
Principal's Newsletter

6 November 2020

Dear Parents,

We have returned to school and to autumnal colours. It is so impressive to see how staff and pupils are working enthusiastically together. If only we could get this combination of competence, compliance, and enthusiasm going in the country at large.

There are some changes afoot in Liverpool's response to the coronavirus. Apparently about 2500 soldiers will be stationed in Merseyside and we are all going to be able to participate in an intense test and trace regime. At the time of writing, we have been told this testing will take place outside of school hours and will not be school based. I will update you if anything changes.

We constantly study the ways we are handling a reported case in school, matching our practice with what is emerging as best practice in schools and also making sure we scrupulously follow the rules and guidance which the government has given us. Thus far, with the exception of very few individuals, parents and pupils have communicated with us effectively, have followed the guidance carefully, and have responded to any request we have made through direct communication with them.

One unintended consequence of Covid in schools will be that we are raising up a generation of the most mannered and well-behaved pupils ever. It is a rare thing when there are no Friday detentions in the secondary phase for me to take, but this is such a Friday. When perambulating the campus, I am immediately struck by the way the very structures of our Covid school which include bubbles and less movement between classrooms are definitely creating an atmosphere of calm and focus on the learning at hand. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than Ms Boyle's after school club in the Sutton Timmis. Ms Boyle sets out the cones on a daily basis and pupils are told to stay within the boundaries of these cones so that their bubble remains intact. To me, this proposition seems on the face pregnant with the possibility of total chaos at the end of a long day as exhausted children want to have a run around and play. But Ms Boyle assures me that pupils follow these verbal and visual directions with total self-discipline, control and focus.

On November 11, we will be holding a Remembrance Day service. Unfortunately, we are not able to have a full parade and chapel service but we will be observing Remembrance

Day just as we honoured our founding in October. A socially distanced Corps of Drums and Colour Party will form a parade and the Chaplain will lead a short service that will be simultaneously live-streamed to classrooms throughout the school.

Major Ridley (CCF Contingent Commander) is also keen to ensure that we are still able to support the work of the Royal British Legion. In the past few years, we have raised thousands of pounds as a school community to support the cause. You are able to make a direct donation to the Liverpool College Poppy Appeal on the fundraising page here: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/liverpoolcollegepoppyappeal>

