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## Principal's Newsletter

12 March 2021

Dear Parents,

It is a very different desk from which I write this week's newsletter. The view of an empty campus has been replaced. Outside my study, pupils pour by in a stream that never ends. Life on campus is back. School is IN. We are back up and more than running.

My thanks to all the parent volunteers and support staff who participated in the extensive testing programme in the secondary phase this week. This was a major logistical triumph, carefully orchestrated by Ms Cassidy. It meant we could make an immediate start to school.

Now that school is back in session I want to publish or share with you a policy approved by the governors during lockdown. You can read it [here](#). It concerns a code of conduct for parents. The reasons for the policy are obvious as are its provisions. As adults, our behaviour around school, whether parking, driving or interacting with others, is part of the experience of pupils in school. As adults, we all share responsibility to set an example. I am sure that the policy will meet with absolute agreement of all parents. If you have questions or concerns about the policy, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Plans are taking shape for the awarding of grades for those candidates for examinations. We have submitted our plans to the powers that be and are confident they will be endorsed. In the way that governments seem able to do, the setting of the deadlines of the grades process seem to be based on the convenience of examination boards, not the maximization of teaching time for pupils. In order to use all available time, we will be publishing a series of revision sessions over the Easter holidays and some of the mock examinations for A level students will take place over the May half term. This is to make sure we have given pupils and students the maximum time to study and revise and to prepare and we have availed ourselves of every opportunity, despite the government's deadlines, to use teaching time.

Boarders are beginning to return to the boarding house. In some cases, they will be quarantining while studying. It has certainly been a very difficult final school year for them and we are keen to get them back on campus and in the proverbial saddle.

Virtual teaching and learning may have destroyed, at least for a time, the serendipity of school life and human development, but it has certainly opened up access to some amazing people. Through the Aspire programme, more than a hundred Year 10 pupils across the city were taught by the Oxford historian of the Byzantine empire, Prof Peter Frankopan, who introduced them to a part of human history often ignored. They had previously had a workshop with an Oxford professor about the trade in enslaved people. Next week, Year 12 students in the programme will have a law tutorial with Sir Christopher Greenwood, master of Magdalene Cambridge and one of this country's most eminent lawyers. I believe these things have become possible and affordable because we realize that we can set up a zoom or teams and have a lecture without travel. Both the speaker and the pupils can do these things with ease from the comfort of their home!

Ms Drew writes about the PSHE and careers programme in the secondary phase which has also adapted to the covid restrictions:

*Last week Year 10 pupils had an online assembly from Savera UK who are a Liverpool based charity who campaign to eliminate 'honour'-based abuse and harmful practices and provide life-saving services to those at risk, regardless of age, culture, sexuality or gender. Our guest speaker spoke at length about healthy relationships and how to spot signs of any form of abuse. The talk then went on to explain about forced/arranged marriages and the laws surrounding this practice. The talk ended with information and explanation of FGM and the misconceptions around this harmful practice which happens all across the world.*

*This week Year 11 had an online assembly from Brook Advisory around the subject of sexual health and pregnancy. A difficult subject that some pupils may find embarrassing, our guest speakers delivered the session in a very relaxed and matter of fact way which presented some difficult information succinctly. There was also information provided about support services and clinics available to young people in our city.*

*Work experience:*

*We have now had 38 students applying for virtual work experience in fields such as the NHS, law, construction and engineering through Speakers For Schools. We have had 27 successful applicants who are attending work experience over the next few weeks. Our first student has completed her work experience through InvestIn which was in the medical field and I was informed it was the best experience ever! This week Year 11-13 students have been invited to take part in a 2 day law work experience event over Easter holidays which is being provided by Browne Jacobsen law firm which is a brilliant opportunity. Finally year 10-13 students have been given the chance to attend virtual work experience at Easter with HSBC which will introduce them to every aspect of the banking world.*

The return of Sport has got many excited. Teams of coaches are assembled, including parent volunteers. Some practices have already begun and this Saturday will see a jamboree of various sporting activities as we return to the fields and get moving again. It seems an

age ago when coaches left every Saturday morning to take our teams to schools to compete. It is heartening to think that a return of these times may not be far away.

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

**Yours sincerely,**

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