



PitsfordSchool

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27 March 2020

Re: Well, we have made it to Easter

Dear Parents

I hope that this letter finds you and your families well and that you are staying safe, quarantined and sane.

I wanted to update you on some good news, of which there has not been a great supply recently, and talk through what we are doing over Easter. I also want to talk a bit about the key workers and how the school is responding.

First, some good news: in the midst of this drama and stress, we have appointed a new Head of Junior School who will take up the post in September. Her name is Mrs Rachelle Heard and she is the former Head of Lubenham Primary School, which is similar in size and nature to ours, and she is currently the Science Lead at St Thomas More Primary in Kettering.

I was immensely impressed by the field of candidates that we had for the post (25 applied, a long list of 10, a short list of 4), which included Heads and Deputies from a variety of schools, some very swanky indeed. This simply confirms what we all know, that is Pitsford and Pitsford Junior School are wonderful schools. We selected Mrs Heard from that outstanding field because we were moved and excited by her vision of how to build on Mrs Willmott's extraordinary legacy, her commitment to driving further forward academic standards, making more exciting still our creative curriculum, and to broadening and enriching the school's offer inside the classroom and out. Mrs Willmott leaves a big hole in the school and in our hearts, but also a magnificent foundation that she created and upon which we will build the next chapter of the school (I am aware that I mixed my metaphors a bit there).

Other good news: from September we will be introducing a Breakfast Club for all students (and parents) and we will remain open until six o'clock every evening. There are some details that I need to nail down, but this will happen and I will let you know when I can. I am not sure why I have not had the time to work on it during these last few weeks...

To move from my jollity, I am very proud to tell you that while some independent schools are not staying open to support the children of key workers, we are and that is down to my colleagues volunteering to give up their holiday, open themselves up to risk, and to come in and help the national cause. As I have said before, in everyone's interests, not least yours and your families, the school should be the last possible option, but if you need us to support you, as you support the nation, then we are here. I would be very grateful if you can email me directly (cwalker@pitsfordschool.com) to let me know when you need to come in, so that I can ensure we are staffed appropriately.





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I would like to say a few words about distance learning. I share your frustration at Firefly not being able to cope with the demands placed upon it by the mass transfer of all schools onto digital platforms on Monday (which affected schools all over the country). I am happier now that they have a better idea what they need and I am confident that it will work better next term. I am also delighted to say that we have been working on (and in some cases already delivering) lessons via video call using Zoom as our tool. By next term, we will also be rolling out Google Classroom across the school which will allow real-time learning and interaction during lesson slots. We are getting there and by next term the whole process will be more polished and robust. More details will come out, when I have them.

As a keen and long-term student of History, I can tell you with a great deal of confidence that we are living through a crisis that no-one alive in the world has encountered before and that everyone is having to improvise to solve. Things are changing at a dizzying rate, but we (you, me and the School) are survivors, we are adaptable and we will get to the other side. And we will get there together.

Have as good an Easter as you can, stay safe and speak soon.

Dr C G Walker
Headmaster

