



Dear Parent

The end of another session is upon us and, normally, I would be writing my Speech Day Address at this time. This year, however, nothing is normal and none of us could have foreseen exactly what would have happened since that day in March when it first became apparent that school closure was inevitable. You will be pleased to know that this letter will not be as long as the address that I usually deliver in the Town Hall, but I cannot let the end of the school year pass without pause for thought.

Much of my traditional Speech Day Address is taken up with a summary of the year's key events and a Vote of Thanks, dedicated to everybody in this community who has contributed to the rich tapestry of school life. I do not intend to include these things in this letter, but I encourage you to read both the separate Vote of Thanks that you have received and the comprehensive Annual Report that will be published shortly.

Speech Day is a celebration of school life and, in particular, it is an opportunity for us to recognise the achievements and commitment of so many pupils by awarding prizes to senior pupils. This year may have been different from any before, but our pupils have continued to work hard as always, and to excel in and out of the classroom. Prize certificates have been sent out by post and I congratulate each and every one of the recipients. I know that everybody would join me in giving all of our prize winners the most generous round of applause.

It is impossible to think of Speech Day without hearing music. I can still recall the spell-binding solo performances of recent years and the spine-tingling moment when the pipes start playing in Highland Cathedral and bring the ceremony to a close. None of these things are possible this year, but our musicians cannot be silenced and I thank Mr Haggerty and all of our performers for the wonderful virtual Summer Concert that was streamed last night. If you have not watched it, go to the Wellington YouTube channel, allocate yourself the best seat in the house, sit back and enjoy.

The most poignant moment in the concert surely comes at the close, when S6 deliver via Zoom a beautiful rendition of 'Red, Red Rose'. At the end, they wave a farewell that will be watched again and again. We have all been affected by the Coronavirus lockdown, but S6 have missed out on their final school days in a way that others have not. The last days of school etch themselves on the memory, because they are such a clear landmark on the journey from childhood to adulthood. It is probably the first time that many of us stop, reflect and are consciously aware that whilst the future is filled with possibilities, life will never be the same again. This year's S6 have been an excellent year group, who have given so much to this school in so many ways. Just today, I have heard that they have raised in the region of £24k for their chosen charity, Epilepsy Scotland. This is a remarkable sum of money to raise in these extraordinary times and I thank sincerely everybody who has made this possible. We will miss S6 and this year's leavers will always have a special place in our memories.

Whilst the end of a school year is a time for reflection, it is important this year that we look forward with hope to what the coming months will bring. The potential of online learning has been well and truly unlocked this term, but there is no substitute for the richness of normal school life. Wellington pupils have continued to make excellent academic progress, but they have missed out on all the other benefits of being together with their friends and teachers. We have all missed the fun of school and I know from conversations, and from the pupil survey that was conducted earlier in the term that, as a community, we cannot wait to be together again. Nobody knows exactly what the return will look like in August, but there is considerable pressure on our politicians to get children back to school. You are aware of the comprehensive plans that we have put in place to maximise attendance within the current safety parameters, but we are just waiting to adapt these if the guidelines are relaxed. I do not want any Wellington pupil to be working from home for a day longer than is necessary.

The summer holiday is for many families a time to travel and to visit family and friends. This year will be different, but the break will still give us all a chance to turn off the computer, to relax and to spend time doing the things close to home that we enjoy. We may have spent less time physically at school, but this has been a tiring term for pupils, teachers and parents alike. All of us have been juggling different responsibilities, coping with unfamiliar working patterns and dealing with anxieties that we are probably not yet able to fully understand. I sincerely hope, however, that being part of the Wellington family has provided some reassurance and comfort in these uniquely challenging and complex times.

I end by expressing my most sincere gratitude to you all. The term just past has been a success because pupils, teachers and parents have worked hard to make it so. For that, I cannot thank you enough.

In the meantime, I wish you and your families a safe, restful and relaxing summer and I very much look forward to welcoming you back to Wellington in August.

Kindest regards

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

Simon P Johnson
Headmaster