
Principal's Newsletter

27 March 2020

Dear Parents, Colleagues, Pupils and Students,

Week 1 of the lockdown is complete.

It seems inconceivable that only a week ago pupils were still strolling in front of my study as I wrote a newsletter. The distillation of time in these exceptional circumstances is disorienting. This was the week when we would have had speech night, played in rugby semi-finals, completed coursework, as well as a long list of other activities.

It was and is not to be. Our first order of business is to keep everyone safe and well and follow the advice and orders of the government.

Secondly, we must keep learning, teaching and supporting each other. It has been marvellous to see the response of pupils, parents, and staff to the circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Mr Hammersley, our Chaplain, is launching the following initiative:

*One of the few benefits of a time like this is that it forces us to take stock of life and realise what is most important to us as individuals and as a community. As a College wide community, I want to provide us with an opportunity to express our solidarity one with the other. As such I am setting up a **Liverpool College Community Volunteer Service**. Initially this service will solely be for the purpose of helping individuals within our community through this COVID-19 crisis. This local scheme will focus on members of our community who need help in the following ways:*

- *They are self-isolating and need shopping*
- *They are self-isolating and would like a phone call for some company*
- *They are struggling with the demands of home schooling and would like someone with greater experience to call*

Help, advice and health and safety guidance will be provided to anyone who volunteers. If you think you could volunteer to provide one or more of these services [click here](#):

[Liverpool College Volunteer Form](#)

If you would like to make a request then please click here:

[Liverpool College Community Request Form](#)

Alternatively, you can phone or text 07783083701 or email chaplain@liverpoolcollege.org.uk, stating your name, connection to Liverpool College, phone number, full address and request.

You can also 'refer' others who you know to be in need but can't help yourself. Please ensure you have their consent before you request though.

Please also be aware that any pupils of Liverpool College who wish to get involved with this must do so with parental permission and supervision.

I know that the overwhelming majority of our community have family and friends nearby that will help out in these ways and more at this time. However, there are some among us who do not, and furthermore it is possible that as the days and weeks go by the people that we rely upon might end up themselves self-isolating or becoming otherwise unable to help us in ways we are used to. This is an opportunity for us to express our 'togetherness' even whilst physically separated!

The impulse to serve is stronger than any other I can discern. It is really gratifying to see parents get in touch with each other to check up and support each other at this time. Our own Volunteer scheme will hopefully enable anyone who needs some assistance or wants to offer some assistance a community-based way to do it.

Learning is still flourishing thanks to the innovation and imagination of our teachers.

Mrs Doran for example has been setting a daily primary challenge as she describes below:

These challenges have covered a range of subjects and were designed to keep everyone fit, healthy, happy and learning! From taking part in daily workout, to writing a blog, to creating unique pieces of art work and using socks to learn about communication using flag semaphore - the pupils have been getting involved and having fun. Pupils have been encouraged to share pictures of themselves doing the challenges with each other - to prevent pupils feeling isolated and to encourage participation and a sense of fun. Pupils have also been emailing me photographs, PowerPoint and videos. This week's Friday challenge is to learn the chorus of the song 'Fight Song' in sign language. Next week, I will be asking for volunteers so pupils can take part in a live choir - singing and signing the song, using group video conferencing.

Mrs Doran has also been keeping our Wilton Scholars engaged with all sorts of activities being arranged from a talk with an immunologist researcher from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine for the Year 10 scholars to the Year 11 scholars undertaking mock interviews via video conferencing next week. These mock interviews will be preceded by an

interview preparation workshop held via Zoom. Mrs Doran has also highlighted the [Explore Learning website](#) as a source of interesting discussion topics ('Big Questions') that the whole family can engage with.

Building on the moving tribute paid to our incredible NHS, Mr Hutchinson has asked me to announce that the Humanities Faculty will be switching their KS3 History curriculum to focus on the National Health Service. In the next few weeks, lessons/resources will be uploaded to SMHW that will enable our Y7-Y9 pupils to learn about the origins and impact of this wonderful British institution. We hope that giving our pupils a greater understanding of the history of the NHS will increase their appreciation even further, if this is indeed possible!

Then there are our very own YouTube stars Mr Ainscough and Mr Stamper, garnering media attention as they conduct Learning Lockdown, their online daily school. Just search 'Learning Lockdown' on YouTube to find them. They have about 5000 subscribers. From Mossley Hill to all over the world. It seems like a great way to stay switched on to school and learning.

Then of course there are the super volunteers who need to be applauded at 19.58 every day. These are the teachers and support staff from various schools who are running the day care hub for the children of key workers in our primary school. Their efforts are a very direct way to support the front lines.

Ms Ware describes what a week of learning and playing looks like:

At the beginning of the week, we did the Rainbow mission that lots of parents are doing at home with their children. We learnt about rainbows, and talked about hope and wishes, then the children made a rainbow to take home to put in their windows.

On Tuesday, we helped the DT department by washing and sorting 10,000 bottle tops into colours! As one of the reception children said, our water tray became a 'giant, bubbly sink!'



Wednesday was 'bubbles and boats' day. We designed and made our own boats from various materials, then tested them in the water tray. In the afternoon we had lots of fun blowing

bubbles in the sunshine and even some of the Prep boys also joined in and really enjoyed it, sharing really nicely with the younger children.

Thursday was 'shadows and silhouettes' and we used pastels to make rabbit silhouettes pictures and looked at our shadows outside in the sun.



Today we will be making bunny hats/headdresses.

