

2 February 2021

Ref: OAA284526

Dear Year 11,

A letter from an English Director

This letter is for all of you to let you know how valued and loved you all are and that you are amazing!

Never in our wildest dreams did we ever think we would be in another lockdown and that our Year 11 students would be told again that exams weren't going ahead, but, as with all dreams, they can sometimes become a reality! So, we find ourselves in January 2021 in another lockdown, live lessons every day and yet you are still smiling and giving everything you have to secure the best outcome for yourselves before we let you go into the big wide world this summer.

You are the 'Class of 2021' and once again, you have earned a place in the history books and that's something to be proud of. Yes, it is extremely tough as nothing gives a teacher greater pleasure than being in a classroom with students all working and feeling safe. Many of you may not be feeling safe at the moment. Many adults too will struggle over the next few months as we all have to come to terms with our 'normal life' being put on hold so to speak, but please don't ever forget about the outstanding support network you all have around you in the shape of your subject teachers, learning manager, teaching assistants, 1:2:1 tutors, SLT, your Principal, in fact - any staff you feel comfortable with and safe. Just because we are not all together physically DOES NOT mean we aren't here for any of you as you are our students and, as in any family, we support, guide and listen to whatever you need. When we think back to September, many of you will have been at home isolating more than you have been in school, yet you have shown a resilience and strength which has blown us away and resilience is one of the greatest attributes a human being can have. We see our world changing right before our very eyes yet we know that we have no control over any of it and our trust has to be placed in those who have the power and resources to help us get out of this and we will!

We will get back to class, we will hear laughter as we walk down the corridor and we will see you all flourish as you grow up and prepare to leave our nest but we have to be strong and bide our time. This is a time, I hope, we never have to go through again but it is also a time for us, as members of the human race to finally stop and be selfish as this is time for us.

Life moves at such a fast pace that we all forget what and who is important as there are games to be played on the computers, social media to catch up on and a whole world of Instagram and Snapchat (which I clearly have no idea about as I am too young!) But now is the time to look at your life with fresh eyes. Ask yourselves, who could you not live without? Who is always there for you? (even if you haven't always been there for them) and when did you last carry out a Random Act of Kindness? Our manic lives have made us forget the 'good bits' and maybe this pandemic is a way of telling us to stop, breathe and count what we have. I am not suggesting in the slightest that you all come off your phones (now that would be world news!) but do make time for the people in your life – parents, carers, siblings, wider family, your pets, friends or even the Amazon delivery man! Remember why they are in your life and tell them how amazing and lucky you are to have them in your life!

We know you are under pressure, not just from school but from other areas of your life but please don't think you are alone in this. Every individual Year 11 student has something in common with every other human being and that is you have feelings, beliefs and stresses and we all need someone by our side. We are in a period of the unknown but just as day follows night, so too will our life become brighter and, while it might not be perfect, we have got this! Someone once said to me, "When you change the quality of your thinking, you change the quality of your life" and this is, I believe, something we all need to do as we have the time to think at the moment.

As a student many years ago, I didn't have much support from my school. Many of my teachers saw us as a nuisance and we generally copied from a text book and that was the lesson. However, you are in a unique position in that you have a family of school support around you which consists of many characters and skill sets so please use us as we are here for you!

Thank you for reading this letter. It is for YOU and what you do with the advice is totally up to YOU! If you take nothing else from this, please take this one thing - you have this, we have this and together, we will hear the laughter coming from our classrooms very soon.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Southall
English Director

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