

9th May 2018

Dear Year 11 Students and Families

I wanted to write my own message to everyone this week because I know that this can be an anxious time for you all. I hope you'll accept these few words of advice and encouragement and perhaps find them useful.

Firstly – congratulations! You've seen a lot of change in your time at secondary school. For most of you, I'm the third head teacher you've known. Uniforms have changed, learning communities have come and gone, houses, project-based learning, zero-tolerance, show my homework. All systems and rules, all well-intentioned in their own ways, whether they succeeded or failed. Thank you for playing your part so well.

But I suspect none of those systems and rules have made as big a difference to you as the people you've relied upon along the way. The teachers and staff who've shown you kindness, the family or carers who've been endlessly patient, the friend who has been the shoulder to cry on. In the end, the true success of a school is defined by our ability to ensure everybody can make and sustain such effective relationships. You really do only get one chance at that.

Exams are different – the outcome of an exam doesn't define your worth as a person. Life will test you in many ways, this is just one. But your approach to them can say something powerful about your character. I hope that you take them as an opportunity to show some qualities that I think are truly worth measuring: like determination, preparation, moderation and compassion.

Determination – because you owe it to yourself to make the effort to succeed

Preparation – because knowing what to expect and retaining key knowledge is power!

Moderation – because we all need to take the time to relax and please ourselves

Compassion – because these things are difficult, people need help, and we need to look after each other.

As Macbeth might say (indulge me, I'm an English teacher!), be 'bloody, bold and resolute' Year 11. We are very proud of you. Now go and be the best version of yourselves you can be over the next few weeks.

With respect and admiration,



Richard Spencer
Principal