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## Principal's Newsletter

11 February 2022

Dear Parents,

I noticed, for a brief second, while bicycling to school a swarm of swallows overhead. Despite the proverb "one swallow does not a summer make", our campus, dappled by sunlight, is hinting at spring. The Year 4 are in Barnstondale, a Wirral location, and the first time we have taken a trip off-campus of this kind in years. It all augurs a return to "normality," a chance to experience school fully with experiences our pupils have not been able to enjoy for a long time.

This week is Children's Mental Health week. Last week I wrote about the reports indicating the damage lockdowns and the pandemic have done and are doing to the mental health of the population.

Here is a description from Mr Marsh, primary inclusion mentor, on his work building understanding and resilience in the mental health of our pupils. He writes:

*This week, Pre Prep have specifically been looking at their support network and created a support balloon which depicted all of the different people that they can identify within their own network that support them best when they are feeling sad and/or upset. They also took part in a LIVE session on 'Expressing Yourself' and understanding why 'Growing Together' is essential for our positive mental health.*

*Reception pupils completed a session on how to recognise emotions, specifically when someone is feeling sad, happy, or angry by using different facial expression.*

*Prep had lots of fun with their activities this week, including having a dance and singing first thing on Monday morning to uplift their emotions and help them understand the potential positive power of music on our mental health. They also took part in a LIVE 'Express Yourself' session and learnt about the importance of talking to someone about things when they are worried and how this can help increase their positive mental health. Every Prep class also volunteered an individual from their class to come and complete 'Mr Marsh's Communication Post Box', which will be based in the main reception. Children can access the post box and leave a note expressing any worries, concerns, or things they may want to discuss. Finally, all Prep classes participated in a vote for a Well-Being Champion for their class and created and developed a shared class charter on what they believe positive Mental Health means to them*

*and each other. Each Mental Health Champion has been assigned the task of reading & sharing a Positive Mental Health message during Friday's Assembly which will cover the same topic.*

Personal Development (PD) sessions in Years 7-11 have also been focused on mental health this week. Through videos and presentations, group discussions and Q&As, pupils have been able to explore a variety of mental health issues. Throughout this term, the Sixth Form PD programme has also included a focus on mental health, with topics such as maintaining good mental health, emotional well-being, and who to turn to when support is needed.

Tuesday this week was also Safer Internet Day. This is an event that is supported by over 170 countries around the world with the one mission to make the internet a safe place for children and young people. We experience on a daily basis the damage that internet activities do to our school and to the mental health of children. For us as parents there are many excellent resources out there to help support us. With this in mind, Mr Lowes (Head of Computer Science & ICT) has added a number of useful guides to the school website detailing different apps or games that your son or daughter might play. Please [click here](#) to access the page. In the first instance their intention is just to promote a healthy conversation with your child. We hope you find them useful.

By way of example, some Year 6 pupils appear to use a WhatsApp group. This group is, as might be expected, full of immature utterances, slanders, and gossip. In fact, WhatsApp, by its policies in the European area, is not supposed to be used by pupils under the age of 16. There is a reason why even profit-focused social media and internet companies set these age limits. Parents need to take charge of the phones their children use. One teacher reported a somewhat sad moment in Year 2. The question to pupils was: if you could choose between a full day on the iPad or a day at the Forest School, what would you choose. 100% of pupils voted Forest School. We live too much on-line and should instead heed, as the Year 2s clearly have, the great American writer Thoreau in his book *Walden*:

*"We need the tonic of wildness...At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature."*

Most of you who read this newsletter will know about my ambivalent attitude to educational technology. Who still remembers the palm pilot, allegedly a solution to all educational problems. But I have now been introduced to some technology which I believe has the potential to really improve our curriculum, our teaching, and parental engagement in learning. Mr McBride, the Head of our Mathematics faculty writes:

*With every great challenge comes great opportunity. The past two years have certainly provided us with our fair share of challenges but now as we transition back to a new normality we are beginning to see the shoots of longer lasting change in our classrooms. Through online materials, our faculties are now able to support pupils much more*

*comprehensively than they ever had been able to before and so despite the difficulties faced throughout the pandemic, our pupils can feel optimistic about the opportunities that they have in front of them.*

*In our secondary phase, the mathematics faculty is leading the charge in a new digital age at Liverpool College. Subsequently the Languages and TES faculties also saw the benefits of this technology and are using it. All lessons in mathematics are now being taught on Surface Pro devices using an app called Microsoft OneNote. This app is simply a digital notebook, with digital chapters and pages. Pupils have full access to these Notebooks through their Office 365 accounts and so can access lesson materials any time. In exam year groups, some pupils are even beginning to use the Notebooks for their own advantage; they can ask for help from teachers and receive a digitally written explanation in their Notebook. The opportunities will continue to grow and embed over the coming years.*

*A big ambition of the mathematics faculty is to enable parents to feel better placed to support their child's learning in maths. With the integration of OneNote along with Math Watch and White Rose materials the faculty hopes that parents will start to feel more aware of the support that exists for their child and so feel more empowered to help. The faculty will seek to hold some information sessions later in the year to demonstrate some of these resources in action.*

The exam boards have published the so-called revision lists for exam classes. Pupils should now be aware of the topics which will be on the exam. It is a sobering thought to think that we have not sat exams since 2019 and naturally both pupils and teachers are adjusting to the reality that this marathon of exams is now on course to happen. Mocks will help us to prepare for this, and our pupils certainly have nothing to fear from being examined just as previous generations of pupils were.

The secondary phase library is receiving some loving attention and refurbishment thanks to a generous parental donation. New lighting, new carpets, new furniture are being installed. We hope soon to solicit a substantial donation which will allow us to have a laptop cart in the library, thus expanding its use for classes and teaching. My experience is that when people become aware of what the school really needs they often respond generously. If you can help us buy a laptop bank for the library, please let me know.

Today's artist of the week, nominated by Ms Hardisty is Sam W from Chapter 7 with his piece *Mersey Skyline*. Inspired by artist Tula Moon, this piece explores the rich cultural heritage and architecture found in our city. Sam developed collage techniques using recycled materials to create art.



An update from the LC Video Production Team on their creation of a video message for John Goudie, who was our Lollipop Man for many years:

*Many thanks to everybody who has submitted a video clip for John, our lollipop man, so far. We'd like to give everybody an opportunity to be involved and have extended the deadline to submit a video to Monday 14 February. An email sent to you earlier this week contains the full details for those wanting to get involved, as well as links to send us your video clips. Any questions or issues can be sent to Miss Bamber (Principal's PA) on [sbamber@liverpoolcollege.org.uk](mailto:sbamber@liverpoolcollege.org.uk).*

Our Chapter 8 really are a very good rugby team. This was shown once again when they defeated Audenshaw five tries to two, who themselves sought a fixture which would test their own invincibility.

Tomorrow Mr Cook and I head on the 07.45 bus to Ellesmere College to field football teams. I am sure the sun will shine.

May I wish you and yours a very sunny weekend.

**Yours sincerely,**

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