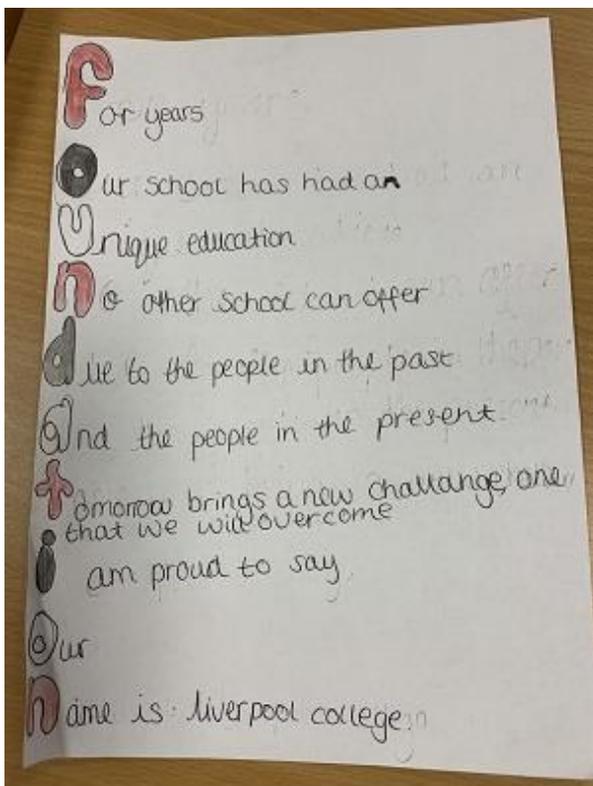
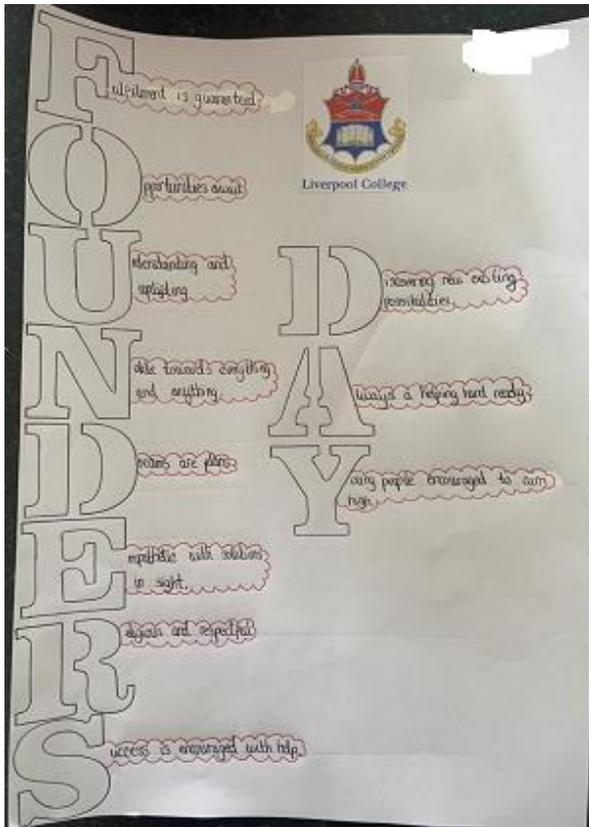
College families have supported many charitable efforts throughout the pandemic. Harry (Y4), Daniel (Y2) and Lily (R) K for example were busy over half term supporting their local foodbank and an initiative that provides free meals for children over school holidays.

A number of our gifted Y11 linguists have applied and been accepted to take part in a year long masterclass series run by Trinity College Cambridge.

The US Election has preoccupied me a little this week. It is remarkable that a country which invented the iPhone needs about a week to count its votes, but, I suppose one is reminded of the Tom Stoppard quote: it's the counting not the voting that makes a real democracy. What has been equally striking is the enormous interest of pupils in this election and the processes behind it. It is a feature of a totally modern and connected age that I can discuss with a Year 7 whether or not Vice President Biden's stutter means he has dementia (answer it does not) as well as whether the DEM/REP split in Maricopa County Arizona is likely to lead to Trumpian inroads in the final vote tally. The internet has created a global political spectacle for us to consume 24/7 and, thanks to the reality TV like quality of most US media, the whole thing is certainly a very entertaining and diverting circus. How sad it is therefore that this entertainment culture is now associated with politics to this extent. I am always full of hope when I talk about the vision young people have for their own lives and for our society. But I fear that the constant trivialization of all information and even the constant assault of false claims and manipulations on our brains and senses will ultimately lead to a dangerous erosion in our democracy. I try to ask pupils where they get most of their ideas. One Year 7 told me for example that Joe Biden had stolen money and bought a big house with it. This debunked libel, I happen in this case to know, comes directly from various websites. We worry about porn, bullying and other inappropriate content, but there is no doubt that there is a sort of political abuse and radicalization to triviality going on in the online space. More work for schools, it seems, to counteract this problem by helping pupils and students to develop a politics based on reality and on the idea that politics exists to improve the common good not to enforce our prejudices or provide hours of entertainment.

We are publishing another podcast today. This time it is a conversation with Jess Staufenberg who is an educational journalist who has written for The Guardian and other national papers. Her current interest is in the area of private school reform. Please [click here](#) to access our Imagination in Education podcast series.

I have chosen my winner from the submissions in the acrostic poetry competition for Founders' Day organised by Mr Hammersley. Nella A (Y9) and Avah O'K (Y8) beautifully captured the possibilities which our school provides and the way its tradition is kept alive by today's pupils.



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

Yours sincerely,

Hans van Mourik Broekman
Principal