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## Principal's Newsletter

13 September 2019

Dear Parents,

My congratulations to Mrs Doran and all the College volunteers who through their participation in the relay for life last weekend helped to raise almost £70000 for cancer research. The Star Wars themes, so beloved of Mr Doran, were much in evidence in the form of stormtroopers and lightsabers. We can be proud that our community came together in this way to support Mrs Doran and her family.

The **PTA AGM** will be held on Tuesday 24 September at 7pm in the main school dining room. Every parent is automatically a member of the organization and the AGM is a great way to get involved and learn more about the PTA. I hope you will come along. If you are unable to attend but would like to find out how you can get involved please email [PTA@liverpoolcollege.org.uk](mailto:PTA@liverpoolcollege.org.uk).

The PTA have also asked me to highlight a new initiative that they are trialling this term – there will be refreshments available for parents at all home rugby matches. Hot drinks, soft drinks and sausage/bacon sandwiches will be available from the pavilion.

Last weekend I watched, adjacent to Coach Stamper, as our [Year 6 Rugby team defeated Scarisbrick Hall](#). The boys played with great determination, symbolized perhaps by the bruising runs of Joe N who pounded away straight into opposition lines. Layton and Jude led by excellent example. It was all highly satisfactory. The other rugby fixtures were victories as well, setting up this weekend's clash with Bolton School which takes place during Open Day tomorrow morning. Our netball teams are also in action against Birkenhead School tomorrow.

This is the week our activities programme started. I enjoyed introducing touch rugby to many boys and girls who have not played the game before as well as seeing some of the budding talent in the Prep School. It remains amazing to hear of the activities on offer. Yoga and squash spring to mind.

We have been particularly impressed with how our Gladstone Scholars and prefects are taking the leadership of the senior houses forward, performing their duties, taking

assemblies, setting that good example which, from the perspective of a Principal, is one of the great benefits of having a successful and dynamic Sixth Form.

Attendance as one might expect is still very good across the College. We have an ambitious target to raise it by one whole percent across the College this year. I am not a data geek by either profession or pretension but the most sobering educational graph I have ever seen remains the one which shows the direct correlation between academic progress and attendance. If you do not come to school, you do not learn in school. There are still too many lamentable composite and slightly feeble excuses for missing school ranging from headache to feeling tired. I already read some of these with rising irritation, and it is only mid-September. If a new year means new year resolutions, let's agree that we will not miss school.

The new Year 12 boarders had a great weekend last weekend. They kayaked around the Albert Dock in one activity meeting each other and the Year 13 and beginning that annual process of constituting our boarding community.

Our 65 piece orchestra is rehearsing in the new Rushworth Music Centre. It is quite a sight to see the old Pre Prep hall converted into a rehearsal space. It is particularly pleasing to hear that more boys are singing in our choir. 13 tenors at the first rehearsal. One of the things we will stress when we host our visitors tomorrow at Open Day is the LCA+ curriculum. We introduced this way of thinking and talking about our curriculum about a year ago. Our pupils have a dawning awareness of this concept and it is not difficult for me to imagine that most of you have never heard of it.

LCA+ is the name we give our curriculum, rather than describing it in agonizing detail across the 14 years of the school. It seems many pupils and parents might ask why our curriculum needs a name or a discussion. Most people view a school curriculum as a given, a part of the landscape, a non-negotiable thing which infuses every school with a timetable and with things to do. Indeed, curriculum is seldom discussed by parents. I have had many more queries about lunch selection than about curriculum.

We need a name for our curriculum because the intent and implementation of our curriculum is unique so it makes sense to give it a name, like any other unique and identifiable thing in the universe.

We also want to be able to talk about our curriculum with pupils, staff and all stakeholders as a thing which should and can be discussed. In an all through school, we have an opportunity to make a coherent seamless curriculum which develops key knowledge and skills. The LC part is pretty easy to understand or explain. It signifies that the curriculum is our curriculum, the Liverpool College curriculum, that it is unique, that it seeks to express our intention of promoting Learning with Character. The A stands for all the academic subjects that we do organised in to seven strands which match the seven faculties of the secondary phase of the school. This refers to the emphasis on the development of the intellect implied by our motto, not only the intellect also character. This LCA curriculum

provides pupils with the knowledge which turbochargers further learning, a broad understanding of the major disciplines of academic study and research and the development of intellectual curiosity and learning skills.

The + part of the curriculum is all the work we do to build and develop character, the unique combination of traits which make us distinctively moral agents. The LC+ curriculum consists of seven strands, of equal importance to each other and to the LCA curriculum.

It is encouraging that Ofsted are increasingly convinced that this “balanced” approach represents something which more closely resembles education rather than mere schooling.

The next step for our work with the LCA+ curriculum is not only to get pupils to understand how it is designed and why it is designed that way, but to get them to reflect and plan their engagement with the curriculum. It seems extraordinary to me that schools do not demand of their pupils that they think about what they are learning, why they are learning it, and how that learning is shaping their intellect and their character. Instead, schools have an unfortunate tendency to conceive of their pupils as a passive object to be moulded or “filled up” with some knowledge.

This unfortunate approach leads to some very bad learning habits in pupils. Passivity, lack of responsibility, failure of the imagination, lack of agency, and reflexive responses to external incentives and stimuli are the result. It is very common for pupils of all ages to tell me that some teachers make things too difficult by failing to tell the pupils what to do, think, write or say.

One initiative this year is the so called LCA+ Map which every pupil works on in form time across the College from Year 3-13. The Map is intended to encourage curriculum planning and reflection not by the school, but by the pupil. Research reveals that when a pupil reflects on how and what they learn, the so called act of metacognition, the quality, depth, and agency and quantity of their learning increases. LCA+ is a framework within which every member of our school community, including parents, can think about the question: What am I learning, why am I learning it, and what should I learn next?

Some more new staff introductions:

**Mr O’Connell** is a new member of the Maths Faculty in the secondary phase. Mr O’Connell knows the College well having completed his teacher training here last year through the School Direct programme.

**Miss Elkin** has joined the English Faculty after completing her PGDE last year at John Moores University.

**Mr Jones** joins us as a DT Teacher and Assistant Head of Faculty from Archbishop Blanch where he had worked since 2006.

**LC Sports Health & Fitness** within Liverpool College would like to offer all College parents the opportunity to purchase 2 full Gym Memberships here at LC Sports for just £25 per month. There is no contract or joining fee and all classes are included with your membership plus two free personal training sessions and a nutritional consultation.

Please call in and see a member of staff or call 0151 724 4488 or email [LCSports@liverpoolcollege.org.uk](mailto:LCSports@liverpoolcollege.org.uk) for more information.

May I wish you and yours a happy and sunny weekend.

**Yours sincerely,**

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