it.

So, this week keep going, keep being kind, keep being courageous, keep learning, keep reaching out, keep being the sensational students you are. I feel so comforted that we have the most empathetic and sympathetic students; students that truly care.Take care and remember we haven’t gone anywhere.

I would like to leave you with this. A beautiful poem from Tom Roberts about how sometimes times of crisis can bring out the beauty of humanity. As I said before, you have all shown each other kindness, acceptance and created stronger relationships with people. You have understood what really is important.

“Sometimes you have to get sick before you get better – then, your dreams will come true”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bea4jCAkXsI>

Take care, and stay safe.

Mrs Baker

Principal