



From the Headmaster  
B J Wignall, MA, FRSA, MCM

# Ellesmere

A 7-18 Co-educational School

June 2020

Dear Parents,

I am writing to all Lower Sixth parents as I would normally do at this time of the year to cover a number of topics of relevance. In doing so, I am extremely conscious that this is hardly been a normal run-up to the end of term and the summer holidays and I hope that you and your families are coping well with the current situation. I have to say that all the reports that I am receiving suggest that the vast majority of Ellesmerians are coping well with the academic curriculum that they are receiving, but I know that they will be desperate to get back to normal life, and I share that desperation!

### **Summer Holiday**

As I have noted, there has been really good work done by the majority of pupils this term, and they will certainly have earned a break over the summer. However, I am afraid that if they are to maintain their good progress they cannot regard the summer as entirely free from work. For our IB students detailed research and preparation for the extended essay is an absolute must if this important part of the course is to be completed in draft by the start of next term. All students should have a clear work plan relating to their extended essay and need to spend a significant amount of time on working through that plan during the summer break. For our A Level and BTEC students there is more than enough to keep them occupied in simply preparing for the second year of their course.

### **Prefect selection**

It is at this time of the year that I speak to the Lower Sixth about prefect selection, and I thought it might be helpful to explain to you the process by which we will choose prefects from the group currently in the Lower Sixth.

I feel it is particularly important to write to you as almost every year I have conversations with Sixth Formers (and occasionally their parents), regarding their disappointment at not being made prefects. I hope that by writing in advance of any decisions being taken you will be in a good position to understand how we arrive at our decision. I have already spoken to members of the Lower Sixth about our way of selecting prefects. I have recorded a message to members of the Lower Sixth where I talk through these issues.

In a normal year this term would have been very important part of our prefect selection process as members of the Lower Sixth would have various school duties and there would have been a leadership training day that produces a report on every individual within the school. We then consider reports from Housemasters and Housemistresses and Tutors. Obviously, not all of this has been possible this term. Under normal circumstances having taken the factors outlined above into account (and others) Dr Chatterjee and I meet and I come to a decision regarding the appointment of prefects.

As I have already suggested, each year there are people who are disappointed that they have not been made prefects. I always go out of my way to make it clear to members of the Sixth Form that being a prefect is a responsibility rather than a reward, although I quite accept that it is seen as both. Each year we have thoroughly sound individuals who have been disappointed not to be prefects and who ask "what have I done wrong"? The answer to that question is, frequently, "you have done nothing at all wrong". In addition to the vitally necessary attributes of integrity, honesty and trustworthiness – which I hope all members of the Sixth Form possess – the ability to work in a team is vital. The ability to take on quite significant responsibility, which includes the ability to direct the younger pupils and support the discipline of the school without at any time making misjudgements which exceed authority or make other students unhappy, is also something that is taken into account. An assessment of an individual's ability to cope with the additional workload without compromising his or her studies is, of course, vital.

I hope that all our pupils leave here with significant leadership qualities, and not being appointed as a prefect does not mean that somebody will not be given responsibility or be trusted during their time in the Sixth Form.

In these unusual circumstances the only prefect appointments that I will be making in advance of September are for the Captains of School (Head Boy and Head Girl). I know that the Houses – both pastoral and competitive – will also be appointing their House Captains. Those people selected will not necessarily be College prefects.

I am going to delay the appointment of other prefects as long as possible in to next term. 'As long as possible' is a phrase of art and means exactly what it says and carries the implication that I do not know precisely what timescale I will be working to, as I will need to see how things develop.

#### **Last Day of Term**

I would normally include in this letter arrangements for the last day of term, but – sadly – that is not necessary on this occasion. It is possible that I will be writing to all parents as we are considering recording something and putting it online to mark the end of the year. For those who have attended Speech Day in the past, please be assured that no part of our planning includes my speech summarising the year: I can't see anyone wanting to sit through 45 minutes of me speaking into a camera!

I look forward to seeing you sooner rather than later, I hope.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely



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