



Church Road, Lydney
Gloucestershire, GL15 5DZ
T: 01594 843202
F: 01594 842025
E: info@thedeacademy.org
www.thedeacademy.org

Richard Brand: Headteacher

17th July 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

This term summer term has been like no other I can remember in my career and I am sure it is not one many of us will forget quickly. We know that many of you have faced very challenging situations at home juggling work and home-schooling and we are grateful for the way in which our community has continued to work together. Despite the many challenges we have faced we are ending this year with much to be proud of. However, if you are anything like me, you will be happy to be resigning your post as home-school teacher with immediate effect!

It has been a strange time to start as a Headteacher. Walking around our school, with an absence of students and staff in our classrooms, corridors and playgrounds has led to us thinking forward to a return to normal, and we are delighted that shortly we will be able to welcome back all of our students and staff. However, there have been a number of advantages to having had slightly more time to watch and observe. I have had more time to speak with parents, staff, and students and what has struck me through these conversations is the strength of community investment in this school. In addition, Academy Leaders have had time to plan and think, and we are excited to implement some changes in September.

In the recent weeks which have passed we were thrilled to see most of our students coming in for meetings with their tutors, and others joining the occasional online lesson. We are incredibly proud of our staff for being flexible and determined to offer the best remote education we can, and picking up new skills rapidly on the way, and for our students for being diligent, organised (and patient!) and working with us along this journey.

Over the course of the term, with more time to observe I have seen clearly a number of unique strengths of the Academy. I have been impressed with the positive relationships' students have with their tutors and teachers, and that teachers have with parents. I have also been incredibly proud of the resilience and creativity our students have shown when approaching their home learning. Seven weeks ago, we started our "Bright Spots" bulletin, in an attempt to capture some of the exciting and wonderful work our students have been completing and submitting from home. Each week we have been inundated with work from our teachers and students, and one of the most challenging jobs I faced each Friday was selecting the small number we could use in our bulletin. In this newsletter please enjoy a small sample of some of the truly exceptional work our young people have undertaken over these recent weeks.

We say goodbye to a number of staff at the end of this term, who are leaving either for retirement or promotion. Colleagues leaving this term are Mr. M Spyridakis, Ms A Edwards, Ms H Deans, Dr L Condon and Mr A Hutchence. Whilst we are sad to see these colleagues leave, we are excited that they are going on to take their next steps.

We have been grateful for the many supportive messages from parents thanking our staff and recognizing their achievement and dedication during such a difficult time. Your kind words have been much appreciated and as always, your feedback is very welcome.



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I would like to thank the students, staff and wider community for making me feel so welcome since June. I wish you all a very restful, and well earned, summer break.

Yours sincerely

Richard Brand
Headteacher



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