
Principal's Newsletter

4 December 2020

Dear Parents,

I stopped by the COP26 Virtual UN Climate Conference 2020 in G2 the other day. Here was yet another example of innovation in a time of restrictions. Pupils from various Liverpool schools were joined by Councillor Barbara Murray as they represented different countries in the climate change debate. If our city's pupils reflect the reality of our politicians we may all have cause for hope. They challenged each other very rigorously, demanding to know why certain targets had not been met. It was good, in this instance, that such discussions were virtual as the debate grew heated. This was an excellent experience organized by Ms Whittell, and the pupils involved (members of our Eco-Committee) are looking forward to sharing their findings and experience with the whole school via their Eco-Newsletter and in their assemblies - watch this (green) space!

Of course, climate change and environmental measures begin at home. The winter temperatures have induced some parents to keep their engines running outside of the Prep and Pre Prep, keeping themselves cosy and creating some seriously toxic air for all the small people walking around after school. I think we can on these, and on so many issues, do better as a school.

This week we took the unprecedented step of beginning our research on the introduction of a code of conduct for parents! This will set out our expectations of parents in promoting a healthy and safe school environment. I did not think such a policy would be necessary but have become persuaded that it is unavoidable. We will discuss the policy at our virtual parent information evening which we have provisionally scheduled for Tuesday 15 December.

The Year 11 mocks, disrupted by the need for some pupils to self-isolate, was a technical and organizational triumph of teachers and leadership. I visited what I term the NASA control room where pupils being examined at home were being invigilated remotely, using methods developed by the Oxbridge colleges in their systems. Our pupils responded magnificently. We were all touched by the request of one of the self-isolating pupils to be allowed to wear her school uniform while taking the exam.

Next week it will be the turn of our Year 13s to undergo the intensity of mock examinations. Mr Williamson has stubbornly insisted that examinations will go ahead and, like all stubborn

people he will eventually be proved right or disastrously wrong. He has certainly not revealed a tremendous sensitivity to the disparity between pupils in Cornwall, who have not lost any days of face to face teaching, and those in Bolton, where last week 40% of the sixth forms were absent through the virus. Levelling up in this case means ploughing ahead, without regard to some fundamental unfairness. Our students will in fact rise to the occasion, and we are prepared for any and all U turns however screeching, when reality meets Mr Williamson. That has apparently not happened yet.

Here is something that is piercing the gloom of winter. This week has seen the start of Liverpool College's 12 days of Advent (there are 12 school days in December). In school these have included contributions from pupils in all phases of the school put into a video for pupils to watch in their forms/ classes. The performance of the Pre Prep and the readers is very inspiring. You can follow along with us by watching pared down public versions of the videos [here on YouTube](#). A big thank you to Luke P (Year 8) who has edited this week's videos.

The Rugby Football Union must be the most effective negotiating body in the whole world. Indeed, they should be seconded to the Brexit talks immediately. After procuring vast monies to pull the sport through its shut down, they have now persuaded the government that rugby can be played in a socially distanced way. The games are back on. Clubs are preparing for fixtures. The only adjustments are the disappearance of the scrums and mauls, which from the perspective of most schoolboys playing the game, should have gone a long time ago anyway. We are studying these remarkable documents which shatter any concept of bubble, and we will certainly be able to tell you what sport will look like next term later on this term. Six people may mix outside, but so may 30 grown men from 30 families.

Mrs Cassidy has asked me to remind parents that pupils in the secondary phase must bring a face covering into school with them. Thanks to the generosity of a parent who donated a large number of masks, over the last few weeks we have been able to provide masks to pupils who had forgotten or lost their mask during the day. These supplies have now run out due to the number of pupils needing masks on a daily basis. We do have a small number of masks available that the school has purchased but we will need to make a small charge for these.

The science diversity project is an inspirational effort suggested by Mr Turbitt to highlight the contribution to science of various nationalities and ethnicities. Ms Diamond explains more about how pupils can get involved:

The science department has launched a KS3 competition where pupils are tasked with researching a pioneering BAME scientist or engineer, and producing a piece of display work based on their research. The department want to expand on the scientists covered in the science national curriculum and use our displays in science to celebrate diversity and achievements from all different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils in Years 7-9 can find more details on SMHW. They can be as creative as they wish, and there will be prizes for the winners (as

picked by the leaders of our sixth form inclusion group). The deadline for completed projects is Monday 14 December.

Mrs Webb has asked me to highlight a request for support for the Year 7 Selwyn's charity appeal:

Year 7 and 8 pupils are currently donating Selection Boxes to Alder Hey, who are hoping to give every child staying at the hospital a gift of a selection box at this time of year. It is also hoped that we can donate some to the South Liverpool Foodbanks as well. Pupils have been asked to bring their donations to their form room where they will be collated. Year 7 have been donating their selection boxes throughout this week and have made a fantastic start to the appeal with 150 boxes received! Next week it is the turn of Year 8.

Should any other pupil in the school wish to donate a Selection Box, please ask them to bring them along to the Main School Office where a box will be left out during next week. Many thanks for all your support.

Another busy week for Mrs Doran with a number of virtual talks and masterclasses organised for pupils in the secondary phase. Pupils enjoyed talks on varied topics from the [inner workings of the civil service](#) to [creating apps for the BBC](#) to [living and working abroad](#).

My congratulations to the great Henry A in Year 6 (School) who is to be a published poet. His poem "When Pigs Fly" will feature in a book called *Peculiar Pets - UK Voices* due to be published in January. Peculiar Pets was a poetry competition run by Young Writers that challenged 7-11 year olds to create their own bizarre animal and then write a poem inspired by it!

Sport is on tomorrow. Christmas is creeping nearer. What is not to like?

May I wish you and yours a pleasant weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal