



EMMANUEL COLLEGE
Emmanuel Schools Foundation

17 December 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

I don't know about you, but I have certainly got into the habit of checking the news more often over the last two years. We live in times of a heightened awareness of what is going on in the world, mainly because often, the announcements that are made have a direct impact on our lives. We will all have different reactions to hearing about changes in our lives enforced by the government's response to the pandemic, but we are increasingly suffering fatigue and frustration every time our hopes are dashed or uncertainty increases. Of course, many people have received devastating news during the pandemic, about jobs, about health and, very sadly for some, about bereavements. News is often unsettling – we use the phrase “no news is good news” for a reason. But in the account of the first Christmas, we hear of news that is not only good but a cause of great joy.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2: 10-12)

My prayer for you and all in our school community is that we will hear this announcement and know its truth for us in our lives. That the saviour's birth, announced in this message and written by Luke in this passage, is for all of us today as much as it was for those who first heard this message that first Christmas.

We have been walking together through the Covid crisis for over 20 months now. Each phase of the pandemic has brought its own challenges. This term, we have had more freedoms than we have had previously, but I know for some it has been the hardest term yet as we face uncertainty and disappointment alongside the pressures that the busyness of life brings. In the face of all of this, our students and staff have been amazing. They have shown remarkable character and maturity throughout the term. I am also thankful for all you have done as parents and carers to support the work of the College this term and for your patience and understanding throughout.

I am delighted with the progress we have made with development this term as a College. We have had a successful launch of a restructured approach to the use of the building, the resumption of co-curricular activities but at a scale never seen before, and the rapid development of the curriculum. We have launched and begun to embed a new, high quality personal development curriculum and strengthened our provision for the most vulnerable. In addition to this, we are launching a new, very exciting approach to reading which we will share more about when we return in January.

As the year draws to a close, we will be saying farewell to a number of staff who are moving on from Emmanuel at this time. Miss Adams, who has served College as a Learning Support Assistant; Mr T Oakes, who has served College in the science department and in the pastoral team; Mr McCrae, who has been our College piano teacher for some time; and Mr Layfield, who has served as a teacher and leader at Emmanuel for many years. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to these staff for all that

they have done in the service of our students and to wish them the very best for the next stage in their lives.

We have an exciting year ahead which begins on Tuesday 4 January. At this stage, we don't know what requirements will be placed on schools other than the obligation to provide Covid testing for students when they return. However, we shall do all we can to do as much as we can. We have designed our co-curricular programme so that we can continue in the event of a requirement to return to year group bubbles and benefit, of course, from a site arrangement that also supports this. We know that students need school more than ever before and we take the responsibility for ensuring we make every minute count very seriously.

It is important that we return well and, to that end, can I ask for your support in ensuring that all students return to College fully adhering to the College dress code which includes an expectation that all students will have, and wear, their lanyard and ID card and have their own mask with them (unless they are exempt). Girls who choose to wear skirts must ensure that they are the correct length, and all students must make sure that they are adhering to the dress code in respect of shoes, bags and coats.

May I finish by wishing you a very blessed and happy Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous new year.

Yours sincerely

Mr M Waterfield
Principal