



9 September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: 'Parents/Carers – School – Student: Community partnerships'

I write to you within the first week of this academic year following the sad news that Queen Elizabeth II passed away yesterday. Being our longest reigning monarch, she was part of the rich tapestry of our nation and as Liz Truss said yesterday, 'she was the rock on which our modern nation is built.'

We have talked to your child/ren today about these recent events and what to expect over the coming weeks. We held a two-minute silence at breaktime out of respect and to pay tribute to her life. Our 1657 students were so respectful, standing on the tennis courts in complete silence with heads bowed in thought and quiet reflection. As a school community who 'do life together', occasions like this call for mutual support, encouragement and reflection. Indeed, as I type, I am listening to the bells of St Martin's Church in our local community on Green Lane peeling as part of a national response.

Whatever our views on the monarchy, she was a fixed point in our lives, a figure of continuity when all around was in constant change. As the writer Jonathan Freedland said:

'She was woven into the cloth of our lives so completely; we stopped seeing the thread long ago. It was not just the coins, the bank notes and the letter boxes. It was the fact that you could hear a song called Her Majesty from a different lifetime, written by a group that broke up half a century ago, and the Majesty they were serenading was the same person who reigned until yesterday. Longevity plays strange tricks like that.'

We enter a new future now. There will be a different head on the coin, different words for the national anthem. The one element in our collective life that was consistently, reliably the same has gone. Many will be mourning a woman they once saw visit a school or open a hospital; the sender of a birthday telegram to a parent or grandparent; the incarnation of the crown that their son or daughter swore an oath, and risk their life, to defend. There will be talk of the national values she embodied.

But millions will now be mourning something more intimate and more precious: the loss of someone who was a permanent fixture for their – our – entire lives. Her death will prompt memories of all that has passed these last 70 years, and all those others whom we have loved and lost. There is a grief contained within grief. And in that very act, we mourn for ourselves'.

Much of our discussions with your child/ren this week have been focusing on fresh starts, change and hopes for the future. You, their parents/carers, and the school can both be their 'constant' throughout. There are more students in the school than ever before. E block is unfortunately delayed opening as one of the sub-contractors ceased trading over the summer. We are making plans to accommodate the greater number of students with more covered areas and temporary classrooms. Having more students leaving site presents its own challenges, and whilst students have behaved impeccably all week, I remain very grateful to parents for not driving up to the school gates at 3:15pm as this causes congestion.

I look forward to continuing to work together in that triangle between parents/carers, school and students this year so that our students can reach all they hope to, together as a community partnership.

Yours faithfully,

Mr C Bishop (Headteacher)