



# Robert Smyth Academy

Dear Families and Students,

I hope this letter finds you well.

I write to you following the loss of Chloe Longster, a student in Year 9, in November. Today, I write with a mixture of sadness and hope. If honest, these have been my prevailing emotions over the last six months as I have reflected on how best we can honour the memory of a student who brought so much joy, life, happiness, and kindness to all those that she came into contact with. That was Chloe, and that is an important legacy that we are committed to honouring and remembering.

As many members of our community will know, recently Chloe's family and friends celebrated her 14<sup>th</sup> Birthday together at a local gathering. I was moved to learn of the deeply respectful and faithful way that our students conducted themselves during this event and I was humbled to hear this from Chloe's family directly. I wish to pay a sincere, heartfelt tribute to every student who participated in that event and provided the family with the respect, support, and love that they deserved. You should all be very proud of that.

Whilst we continue to mourn the loss of a vibrant, talented, and compassionate individual who brought so much joy and positivity to our school, we have a responsibility to keep her memory alive. Therefore, in honour of Chloe's memory and the profound impact she had on our school community, I am pleased to inform you that a commemorative bench has been installed on the school grounds and Chloe's friends have been able to decorate planters that will feature alongside the bench. This bench serves as a lasting tribute to her remarkable spirit and will provide a serene space for reflection, remembrance, and solace.

The bench, adorned with acrylic quotations and colours selected by Chloe's family, serves as a reminder of the beautiful memories we shared and the enduring legacy she has left behind. It is a symbol of our commitment to preserving her memory and ensuring that her light continues to shine brightly within the corridors, classes and community of Robert Smyth Academy.

This commemorative bench also stands as a testament to the strength of our community, coming together in times of both joy and sorrow. It represents our unwavering support for one another and the compassion that defines our school family. Put simply, it is about belonging and Chloe will always belong to our community.

On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July, we will also present the inaugural Chloe Longster Award to a student who has been nominated and selected for their embodiment of the compassion, positivity and kindness that represent Chloe's characteristics. I wish to sincerely thank Chloe's family for working with us to establish this award.

I would also like to welcome you, in whatever way that you deem appropriate, to offer your ongoing thoughts, reflections or prayers to Chloe's family and friends who continue to be in our hearts.

During these challenging times, I hope we can all take strength from unity and the sense of belonging which typifies what it means to be part of Robert Smyth Academy.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are here to support one another through this difficult time and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

Dan Cleary  
**Principal**



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