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Sunday 17th May 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

This week is mental health awareness week and it has been announced that 'kindness' is an appropriate theme upon which we can all focus.

I am sure that the thousands of acts of kindness, which have emerged from the hardship of this pandemic, have not gone unnoticed, and we would like to take this opportunity to look to the future.

Our pace of life under lockdown has been different. It has created challenges and difficulties for us all in many differing ways but, I am sure, many would have found the slower pace of the world has led to an opportunity to step back from life as we knew it, and take stock. It has enabled us to focus upon what is really important in life and I, for one, have noticed nature taking full advantage of the peace and quiet generated by the significant decrease in human activity; the birds appear to be singing more loudly, the rabbits and foxes have strayed into places they would not normally venture and the air has been so much fresher. It has been a true example of how we are, in reality, guests on this planet, not its master.

But this lockdown would also have highlighted our responsibility to care for our fellow man - to identify and comfort the most vulnerable. It has been a time for the kindness of human spirit to shine through and new and innovative ways of reaching out to those in need have come to the fore. The vital importance of the good mental health of the nation has been ever present in news stories and the world appears to be united in one quest, to address the needs of those who suffer, in whatever way is humanly possible.

As lockdown is eased, we have an opportunity to take with us the things we have learnt, the things upon which we have reflected and the areas in which we feel we need to make changes, if the world is to benefit into the future. The kindness, which was evident during the height of this surreal and unprecedented situation, can, and must, live on in our post-pandemic world.

There is still a long way for us to travel through this chapter, but we feel that now is a good time to have discussions regarding the kind of world we would like to see, as life begins to gather speed once more. Deciding which lessons, we would like to take with us into the future, in order that we may always place kindness at the forefront of our world, would be one of the brightest silver linings to this pandemic cloud. Those who suffer from poor mental health, may well have had difficulties all their lives, only to have the issues highlighted and compounded in recent months. They will continue to suffer into the future if they are forgotten now. To enable them to feel a sense of lasting community, love and support, could change their lives for ever.

I have been very proud and touched by the generous acts of kindness I have witnessed, and continue to experience, within the Quinton Community in recent weeks. I would like to thank you wholeheartedly, and on behalf of all my staff, for supporting us and keeping us going.

Since 23rd March, including throughout the Easter holidays, we have continued to offer on-site education for the children of Key Workers within our Quinton community. We listen to the news keenly, as the roadmap for re-establishing school-based education for some year groups unfolds. Those in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, are due to be the first through the door, to join the children of Key Workers. We requested that the families of these children would be kind enough to fill out a survey on this subject, in order for us to canvass opinion, as we are very keen to mitigate any concerns there may be.

We do not pretend to be able to eliminate all risk, but we are completely committed to mitigating the risk to students, parents and staff, to the best of our ability. We assure you of the fact that we are studying the guidance from the government very closely and looking at how it relates to Quinton House school. This week and next, we will be preparing the site and producing a video, which will show everyone the safety measures we have established on site, both outside and within the school buildings. In addition, there will be live Teams meetings, to discuss all the issues with parents and staff.

I can confirm that we will continue online learning for all other years, until the end of term. This includes Year 10. We believe from the responses to our surveys and the many individual emails we have received, that we are delivering excellent online learning and we will continue to develop this further as the term progresses.

With my grateful thanks for all your patience and support.

Warmest wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Storey', written in a cursive style.

Jo Storey
Principal