
Principal's Newsletter

7 February 2020

Dear Parents,

Thank you to all those parents who have accepted that there is in fact a single yellow line painted on the far side of Queens Drive. My occasional duty at the Prep School gate gives me some opportunity to behold the entire festival of parking while pupils carrying inflatable guitars pour in for the Times Tables Rock Star Day! Some parents offer excuses for their parking which are remarkably similar to the ones I hear later on Friday in the detention room from Year 7 pupils. "Everyone does it", being my favourite, as patently and obviously not everyone does park illegally. In fact, the vast majority of people take exceptional care to follow the laws of the roads and keep themselves, their children, other children and other road users safe. Another old chestnut is: you only ask me not to park illegally but not so and so. Such carping and bickering leaves us speechless. Explaining the realities of life to young and sometimes misguided children is hard enough. The additional burden of arguing with an adult who is talking like a child is too much.

Since every other task from healthcare to mental health counselling to character development is already being transferred by the government to schools, traffic wardening and parking enforcement cannot be far behind. I already have my CCF Navy uniform, perhaps they will send me on a traffic warden course next and grant me and my colleagues the gift of that uniform with its fetching and distinctive hat with the yellow rim and the small handheld parking penalty fine machine.

Last night we held a very successful Sixth Form open evening. Godwyn House was crowded with visitors talking to teachers. Our student ambassadors, particularly Hashem A (Selwyn's) in Year 12, were magnificent in giving tours and explaining what we do, why we do it, and what they like about it all. Such evenings are a sign of the strong relationships, leadership and teamwork which makes our school buzz with the excitement of young people learning and pursuing their dreams.

The resurgence of house life across the College is a joy to behold. My bicycle was delivered spick and span after a thorough scrubbing in the Selwyn's Prep School car wash. Colleagues are emerging limping and sore from the sports hall on Tuesday and Thursday after intensive games of charity dodgeball. All our year groups, even the sixth form, have performed their house run through Sefton Park, often with ironic humour. The talent show will climax next Friday at assembly when heat 1 and 2 are completed and we will hear from the five finalist

acts. Brook's are apparently creating TED talks, although I have not heard one yet. Chapel services in Prep School and Secondary are house led. Various recycling and ecological initiatives are well underway. School House is ready to assist our Foundation with the move of their archives out of Beechlands into new offices in Gladstone.

The senior prefects help me understand all that is going on. I meet with them bi-weekly. They offer suggestions for the improvement of the school, particularly their sixth form experience. They seem more determined than anyone else that the house system will be developed still further. We can look forward to hearing from each house about its successes and activities briefly at Speech Night.

Congratulations to Ms Shackell who has successfully completed her nationally recognised Forest School Leader qualification. This arcadian grove is now a scene of constant activity. All sorts of learning from the ecological to the personal is occurring there and it is always a thrill to see pupils lining up in wellies before diving into the forest for their lesson. We are all very grateful to Ms Shackell for her effective and energetic advancement of this programme. You can read about the activities and lessons taking place in the Forest School each week in the Prep School newsletter, which is available to download from the school website [here](#).

Ms Diamond is to be congratulated on her appointment by the Royal Academy of Engineering as a STEM teacher coordinator for Liverpool. She will be working with STEM teachers in local schools, as part of the Academy's Connecting STEM Teachers programme, to provide them with resources to enrich STEM learning and tools to help them illustrate to pupils the role of engineering and engineers in society. Ms Dimond has already been busy promoting science to our Year 4 pupils as part of a cross phase initiative organised by Mr Ainscough and Ms Ormrod this week – you can read about this on the school website [here](#).

It is not the intention of this newsletter to drag you into the thickets of curriculum design but there are some exciting developments underway. The first is that we will be participating in the roll out of the new early years curriculum in Reception from 2020. So far, 24 schools have piloted a review of the goals of early years education. Now there is to be a larger wave of piloting with the expected roll out to all schools in 2021. There will be a streamlining of the 17 learning goals for early years and some work on standardisation and assessment of progress within these goals. It will be exciting to help improve the early years curriculum for everyone in the country in this way.

A parent asked how to get more information about how to support their child in Pre Prep learning. A good place to start is Ms Ridley's Instagram page about the topic. You can see that here: @withtheridleys. All sorts of advice is published by this indefatigable teacher about how she supports her children with their learning. We are also exploring ways to get more links and information about how parents can support Pre Prep learning onto our website.

An invitation from Mrs Crook (SENCO) for any interested parents to attend a coffee

afternoon on Tuesday 25 February at 2 pm. Margaret Kelly from the Local Authority's ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) Training Team will be attending and she is happy to answer any questions. This will be an informal, relaxed but informative event. Please meet in Reception. If you would like any further information, please contact Mrs Crook: kcrook@liverpoolcollege.org.uk.

Our review of the curriculum is nearly constant, a sort of painting of the Forth Road bridge or Eiffel Tower, it never stops. Currently there is a focus on the development of a Business Studies BTEC, Computer Science A level, and a focus on writing in every part of the curriculum. We make a bold assertion, namely that EVERY Liverpool College pupil learns more, remembers more and writes more than the national curriculum requires or expects. Our heads of faculty, subject leaders, strand leaders and senior leaders are constantly discussing, planning, and challenging the depth of the curriculum: can we go deeper into the subjects we study?, can we assess our pupils knowledge better?, can we improve their oral and written communication about it?. Our hope is that by the end of this academic year we will be able to present you with a completed snapshot of the fruits of these efforts.

From time to time, we are, in the words of the Donald, tired of winning. The royal snail mail recently brought a beautiful plaque, a signed certificate from Boris Johnson of all people, and a recognition that we had won yet another award this time relating to our high rates of participation in the NCS (National Citizen Service). It is a humiliating confession to make but my first response upon examining the content of the envelope was to ask: What is that? and What is this?

Much more concrete are the sporting victories which we are achieving. Credit to Ms Achilleos, Ms Lines and Ms Roddy who have transformed our netball fortunes. All our teams made at least the semi-final - two of them are through to the final with a third still to play a semi. One team lost to a solitary goal. Our passing and teamwork has vastly improved because of the coaching and organisation and increased number of fixtures. Football also continues to win. Last Saturday we had enormous success against Oldham Hulme, tomorrow we take on Ripley St Thomas in Netball and Ellesmere College in Football. The CCF is also sponsoring a first aid course tomorrow. Next week, our U14 and U15 play on in the Lancashire plate traveling up the motorway in the general direction of Blackburn to keep their chances alive.

We have received a reminder from Network Rail about the closure of the footbridge across the railway line at Elmsley Road and Bridge Road from Monday 17 February 2020 until Sunday 10 May 2020.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal