



Christmas 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

In 2009 at Christmas in the midst of the Swine Flu epidemic I wrote that *'we are breaking up early and this is the final sadness and disappointment of what has been a very difficult and at times very sad few months for the School.'* Like then we are having to close early and like then life was very uncertain!

I continued, *'but despite all that has happened we must look forward to Christmas and the new year with hope in our hearts. Life is unpredictable and often very challenging and we have been made acutely aware of that during 2009. The whole senior team here are concerned that as we finish this term that we can leave with Joy in our hearts and that the spirit of Christmas, its timeless and universal message of love and goodwill to all people will be ours and yours in the days ahead and throughout 2010.'*

So 11 years on in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic that message from us is just the same - we just have to change the dates! Let us hope and pray that 2021 will bring an end to the pandemic and that all of us can begin to live our lives in the way we wish. In the meantime we cannot afford to let our guard up! We have been relentless in pursuing our Covid plans at School to keep everyone safe and whilst we have had challenges to deal with and some bubbles closed, I think, compared to many schools and other places that we have done extremely well, especially given that social distancing when working with our students is not really possible.

Christmas is, as I said in 2009, a time of Joy, that deep and lasting peace and happiness in our hearts - not just passing moments of pleasure! That Joy can be witnessed every day in the lives of our children and young people, who despite enormous barriers to learning and living rise above them and participate, learn, achieve and flourish! I congratulate each and every one of them and wish all them a really happy Christmas. Having just shared in the 'Teams' Carol Service my heart is aglow with pride - what fantastic and amazing young people we have! They are so determined and just unstoppable!

The staff too, have also been amazing and I would like on your behalf to thank them for their dedication, hard work and determination during this year. We are so privileged to have such committed and talented people working at the School. I wish all of them a merry and joyful Christmas! I also want to particularly thank my senior colleagues - Matt, Lisa, Sarah and Pauline for their leadership and tremendous hard work during 2020 and Debbie my PA for all the support she gives me and as Clerk to the Governing Body. The Governors, too have been so supportive during this time and have governed and advised the School with wisdom and care!. In thanking all of these colleagues I wish them a very happy Christmas!

There is a short Covid bulletin with key information for you which we would ask you to read - it is on the website!

I would also like to thank you all for the tremendous support and co-operation that you have given us during these difficult times. It really is greatly appreciated and has made our lives so much easier!

Lastly, Esther and I send you all our very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Enjoy it!

Roland J Gooding

Principal

17 December 2020