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## Principal's Newsletter

28 May 2021

Dear Parents,

School life is full of surprises. In Mr Atkinson's Year 1 class this morning a pupil asked me to confirm that he sounded like Dolly Parton. He proceeded to sing one of my favourite songs: Jolene. When he finished he asked me again: do I sound like Dolly Parton? At this stage his classmates had become involved in the question, mentioning other songs this young vocalist could sing and offering various musical accompaniments. Pupils also began to tell me of their half-term plans from swimming at my cousin's, camping in Wales to more exotic locations. The mood is one of demob happiness.

This half term has been an unusually long one. One observes the exhaustion in pupils and staff alike. Hopefully, this break will allow everyone to catch their breath and we will complete the remaining five weeks after a sunny week of reinvigoration.

One thing to look forward to is the Summertime Soiree. Over the past couple of months, the Music Department have been recording items for this year's soiree which will be premiered on YouTube at 6.30pm on Thursday 10 June, including an interval quiz. [Click here](#) to download the flyer for the event and email Mr Bishop (dbishop@liverpoolcollege.org.uk) if you would like to receive the link to the concert (indicating if you would also like the Teams invite to participate in the quiz).

You will be receiving an email from Mrs Cassidy with information about the new Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) policy. As part of the consultation process, she will be inviting parents to email her to share any suggestions for improvement or change in the draft policy.

Last weekend I entered one of the most energized spaces I have entered for about 18 months. Our sports hall had been taken over by Saturday morning inter-house netball. The passion and enthusiasm for playing hit me like a wave when I stumbled in. One pupil told me how happy she was just to finally be back playing and competing. It was a great sight.

That same morning, I watched the DofE, their bags sealed from the rain, trundle off for another modified expedition. The weather was not helping but the spirit was once again great. These activities are intimations of what may be possible when covid restrictions are

further eased. Mr Stamper for example has published his Year 6 activity week which, while not quite matching a residential experience, is nevertheless full of the sorts of things we have been missing. Leaders across the College are beginning to plan programmes which will tackle the cultural deprivations and so-called catch ups required. Many of our pupils have not had an opportunity to go to a play, a concert or any cultural event or trip. Just as we need to catch up academically, we will need to catch up culturally as well.

The queue outside the Noel Chavasse Poolhouse consisted of shuffling feet. These were the Year 6 classes about to invade the beach named "informal SATs", a rite of passage of Year 6 life. I am hugely impressed by what a Year 6 knows and can do. The vocabulary used by our pupils in their writing for example would put a prime minister to shame. The power of adjectives has been elevated to a sword in the hand of verbal samurais. I heard one Year 6 spelling out the word inconsequential to herself - I wanted to say that in the context of a review of the span of a full life this word might be applied to the government's vision for SATs itself.

Ms Whittell's part time secondment to the Tutor Trust is bearing fruit. I regularly accost young teachers and ask them: what are you doing here? They then tell me they work for the Tutor Trust and have started working with small groups of pupils, focusing on their maths, supporting their "catch up".

Sunflowers are much in evidence around school. There is the Pre Prep sunflower growing competition. I entered if you recall but my flower has not had my undivided attention. It has been rescued from a table in the dining room by the staff and placed in an excellent location above the industrial dishwasher in the kitchen, much light and humid air. It's thriving there and I remain confident of an undeserved victory. Ms Webb has now taken Year 7 Selwyn's and planted the proverbial seeds to begin a competition with them.

Joe in 7 School told me of an amazing football match for which he had been picked. He asserted that his class, just one form, was the source of a team which would be taking on all of Y7 at St Hilda's. He was confident of victory, although the asymmetrical size of the pool of players from which selection would be made, made me marvel at his assurances.

Increasingly, we are talking about re-launching the school after covid. It is difficult to dream such dreams while our staff have been converted into an exam board. There is much eye rubbing as teachers look up from another exam script, which in this case must be marked with forensic accuracy, just as a public exam paper would need to be.

One might ask whether we still have to send more than 100000 pounds to the exam boards when we are doing all the work. The answer would be yes. Any refund? As my New York friends would say: fuhgeddaboudit.

There is a half term letter for parents from Liverpool's Directors of Public Health and Children's Services – please [click here](#) to download.

May you have a dry and restful half term.

**Yours sincerely,**

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