

At the Beginning of the second trimester, 2020 Academic Year

Boys and girls, I would like to talk about two things at the beginning of the second trimester.

First, the outbreak of the new coronavirus has concerned all of us during these past six months. We have seen very many people infected with COVID-19 worldwide—and more than 800,000 deaths due to it. The number of the infections and deaths has been still skyrocketing. Fear of this pandemic has spread all over the world, negatively impacting global transportation and the economy.

I think we are in the second outbreak of COVID-19, not keeping it under control any more, the current situation could still lead to “over-shooting,” a nationwide explosive surge in infections. It is unclear when and how the spread of this coronavirus will cease, and it is said that it will be a year or never before a vaccine can be developed.

We have to protect ourselves medically. Avoid the “three Cs” —closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded places with many people nearby and close-contact setting in which close-range conversations take place—where clusters of COVID-19 cases tend to be found. Never forget to wash your hands before and after having meals or using the bathroom, or after returning home from school or from any other place. Wear a medical face mask when you come to school and go home, as well as at any time that you use a train or bus. It is very important for all of us—you and your families, my fellow teachers and myself—not to get infected with COVID-19. It is also important for us to be wise enough to avoid discrimination and prejudice.

Second, Hans Rosling writes in his book Factfulness that “Societies and cultures are not like rocks, unchanging and unchangeable. They move.” “... societies and cultures move ----- often much faster,” because of “... the spread of the Internet, smartphones, and social media,” He also writes, “What you learn about the world at school will become outdated within 10 or 20 years of graduating. So we must find ways to update adults’ knowledge too.” As I often tell you, we live in an age of uncertainty. We don’t know what will happen in the next 10 or 20 years. That’s why we should be lifelong learners. Don’t take only dark views of your lives. There may be many more chances to leave your marks and achievements in this age than in times when humans lived in surroundings that didn’t change much. We don’t have time to spend complaining about the age that we live in. Enjoy changes in our society. Take on as many new challenges as you can. Life should be full of adventures. Be ambitious, boys and girls.

Today, I talked about two things: first, that you should protect yourselves from COVID-19, second, that you should be lifelong learners.

One more thing, to the twelfth graders, I know how hard you have been working. Believe in yourselves. The possibilities for you are infinite. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves. You don't regret what you have done, you regret what you haven't chosen to do. AD ALTA. Aim high, boys and girls.

In closing, I would like to offer you all my best wishes.

Thank you very much.

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