



November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing as the Director for Catholic Schools and Colleges in Clifton Diocese to express my thanks to your school community for the work that they and you, as part of that community, are doing to support each other during these very challenging times.

You will have returned from a mid-term break which was not perhaps spent doing things with your families that you would normally do – go on holiday, visit family in other parts of the country, share childminding etc. – however, I hope it enabled you to recharge your batteries for the next phase of the term and the uncertain months ahead.

I do not need to say how difficult and strange these times are for all but as the Director of our Catholic schools I would wish to reassure you that the leaders, and their staff are working tirelessly to ensure that the education of your child is not unnecessarily disrupted and that their experience in school is as productive and enjoyable as possible given the restrictions that have to be adhered to. The restrictions that each individual school places on both the students and you are there for the safety of everyone; and to ensure that the school can remain open and in operation throughout the twists and turns of this pandemic. School leaders must comply with government directives and are under unceasing scrutiny to ensure they do so. Both Ofsted and Health and Safety executives undertake spot check visits and phone calls to ensure the risk assessments of the schools are fit for purpose and in line with current statutory advice and guidance. This will continue for the unforeseeable future and will undoubtedly impact upon any forthcoming events like the usual Christmas celebrations of carol services, plays, Christmas lunches. Restrictions on singing, the sharing of resources, the mixing of bubbles etc will impact severely on those key events that would normally occur. As Director therefore, I would ask that you continue to be supportive and patient with your school leaders and staff during the forthcoming months. I am sure they will continue to communicate with you as and when they are able to.

As Catholic schools a holistic approach to education has and remains at the forefront of the work that is undertaken. The value of quiet moments in the day for prayer, reflection or a means to alleviate stress or anxiety remains central to the life of our schools. As a diocese we endeavour to support our schools with the provision of this through resources and training. Again, each schools' approach to being able to hold a Mass or liturgy with pupils and parents will be determined by the priest and the school situation. However, I know through their websites and talking to heads, schools continue to provide on-line opportunities for spiritual development of the faith and for personal well-being.

As the Bishop's representative for his Schools and Colleges I am immensely proud of our schools, but specifically at this moment in time when they have put into practice the mission of the Church which is to work for the common good and serve the vulnerable. We are all vulnerable currently in different ways and the need for support of one another and collaboration is vital to us all getting through this.

Once again thank you and the pupils for your contributions to Catholic education.

Yours sincerely,

*C. Collett*

Colleen Collett

Director for Schools and Colleges