



Dear Child,

A letter symbolises the need to connect despite, and because of, the distances created by time and space. I am writing one to you to express many thoughts, but mostly, I am writing to let you know how much I miss you. Currently, I am in my home and you are in yours, while ordinarily the two of us would be in a classroom – going over Electrostatics or commenting on the weekend that’s passed. But the pandemic has overturned all our usual routines and established strange new ones.

It’s taken me a while to get used to the ‘new normal’. In fact, I’m not sure if I’ve adjusted completely yet. I wonder if it’s the same for you – after all, you belong to a generation of ‘digital natives’ where gadgets shape your everyday realities. Yet, I find myself thinking about how you are coping with all these technological transformations. My constant questions are: are you okay? Are you happy? How can I be there for you through times that are uncertain, and physical distances that appear insurmountable?

I look forward to interacting with you online each day – it’s what keeps me going. I enjoy lecturing to an eager, curious, and smart audience behind the screen, who are attentive and patient. It gives me immense fulfilment when my chat box erupts with answers to my questions, doubts, and comments. It comforts me that my children are safe and well and untouched by the chaos in the external world. It affirms to me that teaching and learning can endure any circumstance, and that the need to care for every child’s well-being is hardwired into the DNA of each teacher.

I want to take this time out to tell you about how proud you continue to make me feel, even though it’s been ages since I last saw you.

Your ability to show up every day is truly inspirational. You motivate me to do my job, which is not so much a job as it is a fierce need to nurture, protect, and support. When this could have been a summer filled with the outdoors, of meeting friends and family and being uninhibited, you have adapted to being indoors with an acceptance and grace that’s nothing short of astounding. You have shown steadfast focus and determination to goals that are not immediately in sight. You have persevered, demonstrating unshakeable faith and hope.

Above all, your resilience displays a maturity far beyond your years, and this is what makes me most proud. It is not the A+ or the 100% that matters in the long run (although these are nice things to achieve as well), it is the capacity to bounce back from adversity and be on your feet in time to tackle the next challenge. Life will send several curveballs hurtling our way – but the secret to success lies not in the one who throws them, but in the one who catches them.

I miss seeing your bright and shiny faces every day, but for the moment, I must, like you, learn to adapt. Thank you for giving me the strength to go on, thank you for being the reason I love doing what I do. Hopefully, it won’t be long before I see you again in familiar territory. Until then, we will converse through PowerPoints and chat boxes, and wait for the day when our classrooms will resound with our mutual joy.

*With all my love and hope,
Your teacher*