

COMPASSION**MOTIVATION****OPEN-MINDEDNESS****Dear students of Aylesford and Wrotham Schools**

I hope that you and your families are well and that you are finding ways to remain positive in these extraordinary times. Life is certainly very different, but the kindness and creativity being shown by you and the staff at our schools shows that the sense of community at our schools remains strong.

As we move to the start of a new term I wanted to remind you all that even though you are at home you are still a part of our school community and that we are here to help and support you when you need it. Your Headteacher's have been in touch to let you know who to contact if you need help with your school work, or if you feel that you are simply not coping well. We are all having good days and bad days, so please use that support when you need it.

At our schools we have a real focus on character and this will continue to be most important as we deal with the challenges that we are now facing. I believe that focussing on the three particular character strengths of compassion, motivation and open-mindedness will help us remain positive.

Compassion:

Being kind to others around you is really important at the moment. Everyone is facing new challenges at the moment and when someone offers to help out or does or says something kind it makes a real difference. We also need to show compassion to those around us by being tolerant of each other, for example, by making an effort to ignore someone's annoying habits. Finally, we need to show ourselves compassion. This means not being too hard on ourselves when we are having a bad day, and allowing ourselves to make mistakes without getting too frustrated.

Motivation:

Learning at home rather than at school is very different and some people do not find this easy. Having a routine does appear to be the key to keeping healthy both physically and emotionally. For example, getting up and dressed in time for lessons to start at 8.30am, planning your day to include lesson time and breaks, and making sure you get some fresh air and exercise every day, even if this is just going for a walk. Your routine will help keep you motivated and this will require you to use your self-discipline. Finding the motivation to focus on learning is going to be really important over the next few weeks and will require you to be really resilient at times. Trying to focus on what you have achieved each day rather than worrying about what you haven't achieved will also help with your motivation. If you are struggling to be motivated do contact your teachers as they will be able to help you prioritise your work.

Open-mindedness:

Learning at home rather than at school means that you will have to get used to new ways of learning. It is important to be open-minded about this and trust that your teachers are doing their best to set you learning activities that will help you to continue to make progress. Remember that whilst you may have one particular way that you like to learn, its important to be able to learn by doing a range of different activities. Being open-minded isn't easy and it will require you to recognise when you start thinking 'I won't be able to do this, I don't understand it, I can't learn like this ', and to just try.

Having good character is sometimes described as doing the right thing even when it is not easy. If we can all continue to develop the three character strengths above, we will resurface from the current situation being more able and more determined to focus on the things that truly matter.

All best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wright'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M'.

Matthew Wright

Executive Headteacher

Aylesford and Wrotham Schools