
Principal's Newsletter

10 September 2021

Dear Parents,

This week has provided intimations of a return to “full school”, to the kind of school experience we believe every pupil should have.

Examples abound. Scouts, under the guidance of the indefatigable Ms Rogers, has already met in person. They are now planning what I would describe as real scouting activities like camping, open days, and meeting in person. The pack has been incarnated, a sort of reverse apotheosis from zoom to flesh.

Another example was Friday night/ Saturday morning. There were many families present for the sports award evening in the MV Hall. It's always a highlight to celebrate the commitment of pupils, parents and staff, the common purpose which is the only fuel capable of powering the sports programme forward. Just to be able to meet, to see families together, laughing, sharing the copiously adorned cheese platters, listening to our guest speaker Mrs Ansnes and Mr Harrison OL and current parent. It was an inspiring reminder that we are a community, and that the various lockdowns and covid restrictions have damaged our experience of community. A special moment was the testimony of Ms Pye and Ms Evans about their own experience of College sports. These excellent young women gave an account of their journey from the College to further studies, travel, work, and their return to the classroom and playing field of the school they loved. For Dr Atkins and I, watching from the back of the hall, it was a moment of recognition and feeling one's age, as he had taught both pupils and I had a recollection of showering sports awards on Ms Evans when she finished Year 6. Here, in the flesh, was the living tradition of holistic education and the Liverpool College tradition of education rather than mere schooling.

We then all went home to get a few hours sleep before the great gathering of the clan in bright sunshine on the playing fields. Here was a sight not unlike the Homeric view from the walls of Troy, a vast army of sportswomen and men arrayed, of a fiesta of sport, meticulously organized and staffed, involving Year 8 rugby house competitions, hockey training, and Year 7 coaching. Many older pupils and prefects helped out. Parents gathered to watch and the PTA provided the refreshments. Then came the move, the human caravan, to Sefton Park for the traditional house run, a sight to behold, as bemused pedestrian dog walkers, enjoying their strolls, suddenly saw a flock of Year 7s tearing in their direction past

the Palm House. Later in the afternoon, we narrowly lost our first 1st XV rugby fixture. Life was returning to normal.

Also returning to normal is the constant stream of justified complaints from road users and neighbours, and other parents, about the excesses of parental parking and traffic safety. Already, some of our strictly no parking signs have been driven into the mud, parents presumably driving over them, for their convenience. Neighbours report near misses. The friars at St Anthony of Padua can't get out for calls to the sick and dying. It is enough to test our patience and calm.

E-Scooters have made an appearance on the roads of Liverpool. A reminder from the police that it is against the law to ride a private e-scooter anywhere other than on private land (and only then, with the express permission of the landowner). The Swedish company running the pilot rental scheme has made clear that only those with a valid UK provisional or full driving license and are over 18 can ride these little machines and must do so on the road. I am reading a book called *Freedom*, about a group of American men walking 400 miles along the railroads of the eastern United States, reflecting and ruminating on the meaning of freedom in the context of US History. The author points out that even in the Biblical account of Cain and Abel the nomadic lifestyle of hunting and plunder induces envy in the settled or civilized community. Somehow, some people experience this need to park where they please, devil and anyone else be damned, as if the search for collective safety imperils their sense of autonomy and freedom. I am very grateful to the vast majority of you who accept that we do not live in the wild west, but along Queens Drive. The morality and social considerations we expect from a reception child we may, in my view, also expect from a parent.

On Sunday, our boarders explored Liverpool with an open top bus tour. By Tuesday, we were in the MV Hall again to watch Aristophanes' *The Frogs*, a play which had survived endless postponement, numerous actor abandonments, because of lockdown. The experience of watching our students perform, of being together again to support them, encourage them, and celebrate what school should be about, provided further fuel for the anticipation of the renewal of choir practices, orchestra rehearsals, the selection of new plays to perform and plan.

Yesterday I saw the leadership of Bella, diminutive in stature, large in courage, in Year 13 finally take her first CCF group of Year 8s and Year 9s for a lesson along with her other colleague NCOs from the CCF. Her speech to the bemused assembled struck me as very effective. Do not call me Miss, she told the Year 8, I am not a teacher, I do not want to be a teacher, call me Sergeant Major! It is great see that we have a real, living, active CCF again.

Great stuff. As was my conversation with a Year 1 pupil who asked me who I was. Ms Haigh kindly answered for me describing to the questioner that I was the boss of the whole school, of everything in it. The child responded: I thought Mrs Fraser was the boss! How very, very true.

Every day, something which we missed, unfolds, and creakingly re-establishes itself. The Chaplaincy has begun again. We are gathering in Chapel and actually singing hymns. Ms Green our chaplaincy lead explained brilliantly how she wants the Chapel to be inclusive for all, and a place where we can reflect as a community. Like the sun in the Beatles song, It felt like years since it's been here.

Over the next few newsletters, I will introduce you to some of our new staff across the College:

- **Ms Radley** is our residential boarding houseparent. She has extensive experience in boarding settings having worked for many years as a residential houseparent and a matron.
- **Mr Marsh** joins our Inclusion Team as our new primary phase inclusion mentor. Mr Marsh has worked for a number of years in school settings supporting children with emotional and behavioural needs. He is also a sports coach!
- **Miss Pye** is teaching Science in the Secondary Phase. Miss Pye knows the College well having completed her teacher training last year through our School Direct programme as well as attending the school as a pupil!

A reminder from Mr Fox to Years 9-11 that on Monday, Wednesday and Friday when their school day begins at 9.25am, they should not arrive on campus before 9.15am unless they are using the library facilities.

I enjoy my visits to the day boarders, a growing number. In part because the snack and food they eat as part of the programme is so delicious. In part because they are enjoying the most varied and intense experience of the curriculum, playing hockey, revising together, engaging in new activities every day. If you would like your child to try this in Year 7-10, email Mrs Latham elatham@liverpoolcollege.org.uk.

Tomorrow, we compete in the first block fixture for about 18 months traveling on the buses to play netball and rugby, Birkenhead and Bolton Schools being the opponents. But not before the first morning detention of the year, and the first whole school secondary assembly. In a world of firsts or at any rate firsts after a very long time, there are all sorts of logistical challenges and tweaks required, but we have had a successful and inspiring week.

May I wish you and yours a dry and peaceful weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal