
Principal's Newsletter

1 May 2020

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Pupils and Students,

We have all completed another week of lockdown. There is a hint in the air that we will all soon be invited to consider the future beyond the current conditions and limitations, especially in schools.

I have been invited to speculate about when this might be, or how it might be done. This speculation strikes me as unworthy of our emotional energy. Better to focus on today, this week, this weekend, and next week, and making it the best and safest possible week for our children, families, colleagues and friends. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, as the good Book tells us.

It is however heartening to read that Mr Gavin Williamson, the man who is now in charge of education, has decided that he will give schools as much time as possible to prepare for a safe and orderly reopening of schools. Let us hope that will indeed be the case.

In the meantime, learning is ploughing ahead, driven by the talent and commitment of our teachers. The entire operation of online learning is being brilliantly coordinated by Mrs Haynes who, together with coordinators, assistant principals, heads of faculty and teachers, uses technology to inspire and organize the curriculum across the College. There is a lot of creative teaching going on, including in some Year 10 Teams lessons, new this week.

Our IT team have provided a link to some further information and guidance for parents about Microsoft Teams – please click [here](#).

From next week you will see on Show My Homework a new year group designation: NY12. This is transition work set for Year 11 in order to keep them focused on learning and engaged with their intellectual passions in preparation for the next step. Guidance about this has already been sent but here is a clear explanation of the intent and logistics of this work from Mrs Haynes:

From Monday 4 May, we are launching transition work for our current Year 11 pupils ahead of their A' Level courses starting in September 2020. The aim of this is to not only minimise any transition challenges created by school closures, but also to engage, stimulate and motivate this year group by offering a new challenge in the next stage in their studies.

This transition work will be available in SMHK in a new year group called "NY12". All Year 11 pupils can access all subjects, it is not linked to classes or blocks. We anticipate that pupils will access those subjects that they are keen to study at A' Level but all Year 11 students are able to access all subjects so they may do as many as they wish.

In setting up these transition activities, it is important that pupils and parents do not assume that admission to the Sixth Form will necessarily follow. Decisions with regard to Sixth Form admission will not be made until after the GCSE results have been published on 20 August 2020. Our usual admission process will apply this summer and the quality of any transition work will not form part of these considerations.

Next Friday, May 8, is a bank holiday. There will be no online learning or lessons organized for that day.

You will also begin to notice in the secondary phase that Mr Hammersley's chapel talks will be joined by House assembly presentations. We are trying to keep the learning in the school which has always included moral and spiritual education going. These assemblies will be placed on the Show My Homework noticeboards.

Mrs Crook (SENCO) has asked me to highlight that Liverpool's SEND Support Services are providing advice and support to families during this difficult time, including strategies on supporting learning at home. You can access the contact details for the support services available [here](#).

There are some amazingly creative efforts underway to maintain this sense of community, or learning from each other, or learning together. Ms Roddy for example is conducting a virtual bake-off competition with her form. Our pastoral staff are speaking to pupils and parents on the telephone. Mr Hammersley's army of volunteers have provided advice and practical help to some families in need.

Mrs Doran has continued through the Wilton Scholars programme to run a virtual programme of activities. Indeed, there appears to be no slackening ever in her drive to provide enrichment that transforms the horizons of our pupils. You can read about it [here](#) and also about a live assembly broadcast our pupils participated in [here](#).

Engagement in online learning has continued to improve. 92% of Year 7 for example are marked present for this week. I think this is due to the quality of the activities and learning being presented to pupils. We are keen to drive that engagement even higher, using the results of the pupil voice survey, feedback from parents, and one to one intervention when pupils are not engaging.

Mr Cook energetic as ever, is bundling together our engagement with Redholme care home. The idea is to flood the residents with messages of hope, sympathy and empathy, and inspiration. Pupils in the hub work on this but several poems and other letters have been submitted also by pupils not in the hub. Mr Cook is inviting volunteers from across the

College community (parents, staff as well as pupils) to take part in this pen pal project with the residents – please email Mr Cook for further details jcook@liverpoolcollege.org.uk.

I was particularly moved by one letter written by one of our Y8 pupils. It is a heartfelt message of human connection, of the love and care that breaks through our loneliness and isolation. It can not be quoted in full because it was too personal but below gives a good flavour:

All might seem lost right now and you might feel worried and anxious and gloomy that you can't see your family, but you are not alone. I can say this because I'm feeling the same. I miss all my friends and family and I'm upset I don't get to see them. The NHS are doing everything they can, working endless hours trying to find a vaccination for this disease. As each day goes by we are one step closer to finding this vaccine and I'm sure that soon they will have found one and gradually the lockdown rules will be lifted. So let's keep our heads up high and we will get through this experience and so when we look back on this that we can remember that in fact, even during isolation, there are moments of bliss and, at times, although it sounds strange to say: we made our own happiness. I guess that is the beauty of being human.

I wish you and yours a restful and safe weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal