



20 March 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I think that this may be one of the last letters I write to you this academic year, although I would love for that statement to be wrong. I just wanted to write and thank you for your support, to ask you to pass my thanks on to your children as they are a fantastic group of young people and to publicly thank all of my staff. It has been a challenging few weeks and I think that there are many weeks to go before things begin to move back to normal. As staff in a school we are in a privileged position. We see young children grow towards adulthood and we take pride in the part we play in helping these young people develop; but we have our own families and worries, yet what has struck me recently is the ceaseless generosity of my staff in giving their time and offering to do so going forward.

However, I know this to be true of the vast majority of people in our community and I am eternally grateful for the goodness and kindness of others.

It strikes me though that we are at something of a crossroads as a country. In my own profession up and down the country we are struggling to train enough teachers; people simply do not want to do the job. We struggle as a profession to retain teachers as they move through the first 3 to 5 years of their career, but I know that this is the case across much of the public sector.

We have atomised education, encouraged schools to become academies and operate in a competitive market place. Two secondary schools on the Wirral, Pensby High School for Boys and Kingsway have gone to the wall in the last five years and now schools are isolated, and without support. PFI contracts and outsourcing have led to multi-nationals making hundreds of millions of pounds from public sector catering and cleaning contracts, whilst employees have had to go on zero hours contracts. These are the very same people we are now relying on to keep hospitals and public services going and they are the same people who have not had a pay rise in 10 years.

Since 2010 the government has slashed investment in schools, social care, hospitals and all other forms of public provision. All this whilst the inequality gap between those that have and those that struggle has grown to levels not seen since before the first world war, whilst staff in the NHS are struggling to get the protective clothing they need to keep themselves safe as they fight a health care crisis on our behalf.

The poor, disempowered and everyone who relies on any aspect of the state for help, support or education have paid to fix the banking crisis and there isn't a single minister in the cabinet who is not a multi-millionaire, but the Gig economy with its short-term contracts and exploitative practices has stripped many of the families in my community of their rights and protections.

I want you to know that we will keep open for as long as we can, not because the DfE says so, but because we believe in the value of our community. We believe in the importance of people and the

value of everyone. My staff aren't doing this to keep the rich rich, we are doing it, because we believe in universal services and the right for every child to have an education, and because it is the right thing to do.

I am not sorry that I am angry about years of underinvestment and diminution of public services, but I am sorry that we cannot do more to help our community. I hope that when we come back everyone in our community is fit and well, and that we find a time and a place to be able to express our gratitude to those who are working to keep us safe.

I think that it is quite possible that we will not see your children before September and I hope that however long we are closed for, all is well with you. Over the coming months look after yourselves, your families and your neighbours, for we are all stronger together.

Take care



K Flanagan
Headteacher