

Thank you, Mr Thomas.

You know, I've never really understood the concept of how picturing the audience naked was supposed to make you less nervous... If anything I'm more so a little uncomfortable right now.

Anyways...

I think that its fair to say that 2020 has been quite the turbulent year. A year that could be described by many words, most of which I probably shouldn't say at an occasion like this. Through an ongoing global pandemic, 2 nationwide lockdowns, and the sudden passing of Louis Duval, this year has been full of ups and downs. It's so easy for me to list the negatives that have come over the past 12 months, however, I can't stress how crucial it is that we prioritise the underlying positives that have come out of 2020. The importance of resilience, comradeship, and perseverance has resonated throughout this year. Its been a rough ride, but **together**, we made a great sacrifice, we **believed** that one day we will be in a better place, and so here we are. As a school, and as a nation, we have **achieved** far more than most other countries have. I hope that this eventful year has allowed you to grasp a better understanding of what you are capable of as a person, how resilient and strong you are, and put in perspective how grateful you should be to live in such a safe place.

I would like to thank Mr Thomas for trusting me with this opportunity to lead my school this year. I believe that this role has developed me into a stronger leader, build character and allowed me to become a better person overall.

Secondly, I'd like to thank each and every staff member - from the teachers to the teacher aids, to the tuckshop ladies, groundskeepers and more. I know that this year has been just as difficult for you, as it has been for us learners. But your patience and perseverance through thick and thin have made the tough times feel so much easier. So for that, I will be forever grateful and proud of the work that you have all put in throughout the year and throughout my time here at whangaparaoa college. I think that 2020 has truly gone to show how much work and care teachers put into their learners. Offering us not only knowledge but also teaching life skills and overall etiquette. I could never thank you enough.

Thirdly I'd like to thank my exec team, house leaders and prefects. Thank you all for keeping spirits high throughout the year, and trying to make this year as normal as you could for the rest of our learners. Through one disruption to the other, our prefect experience has been far from normal, but whether you realise it or not, you have all outdone yourselves and I am so proud of you.

To the class of 2020, Approximately 2468 days ago, on the 29th of January 2014, we gathered in the auditorium as a group of strangers on our very first day of school, and now in a few days time, we will once again gather in the auditorium, instead this time as a dysfunctional family, and say our final goodbyes. We started from the bottom, and now the whole team might just barely be here.

Looking back, I remember it all as if it were just yesterday, the first class, the first athletics day, the first exam, the first, the second, third, and fourth girlfriend. We have been through it all. The thought of playing handball together at morning tea, and grabbing a cookie on a cheeky tuckshop run will soon no longer be a nudiustertian concept. So Thank you for being a part of my journey and for allowing me to be a part of yours.

A wise man often says "be safe, and if you can't be safe, be careful." So to the class of 2020, from me to you, be safe on your journey, be careful, and of course be great.

Good luck to all of you learners for your future. Time really does fly, so make the most of your time here at Whangaparaoa College. Like I said at the start of the year, soak up the opportunities that are offered to you, play your part in contributing to your school's legacy. And most importantly... look after each other.

And of course Good luck to our graduates. As our school chapter comes to a close, the next chapter is soon to start. So whatever you decide to make of your journey next year - whether it be uni, going into a trade or full-time work, make sure you always remember where it all started. Never forget Sammy the shag, and how versatile a good satchel can be. Don't forget your roots, and continue to live by the values of Whangaparaoa college.

It has been a huge honour to have been your head boy for 2020 and have the opportunity to farewell Whangaparaoa College on behalf of the graduating cohort. But This is not goodbye, its see you later.

Thank you Whangaparaoa College.

