

15 May 2020

Dear Year 13

I know that it will feel as strange to you as it does to me that we are starting to part company at the end of your final year in the College by way of a letter. But I am writing, in part, to reassure you that I am absolutely committed to a giving you the sort of send-off you deserve, once this pandemic is brought under control, and life returns to some sort of normality.

As you will be well aware, a Year 13 cohort ordinarily receives recognition and celebration in a great variety of ways; a graduation ceremony, graduation ball and leavers' day celebrations. I see absolutely no reason why we can't hold a day of celebration akin to this, after the summer, should we be allowed to do so. Indeed, it would be a great joy to do so and to recognise the very great gifts that you have brought to the College.

I want first to thank you for your response to these recent weeks and months. To thank you for your patience, as we have all sought to better understand the implications of the pandemic on your immediate futures and, in particular, your exam results this summer. To thank you for the way in which you have embraced our new way of working. To thank you for the support I know many of you have continued to provide for younger pupils in the College. And to thank you for engaging with the enrichment and Pre-University courses that were provided for you.

In turn, I thank on your behalf all those staff who have worked so hard to support you in extraordinary circumstance; writing new courses for you over this period and helping you, remotely, to manage this important transition into the next phase of your life.

I also want to thank you for all you have brought to the College and its development over many collective years. It is you who make St Dunstan's what it is and it is you who have helped shape it into the school it is today. Be it through the leadership positions you have adopted over the years, be it the shaping the place of College Parliament, assisting in the smooth running and development of the school through prefecture, running academic societies, directing House Drama – the list is endless! I particularly want to thank Polly, as your Head of School, for all she has given to the College, and for representing your interests so keenly.

Whilst the formality of regular academic lessons and enrichment might be ending, please do keep in touch with us, and use our mechanisms of support. Our pastoral team are still here for you, and many of the younger children will still be relying on you, so do please keep up the co-curricular activities I know many of you support, and use our teachers to help support you, as you anticipate your summer results, as well as when you navigate your next steps to higher education and otherwise, this summer.

It is difficult to know what to say to a cohort who has had so much so cruelly removed from them, other than to proffer that you will without doubt look back at this chapter of your life as one of the most formative and fundamental to the shaping of your character. I do genuinely believe that as Dunstonians you are particularly well equipped both to weather the challenge and also to use it to make you stronger and better people.

Do keep in touch with us and with the broader community. Most immediately you can sign up to SDConnect, which is our forum for connecting Dunstonians near and far, and details of which you will already have received from Mrs Blake-James who runs the Dunstonian Office. I have recently been in correspondence with a Dunstonian of 92 years who still proudly extols the *albam exorna motif!* You have certainly adorned the white and in ways none of us could have predicted. I thank you for doing so with such good grace, resilience and good humour. I look forward to seeing you again before long and raising a glass to you and more widely to the fact that we can be together again.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N P Hewlett', written in a cursive style.

Mr N P Hewlett  
Headmaster