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Headmaster: David Clark, BA, M Phil (Cantab)

Letter to Parents, Friday 3rd July 2020

Dear Parents,

We enjoyed a good moment this past week when hosting a staff meeting for all heads of department and heads of key stage. Seeing all our colleagues in the flesh gave us a real boost and it provided us with the opportunity to thank them for their sterling efforts during lock-down. As a group of middle and senior leaders, we were then able to plan in earnest for our final week of term, our holiday activities (including results) and our return to school in September. The team spirit and positive, can-do approach was tremendous and, with such a good group of people leading the School, I am more confident than ever that we will continue to provide the best possible learning experience for our students.

There is a palpable sense that a corner has been turned with regards to the easing of lock-down restrictions and that a return to near normality is not far away. Seeing students back at the Abbey again reinforced that and it was lovely having all the year 6 students from our Prep School joining us for the week. A steady flow of year 10 and year 12 students has also lifted everyone's mood and it was good that they have had the chance to connect with their teachers and with each other.

Throughout lock-down, we have been conscious of the strain that has been put on students by high levels of screen time so I am grateful for the efforts put together this week for those in years 7 & 8 with their activities' week. I appreciate that there have been a few teething problems, but there has been lovely feedback about some of the more creative suggestions offered. This week has also given the year 9 students the chance to experience GCSE lessons in their chosen options and it is clear that the extra insights gained will prove valuable when those courses start, formally, in September. Sports day was also a highlight of the week and I am indebted to the PE department for all their hard work in making it a meaningful event for all concerned.

One of the main consequences of remote learning is that we have had to improve our abilities in presenting filmed content to our students and parents. We have become willing and, in Mr Dennett's case, highly accomplished amateurs in this quest – but have felt that we still needed to improve the quality of the visual content on our website. We therefore recently employed the services of a professional documentary film-maker to help us and some of the amazing drone footage that he has provided will be available to view in the coming weeks.

I can't quite believe that we are in July already and that we are about to start the final week of term. By its very nature, the last few days involve a bit more tutor time, some celebration assemblies, a virtual summer concert and, of course, the Battle Abbey tradition of mark reading. Most importantly, we have Speech Day to look forward to, which will take place on Friday afternoon and will come to you virtually. In it, we will have the chance to celebrate with the prize winners and we will make a point of bidding farewell to our leavers and thanking them for their many contributions over the years.

Soon after that, I will write to you for the final time this term, and our Chair of Governors, Janet Dunn, will join me in updating you about some of our plans for the year ahead.

Have a lovely weekend and best wishes to you all.

David Clark