We have joined in with Joe Wicks' live PE sessions and listened to David Walliams read stories at 'elevenses'. Then each afternoon we have had wonderful sessions down in the forest. Some of the children built dens, learnt to climb trees and learnt how to light the fire. And of course, we have enjoyed toasting marshmallows around the fire pit! We were able to forget it all for a couple of hours while down in the forest and the children seemed to truly relax.

The children have all taken things home that they have made, including photos of themselves in the forest, to show their probably tired and anxious parents and hopefully reassure them a little that their children are cared for and having fun. Hopefully we have sent them home tired but happy.

Incredibly, Mr Farnan-Stone has kept his House quizzes going, moving them online.

The music department is continuing to teach exam classes, using the now ubiquitous Microsoft Teams software to connect small groups of pupils and students together.

For the most part, pupils have responded to the work set. Occasionally a parent contacts a teacher at about 10pm and demands that something is marked or returned immediately. I think most of us realise that we are not the only people in the world facing a challenge or feeling slightly frustrated. Teachers will communicate with students and pupils directly about the timeline for the return of work that needs to be assessed.

Later today we will be sending parents in the secondary phase a framework timetable for learning in the weeks ahead. This timetable relates to the availability of teachers in subjects to support your learning and provide feedback.

There are several websites with incredible lecture material. I recommend it not only to pupils and students but also to parents and colleagues. I have two favourites at the moment. One is [Gresham College](#), a place I had only vaguely heard of, but a resource of stupendous utility. Here are top people in every field giving fascinating talks. The ultimate platform for this sort of stuff may be [Open Culture](#) - one could spend one's lockdown days learning the most amazing things. Our faculties have placed more suggestions even than these on Show My Homework.

A special mention for our Year 10 enterprise team who have made it onto the National Final shortlist of the Big Bang Exhibition – winners are announced next week. Find out more about their winning idea on the school website [here](#).

Mr Griffith has cheered me enormously with [this link](#) to my compatriots in the Rotterdam Philharmonic. They are using a platform called zoom to continue to make beautiful music together. Worth a watch.

There is some great working being done by our pupils even in these circumstances. Mr Wilson has shared this piece of creative writing which is so rich in Grade 9 GCSE vocabulary that my head feels like it is going to explode when I read it.

The beach

At peace, I stand, weighed down into the sand, my feet now cushioned by the sparkling dust beneath them. The sun slips between the clouds igniting my back with a glowing warmth that sends shimmering ripples down my spine. I relax, comforted by the dreams of fifty years ago. In a nebulous haze I recall moments at this very beach; bobbing in the ripples of the waves, sunbathing until my back was blistered, playing in the sand every day in the summer. It was not like it is now. It was quieter, it was mine. Alas, like growing old that golden age has weakened.

In front of me the waves lick my feet as the ocean crawls further in. Behind me I notice how the new buildings border the coast, a wall, dividing the city from the ocean. The salty grit of the air is replaced by the sweet scent of fresh donuts. I inhale it eagerly, devouring the distant trace of sugar and cinnamon. I allow my gaze to sketch the horizon. Following the shape of each wave until I could practically feel the gentle rolling motion that powers the tide. A huge upsurge develops in the distance and churns, climbing the legs of those further out. Each ripple determined to reach higher than the latter until, exhausted, the ocean sighs in a defeated breath and the wave slaps the sand, dissolving into the beach.

Surrounding me, so many people: young and old, families, friends, scattered along the beach, splashing in the sea. A small boy drags a spade through the sand, carving a continuous line

that spirals through the surf. When I was fifteen after spending all summer here my best friend carved our names into that sand. Then we watched for hours letting the ocean wash it away like we were never there at all.

A wave roars, whipped up into a huge crescendo. An occasional combustion of screams echoes down the coast whilst the wind hums and the waves bellow, orchestrating an overwhelming background harmony. The multitude of colourful summer garments enhance the scene with an artificial vibrance like sprinkles on a cupcake. Directly ahead, in red one woman waddles, like a crimson lobster wobbling in the shallows.

I'm distracted by a child running at incredible speed down the beach. I can almost hear his small feet pattering in the wet sand with presto pace holding an ice-cream as large as the leaning tower of Pisa in his hand out stretched in front of him as he goes. I wince, knowing the fate is inevitable. Then as if in slow-motion the soft glossy cream slumps off the cone into the sand and the waves sweep it up greedily, consuming it in one grateful gulp.

I turn back to the sea, letting the familiar sound seize my senses. Overtaken by memories I reminisce surfing on those waves, gliding the glassy surface like a professional skater on ice. I can practically feel the smoothness of my board accelerating in the surf, fuelled by the ocean's force. And when I caught one for a few moments the wave at its prime crest would dance with me in a homogenous motion. My own face now gazes up at me from the shallows I stand in. How the ripples make everything glossy, smooth and untainted. I smile, shimmering with youth. A large wave slaps my legs and the young smiling girl disappears. Raising my head, I notice how the waves now seem to falter at the crest and then crumble down forming wrinkles in the ocean. Maybe they too are tired.

Suddenly conscious of the time I turn away from the ocean and make for the harbour. I could stand here for hours, alas, my lunch break is far from generous. Padding through the sand imprinting small dents in the dust in my wake. For one second turning back I realise the water is consuming each footprint I leave behind, snatching any trace of my existence.

I hope you enjoy a safe, creative, peaceful and restful weekend with your family.

Yours sincerely,

Mr H van Mourik Broekman
Principal