

Fellow Hanley Castle students,

Although you are constantly being reminded of the current COVID-19 pandemic, and likely won't stop hearing about it for a while, we wanted to reach out to all of you in light of this situation to express a message of support. We don't think we ever got to properly thank you for letting us be your next student leadership team, and it's unfortunate that we can't do it in person, but despite this we would all like to let you know how honoured we are to be in this position writing to you.

It's not difficult to see how uncertainty makes up the majority of the world's sentiments right now. It's also easy to be discouraged (or maybe relieved?) by the fact that exams have been cancelled, amongst other plans we may have had for the foreseeable future. The fact is, there's nothing we can do about it. But that's why it's relieving. Every single student in the UK is in the same position. Please don't forget that. You are not alone. By nature of a pandemic, this is affecting all of us – whether it's indirectly or directly – and therefore the way our grades turn out should be the least of our worries. Lots of people are working hard to make this as smooth as possible, and lots of people are finding this more difficult than others, so it's important to remember that things are going to return to normal. We have absolute faith in Hanley Castle High School's staff who we know are doing their absolute best to make sure that everyone at this school gets through COVID-19 safely.

It's okay if you're finding it difficult to work during this. The majority of us aren't experienced "remote learners" and are finding it just as hard to adapt to this new way of learning, so please forgive yourself if you feel like you've lost some of the motivation to continue working. Keep putting in the effort with the work you're being set, and everything will be a lot easier once life starts returning back to normal.

Please also remember to not focus too much on all the doom and gloom and have some time to rewind and relax. See what's good on Netflix or Disney+, learn that instrument you've always wanted to, or learn that language that you've been putting off learning for ages. Even though we are separated, stay connected. Check up on each other. Everyone is dealing with this differently so just making sure that we are all okay is vital.

And finally, don't stress out too much, because it definitely isn't worth it. Do your best, get some sunshine, do your "permitted daily exercise", *please* maintain social distancing, and remember that there is light at the end of the tunnel. We are here for you. Please don't hesitate to email any of us or even message us on social media. We definitely want to hear from you. Community is what we need in times like this and we want to do everything we can to provide that for you.

Best wishes from the leadership team,
Emma Sinden, James Thomas, Tanya Mariga, and Sam ~~Turner~~ Powell

Our Instagrams:

Emma - @Emmajsenden

James - @_jamesdt

Tanya - @tanyamariga

Sam - @sammyjp03