15th December 2020

Dear Parents, Carers, Students, Staff and Governors,

What a strange time this is to say goodbye to you all - a weekend with messaging about testing arrangements for schools and communities next week; organising testing for all staff over the Christmas holidays; and then tracking and tracing all the contacts of a student confirmed positive on Sunday. I have enjoyed speaking with all our families recently, although I would truly have preferred this to have been in different circumstances, as I used to love seeing you all at the Parent Evenings, our musical and drama performances, information evenings and so on.

My final week has finally arrived, and messages from well-wishers are beginning to pop into my inbox, and by post. As you know, because of the pandemic, I have delayed my departure for as long as possible. My successor has now been appointed and the school has returned to ‘normal business’ as securely as humanly possible, first in June for Year 10s and our key worker children, then for all children and staff in September. The urgent building works have been completed and, from January, all the students will, once more, be back on the same site. All the t’s have been crossed and i's dotted – hopefully - and it is now time to close the door behind me, safe in the knowledge that the school is finally moving towards some semblance of normality next year with the promise of a vaccine and more frequent testing.

I know this year has brought suffering to many in our community; some of you have experienced the most grievous of losses. We have done our utmost at school to keep your children and their loved ones, as well as our own staff, safe throughout the year. This has meant a tough regime for both staff and students, and one totally alien to our relaxed, trusting and empowering ethos where adventure, fun and new experiences are encouraged as well as cross-age friendships.

I began teaching in London forty years ago. I recall being shocked by the news of the murder of John Lennon whilst eating lunch with students in Camberwell, south London. My school was close to Brixton, where I lived at the time. On one occasion I was barricaded in by police limiting

movement in the area. Forty years seems such a long time ago-and indeed it is. Many of you may not have even been born. In many respects there have been huge advances made in our world, for

example, the development of technology and the enormous potential this brings together with the proximity of our global community. Our world now has great reach yet, ironically, from next month, we stand alone separated from our European partners. As a linguist, I have celebrated the diversity of London schools and the opportunities this has offered for enrichment, especially so at WSfG. We will miss Erasmus and other grant funding which enabled all students, despite their financial circumstances, to travel and explore the world.

But we are left with our common humanity, which no one can take away, and our rolling programme of investment in technology which will ensure that our students will have the opportunity to play a major future role in this digital age, hopefully as leaders, and humanitarian ones at that.

Thank you all for your amazing support for the school over the past nine years. I have been privileged to have been part of our collective journey, together with a world-class team of staff.

I wish you all happiness, joy and good health for the future.

Yours sincerely,



Meryl Davies

Headteacher



 