



2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020

Dear everyone,

We would normally be writing to you at this time of year to wish you a Happy Easter and to say enjoy the holiday: which may not be the case this year in your front room!!

It's hard to believe that schools have only been closed for two weeks. Normal routine seems such a long time ago. Can I thank you again for all the support, kindness and consideration, not to mention patience you have shown to our headteachers and staff in recent weeks. It has been a challenging time for everyone but it really has brought out the very best in people in our Catholic community.

We are very aware that "home schooling" has been fraught with difficulties for some families. Whether it be technology issues, managing the plethora of work set by enthusiastic teachers or dare I say, reluctant learners. These problems will increase after Easter as the novelty of being cooped up indoors really wears off. We have listened to the feedback from parents and teachers and in the summer term will be offering a much simpler daily timetable of work with additional activities for those who want them. It's important that we are not placing an extra burden on families who are already struggling. We know it isn't possible to replicate lessons in the home. For the following reasons it is Xavier policy not to streamline lessons live:

- Teacher unions have strongly advised that lessons should not be streamed live.
- There are significant safeguarding issues with live streaming.
- Many families have very limited internet access
- And Xavier has been inundated with families unable to cope with the current demands and asking us to simplify things.

Therefore, instead time will be spent adapting planning for the autumn term ensuring gaps are filled and the children don't fall behind where they should be.

Our schools will still provide childcare over the holidays for the children of key workers and for vulnerable children. Thank you to everyone involved in organising this and to the staff who have volunteered to come to school instead of being on holiday. We have been very blessed to be inundated with staff volunteers during the last 2 weeks with some staff trying to juggle child care and setting work for their class, all whilst home schooling their own children.. Talk about a busman's holiday!!

I know some of you are worried about a number of events etc. that would have taken place in the summer term. We have started to plan leaving Dos, induction to secondary school etc. and we will provide more details as soon as we have greater clarity on when schools are likely to reopen.

That's a quick round up for now, thank you again for your positive response and thank you to all our teachers and support staff who are amongst the many unsung heroes across the Country. I believe when we come through this, the world will change and for the better. As we move into holy week and reflect what Jesus went through for us all, I wonder if God is sending us a message to take stock, re-evaluate what's important in life; to be kind to others, spend time with loved ones, and ensure our values are lived and not laminated.

God bless you and your families, keep well and keep smiling

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ani Magill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ani Magill

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