



Aylesford School

and Sixth Form College

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2020

Dear Parent(s), Carers, Colleagues and Friends of the school,

As the spring term draws to a close I write my last newsletter to you all as Headteacher of Aylesford School and Sixth Form College. It is not a typical newsletter brimming with various activities and events. It is simply a note from me to you. It is the strangest and most unexpected of all in the fifteen years of my penning them! Retirement looks a little different than I thought it might look already.

The last few weeks have been a challenge for us all and the school has been busy trying to make sense and develop purpose and coherence in an ever changing environment. From where I'm sitting, the human response to our human dilemma has been fantastic. There has been tragedy and loss for many in our own country and beyond but the efforts to help and support others has been heart warming. It is akin to a spirit developed during the war years of the twentieth century when the country pulled together against a common foe. This time the enemy is invisible and attacks randomly but nevertheless the outpouring of goodwill and stepping up to the plate has been palpable. This has been led by all those working in the NHS but supported by others in the public sector and many in key positions that have enabled essential services to keep running. We must also not forget the volunteers who have declared their commitment to helping in whatever way they can and everyone else as we seek to keep our ship afloat. We should thank them all and each other whenever we can.

Over the last few weeks the school has provided support for children of key workers where needed enabling them to continue their vital work safe in the knowledge that their young ones are cared for. This will continue over the Easter period where staying at home is not an option. As well as caring for those children directly, teachers have been busy providing and receiving work from students remotely. I know these efforts have been appreciated by many parents as it has helped in providing a structure and routine.

We have tried hard to ensure families in receipt of free school meals receive support working with our own catering contractor, the local authority, local charities and now with a national provider. If you are eligible and still unable to get support please get in touch.

We have donated our own PPE equipment used in science and technologies to the NHS and this has been transported to them.

I want to let you know that the response from staff at the school has been fantastic. I am extremely proud to call them colleagues and I am honoured to have worked with them all.

I was going to reserve this last communication to thanks across the board but it has been a typicality of the job over many years that one's plans, however well thought through, have often been the victim of circumstance. Life is as it is - ever changing and unpredictable - but it is in our nature to seek control and attempt to create certainty. That is hard to do in uncertain times and requires resolve, resilience and positivity.

I thank everyone I have ever worked with whilst in Warwickshire in totality. Particularly all the staff of Aylesford School past and present. You have all been inspirational to me. You have allowed me to pursue my passion for creating a positive and meaningful educational environment year on year. Sometimes people have made this seem easy and straight forward and others have made it challenging and difficult. I will remember all of these experiences with fondness.

When one reflects of one's work over fifteen years there are notable moments, some in literally building for the future;

I have enjoyed overseeing the laying down of the AstroTurf pitch and floodlights, the replacement of many roofs and windows, the 'new' school access and set down, the building of the Primary School and the annex for the cadets. All of this to create a better environment and wider learning opportunities for our young people.

I have enjoyed (and endured) four OFSTED inspections and lived to tell the tale and share our successful outcomes!

I have seen the school move through a variety of specialist status and on into the brave new world of academisation.

I have lovingly cultivated the development of the all-through school and enjoyed bringing in expert colleagues in this phase of education to steer this part of the fleet.

Most importantly, I hope I have contributed in some way to many young lives (sometimes directly and often through our wonderful teachers and support staff) and helped them see the very real value of education and how it can help make a better world for all of us.

Finally, a word for the future. Inevitably the school will take a different path as leadership priorities change, policy shifts and society evolves. I am confident in the governance, the new headteacher, school leaders, staff, students and parents that they will together cherish what has been nurtured and add to it. The core values of the school I hope will continue and a legacy of enquiring, aspirational, respectful and disciplined students and citizens of the future will prevail. My job is done. I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to serve.

Thank you all. Stay safe and well.

Best Regards,



Steve Hall
Headteacher

