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## Principal's Newsletter

11 December 2020

Dear Parents,

They are building the Ark in the DT department. The rains fall, lakes form. Wet play, which is neither wet nor play, is the order of the day. There is an atmosphere of mild frustration after a term of Covid restrictions which has ended in a deluge. But, we are almost there and this is making pupils, and staff relatively demob happy. The boarders are the tightest unit on campus, surviving a term as a bubble, unable to enjoy some of their activities and trips. This picture captures the mood of their intimate Christmas dinner.



There can sadly be no Christingle service, no carol concert. None of the events which herald the end of term and the beginning of Christmas. There are all sorts of virtual events in Chapel and elsewhere. There is the 12 days of Advent series which Mr Hammersley, supported by the LC Filming Team of Omar K and Khan O (Y9) and Luke P (Y8), has cleverly put together which you can find [here](#). I struggled through the pedagogy of a Year 2 chapel this week. You can imagine the way I marvel at Ms Saleh's ability to elicit the answers I cannot seem to get. Lots to learn from her.

Mr Harvey, whose technical and musical skills have contributed to our primary virtual chapels, will be playing a variety of traditional Christmas hymns and pieces at a virtual

festive organ recital. This will be available to view on the 19 December - please email Mr Harvey ([lharvey@liverpoolcollege.org.uk](mailto:lharvey@liverpoolcollege.org.uk)) for a link to access the event.

This will be the last newsletter of the term. There is much to discuss at our virtual parent information evening now scheduled for the middle of January. We will be discussing changes to our behaviour policy, explaining our future admissions and facilities plan, and asking for feedback on the parental code of conduct and a consultation on the new relationships and sex education policy of the school which is necessitated by the government's changed guidance in the teaching of that subject.

Donning my wellies, and with my new mobile hip, I survey the covid damage. As far as the physical campus is concerned, the main effect appears to be the disappearance of grass. A school of bubbles means that parts of the campus not previously so deployed are now playgrounds. The effects of the intensive running, walking, standing in various areas is to turn a lush campus of grassy knolls into a muddy pool, denuded of grass. One part of covid recovery will therefore be a plan to reseed the campus.

Year 13 whose education has been interrupted did manage to get their mock exams done. A record number of pupils had Oxbridge interviews by zoom. This week the whole secondary phase has been taking exams of various kinds and descriptions. The marking of thousands of papers has begun. I visited a Year 4 class which were holding up their test booklets. I was not sure whether to marvel at the ability of teachers to keep all this testing going, or the obstinacy of the government in insisting that it does.

Minor and internal timetable changes are also on the way in secondary after the break. Our pupils have been supporting the work of the Big Change think tank by participating in various discussion groups about the effects of Covid. The Big Change is working to develop new hopes and new plans for education nationally in light of the reflection which covid seems to trigger in all our lives.

A moment of learning magic. Hannah D in Year 8 was captivated by a poem written by the poet Theodore Roethke. She stayed after class, demanding Mr Barnicoat resolve a central ambiguity in the poem. He could not, so Hannah wrote to the relatives of the poet in Saginaw Michigan USA, seeking answers. She received them. Here we can see that despite the best effort of exam boards, teachers can still inspire their pupils. Literature has not yet become entirely material for tests. A poem is still a poem.

Mr McAllister, a trainee classics teacher, has created a devilishly difficult crossword puzzle for the LC Press blog. Next week, a group of pupils and I will be interviewing Dwayne Fields, a presenter of Countryfile to discuss his own education and the obstacles he needed to overcome as a person of colour to become a TV presenter and explorer. I am also looking forward to seeing the work of some of our Muslim students who have put together an assembly to educate their peers about their faith and what it means to them.

The dining room will not have condensation on the inside of the windows as hordes sit down to gobble up turkeys. The dining room is now so orderly and calm that we hardly remember the throngs of the past. Somehow, the spirit of Christmas will be kept even under these circumstances.

A thank you from Mrs Webb for the excellent response by Year 7 and 8 pupils to our charity appeal – a total of 305 chocolate selection boxes are now on their way to Alder Hey and the South Liverpool Foodbank.

Mr Cook has just announced the extra-curricular sport and games Michaelmas term awards for the senior school. Pupils have been recognised for their outstanding contribution to extra-curricular sport. You can read the list of winners [here](#).

We've been contacted by a concerned parent after a near miss with two children on bikes on a nearby road. Now that is often dark when pupils are travelling to and from school, please ensure that if your child travels to school by bike they have the necessary equipment and clothing to ensure they can be seen and are protected.

Next term I am looking forward to locating my office in the Pre Prep and Prep Schools. I have long wanted to do this, so that I can learn. In covid times, my office has felt increasingly isolated. My visits to the Pre Prep and Prep are always inspiring, but I do feel like a visitor. I am going to live there for a while, after the invitation from Ms Gannon and Ms Pease.

May I wish you and yours a joyous, peaceful and safe Christmas and very happy holidays.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Mr H van Mourik Broekman**  
**Principal**