

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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Update Letter 24th April, 2020

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

I hope that this letter finds you well at the end of the first week back 'at home-school' after Easter!

As most of you will be aware, we have been contacting families for a 'catch up' this week. Most of the calls have been done by form tutors and it has been lovely to hear what you have all been up to. I had the pleasure of calling Miss Warren's tutor group as she is currently on maternity leave and it was a real delight to speak to students and parents. I think everyone is doing an incredible job during this challenging time and you all seem to have found your own rhythm and routine to fit your own circumstances. Please remember that we are here to help whatever your circumstances – if you need any help whatsoever, please get in touch.

We seem to have the balance right in terms of work provided for most families. Some families wanted more structure and more work, others wanted less! We will continue with our current approach using 'Show My Homework' – if families want more work, please contact the class teacher through the messaging facility on Show My Homework and we will be delighted to provide more work. This week saw the launch of an extended BBC Bitesize offer - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize> – there are some excellent materials (especially online) and, as the weeks go on, Holywell staff will signpost Bitesize materials which link with the work we are setting – feel free to explore these for yourselves. The Oak National Academy was also launched this week - <https://www.thenational.academy/> - this resource is a new collection of lessons and online resources. The resource has been created by The Oak Academy in response to the coronavirus lockdown and has been made available to all schools and families. If you want something more structured with video lessons, this may be something which could help. All of the lessons are ordered and follow the curriculum at Oak Academy. New lessons and resources are provided each week.

We had a couple of common queries and issues:

'Show my Homework' deadlines are stressing us out!

Please don't get 'stressed out' by the deadlines! No-one is going to get into trouble for not completing everything! The work is there as a support for you as you do home-schooling. Unfortunately, a key feature of the Show My Homework programme is that we have to set a completion/'hand-in' deadline in order to publish the assignment. We tend to set weekly tasks for English, Maths and Science and these deadlines are helpful for you to see which work was set during which week. Other subjects have set tasks which could range over a number of weeks so have a longer 'deadline'. Most families are sticking to these deadlines as it helps to organise the work and this is what we would recommend. However, you can also join in or select tasks suited to your child. You can do as much or as little as you want.

'Will students who are doing all the work have to wait for others to catch up?'

Rest assured that, when we do have students back in school, we will re-start our curriculum delivery as normal. If staff find that there are knowledge or skills gaps, they will 'fill these in' as appropriate. I'm sure that we will review how we deliver our curriculum as we have all been experimenting with different ways of working during lockdown. It is also fascinating to see how students are exploring



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areas of interest to them and how learning something as a family can be really motivating (whilst also being both intriguing and challenging for parents).

'Will there be online lessons using 'Zoom' or other video conferencing apps?'

For most families, our current approach using 'Show My Homework' seems to be the right sort of provision. As mentioned above, if you want online lessons, please have a look at The Oak Academy provision. We are aware, however, that there are other benefits of getting together using video-conferencing – especially in terms of wellbeing and staying in touch. We are exploring some possibilities and looking into all the safeguarding issues and the practicalities of setting something like this up. So, watch out for something over the next few weeks.

With reference to printed packs which are being sent out to support families with limited wifi / internet / printing / computer facilities at home: apologies for the belated arrival of some packs this week. The postal service is doing an amazing job however, some packs did not make it through this week. If you don't receive a pack, let us know and we'll see if we can drop one off. There are always copies available in reception at school.

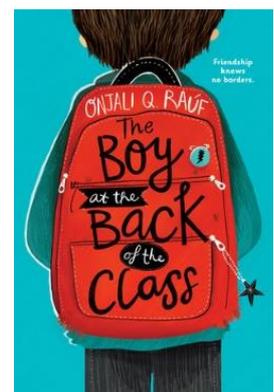
Another recurring theme from our phone calls was the number of families who have been baking together! Students have been learning how to bake bread and cakes ... and, apart from the fact that I'm amazed that you've all been able to get hold of eggs and flour (my personal flour reserves are running rather low at the moment!), I wondered whether this might be something we could have as a weekly challenge. Staff have been sharing recipes and I did share a couple of recipes with some of Miss Warren's students ... so, I have attached a couple of recipes to try – two lovely BERO Flour recipes I got from my mum many years ago – a chocolate cake recipe and a Victoria sandwich cake



recipe which I always turn into orange cake. For something a little more 'off-piste', there is a Courgette Cake recipe! I got this from the Gardening Club in a previous school – they had been growing courgettes and had too many so explored what they could do with them! Try them out ... and send me a picture of your 'triumphs'. If you have some favourite recipes, email them to me and we'll start to put together a

Holywell Bake Book! (mgsimpson@holywellschool.co.uk).

Lots of you have been reading too (Mr Brown is delighted about this!) and many of you are working your way through the 100 book challenge. My recommendation this week is 'The Boy at the Back of the Class' by Onjali Q Rauf.



One thing that we're all definitely missing is our weekly opportunity to get together for our KS2 and KS3 assemblies. Fortunately, the lovely Rachel Foster has put together another great assembly – **Surfing through the Storm** : <https://youtu.be/FR5iufYSPU>. This might be something to do this afternoon

about 2.00pm when we usually meet together.



Surfing Through the Storm

We also have lots of support on offer from our local churches – St Peter and St Paul's in Cranfield have lovely online services: <https://www.cranfieldchurch.org/services>; St Mary's in Wootton have begun an on-line ministry of service streaming to encourage their church family and to welcome any others who might like to join them:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLIOsYfZKLADo1u-Lyd089V5Li62Mz-KKK>.

The Baptist Church in Cranfield is also offering Zoom services every Sunday at 11am whilst the Church Building itself is closed. It can be accessed each week through the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/702197944>.

On the theme of support, we have also been sent the following information from Central Bedfordshire Council:

We are pleased to announce our first virtual Promoting Positive Wellbeing event. This is a virtual workshop designed to promote positive emotional wellbeing. The topic will be Fears and anxieties around covid-19 and self-care in isolation. These sessions are designed for the whole family and there will be information on self-care for parents and children of all ages.

Please sign up using the link below. An email with join instructions will be sent the day before the session. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/promoting-positive-emotional-wellbeing-tickets-103340899412>.

Holywell has also been thinking about how we can support other colleagues and we received a design for face-masks. Mr Salamon has taken up the challenge and has come up with a comfortable, workable design. We ordered some materials and, today, Mr Salamon, Mrs Bassett and Mr Wade have made these masks all ready for collection. Mrs Manning has also been making been fabric masks.



Stay safe and keep up the good work.

With all best wishes, thoughts and prayers

MG Simpson

Mr Simpson