

21 July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

In this final communication of the 2019-20 academic year we celebrate what has been achieved in this, surely the most unique year in any school experience. Heathfield is blessed with a fantastic community ethos and we have all played our part and can be very proud of both the small and large achievements over the last few months as well as across the whole academic year. Collectively they have made a massive contribution to maintaining our ethos, sense of purpose and commitment to each other.

I feel at this point it is important to share how hugely grateful I am to the staff of the College during this period. I know from your effusive feedback that they have continued to inspire and support our young people throughout this period. We are all extremely fortunate in the depth of quality that we enjoy in the Heathfield staff. I am also personally very appreciative of the consistent support of my senior leadership team who have been proactive, pragmatic and relentlessly good-humoured in their approaches to the many challenges we faced. This team has equally been well supported, albeit remotely, by a small number of governors who have helped check and balance our decision making at each turn often offering personal support and encouragement just when it was needed.

I am sharing with you the final celebration “assembly” as we mark the end of the academic year: <http://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?p=2057438>. Hopefully this will emphasise that I do not intend to view 2019-20 as solely defined by Coronavirus, there is so much more to remember and reflect upon.

However, there will equally be much to learn from the lock-down experience and a number of positives that have come from this time. Many students, with the support of parents and staff, have shown an incredible ability to manage their work independently and produce high quality responses to academic tasks or other challenges we have set. They have retained their ambition and determination to succeed no matter what. Others have found it more difficult but shown great resilience in facing up to their individual challenges, and in many cases have learnt that asking for help is not a sign of weakness but actually a gateway to very positive and willing support as well as an important step in developing greater autonomy and confidence. I am hugely proud of them all. Most impressively, this is a community that has been there for each other, aiming for the very best and supporting each other along the way.

A really important part of our planning for the future is to identify the many positive changes that the emergency situation has brought about and incorporate them into the running of the College, maximising the strengths we have seen come to the fore at this time. However, as you will see in our review of the year our students were already in a fantastically strong position by March 2020; whilst there will be a need to recalibrate and re-establish learning and knowledge,



they are building on strong foundations and we will want to give them every opportunity to feel confident about where they are and how they can move forward from there.

We are very much looking forward to having our students back on site. We have missed them and their collective energy and vibrancy over the last four months. We are currently planning the return with a meticulous level of detail and a priority that we want College to look and feel as normal as it possibly can. We are equally ensuring that the safety and welfare of our students and staff remains at the heart of everything that we do. The positive feedback from both students and staff around the systems and procedures in place up to this point has given us an excellent foundation for the plans for September.

My aim is to share the fine detail with you later in August, however the link to the risk assessment is on the website (<http://www.heathfieldcc.co.uk/?p=1936767>: Information) for those who wish to explore the challenges and mitigations we are working through. The Head of Year letter you received last week will provide some of the detail for how and when the new academic year will start. If there are aspects of uniform or equipment that can be arranged now then you are able to do so with that information. Please don't forget to use www.easyfunding.co.uk to continue to support the College funds and also consider the SOHCC pre-loved uniform supply, either to purchase or to donate.

We continue to claim and process refunds for 2019-20 trips that were cancelled. Some of these are still in process with the insurance companies. Where we are in a position to refund we will continue to do so but some of these will inevitably not be processed until September if we are experiencing delays. We will communicate with you about each trip individually as we are able.

I include with this letter some additional sources of information. 1) An open letter from the Local Authority and Secondary Headteachers; 2) A letter from Sussex Police; 3) Details of the summer activities we have been able to research on your behalf and 4) Some suggested reading for all year groups. Where students have outstanding tasks on Firefly they could consider working through them over August but one of the most powerful ways of building vocabulary, knowledge and understanding is by reading. This is both good for their brain and their well-being, please encourage where you can.

Finally, as proud as I am of our staff and students I know none of our achievements would have been possible without the hard work of parents. Supervising teenagers through remote learning would not have been anything you were expecting to spend 2020 doing. As a parent myself, I have empathy for every difficulty and every milestone you will have experienced, we will all have our stories to tell of this period. None of us, student, parent or college, will have done everything right all the time, none of us are that perfect! But as a school we are hugely appreciative of the support parents have shown and the excellent communication you have maintained with us. I have at times been overwhelmed by the kindness and encouragement shown to myself and the staff team. You have been an integral part of the successes we have managed and I am very grateful to you for your positivity and determination throughout. There are likely to be further challenges ahead but I feel truly fortunate to be working with such a fabulous community. I face the future in September confident in the knowledge that together, we can collectively overcome any obstacles in our path.

However you are spending your summer, I hope it is enjoyable; we have all earned some peace and restorative time. Once refreshed, I am excited for what we will be able to achieve together next year. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



MS C BARLOW
Headteacher