

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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*A Church of England School
providing a Values Based Education*

Update letter 15-10-2020

Dear students, parents and carers

I hope that this letter finds you all well. Here we are nearly at the end of Week 6 of our first half term! It has been a challenging and tough half term of establishing new routines, putting plans into place and supporting students – both in terms of support with their learning and support in their return to school. We were hoping that, by now, the virus might have abated a little and we could start to think about re-introducing some of our normal practices, however, as you will be aware from the news, this is not the case! We will continue with our precautionary measures and we hope that everyone stays well and virus-free!

Thank you for working with us over the last few weeks to maintain our new practices and procedures. Some (such as no lockers, PE kit to school, and separate areas for recreation) have been welcomed by students, parents and staff, whilst others are not so popular (the one-way system isn't so popular with students, however, it is helping us to manage the flow of students around the site and it helps to keep the year groups distanced from each other). Adapting lessons to suit the new classroom layout is taking some getting used to and we are all exploring new ways to ensure the same level interaction and challenge in our classes. We have put in place our contingency plans should there be the need for any form of partial closure due to an outbreak or local lockdown measures. These plans will be available on the school website once they have been aligned with the latest guidelines about tiers (it will be in the Coronavirus section next week).



Peripatetic Music Lessons

One area in which we have been able to move forward is in working with our peripatetic music providers. Music-specific risk assessments have been completed for the different instruments so that the majority of instrumental lessons can

restart on site over the next few weeks for students who already play an instrument (new beginners will need to wait a little while longer). Watch out for communication from the music providers.

PE Lessons

With regard to PE, thank you for your support of students wearing PE kit to school on their timetabled PE days. The PE team have tried to ensure that lessons are outside where possible (in line with current recommendations). As the weather is starting to turn, we would be grateful if students could bring in football boots if their unit of work is on the field. Please could they bring the boots in a named boot bag and continue to wear trainers throughout the rest of the day. Students are also reminded that Holywell specific PE kit should be worn in lessons - polo shirt, rugby top and/or a fleece/midlayer. Where possible, shorts and jogging bottoms should be black. Students should also consider bringing in a spare top and pair of socks in case they get damp.



Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

Deputy Headteacher: Mr S Van Der Merwe – Acting Deputy Headteacher: Mrs H Donnellan

Acting Assistant Headteacher / DSL: Mrs J Davies

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Mobile phones

A gentle reminder that we are a NON-SMART mobile phone school. The only mobile phones allowed on site are the non-smart emergency phones described in our Mobile Phone Policy and students need a permission slip for these. If found on site, smart phones will be confiscated and retained until collected by a parent / carer. This helps prevent safeguarding issues to do with social media postings in school or the sharing of images. Please see the policy on the school website.

Fill our classrooms with learning and love

Throughout this first half term, our whole-school virtual assemblies have focussed on our five key focuses for the year:

Focus 2020-2021

Live life in all its fullness

Fill our classrooms with learning and love

Fill our hearts with kindness and care

Have the courage to try again when we fail

In our darkest moments, lead us to the light

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Enjoy ... Achieve ... Excel ... Care

It has been a delight to see some of the amazing work completed by students during this term. A recent Science challenge for Year 7 has resulted in the school being filled with amazing models of cells – students have created all manner of representations – from card-based models to cakes!



Year 6 have also produced some fantastic rainforest work ... this was Joey's brilliant representation:



We have also just appointed our House Captains, Sports Captains and Sports Ambassadors for the year. The process was a little different this year and students will have slightly amended roles, however, they can all be very proud at having been chosen and we look forward to working with them during the year.



Last night was the first of our Tutor-based consultation evenings which provide an early opportunity for parents to catch-up with tutors to see how students have settled back into learning in school. This year, these are being done remotely and we have decided to do these as telephone appointments. The first set of appointments were for half of Year 5 and the feedback from parents was very positive. The rest of Year 5 will have telephone appointments next week. We will do the same for Years 6-8 over the course of next half term – watch out for further information.

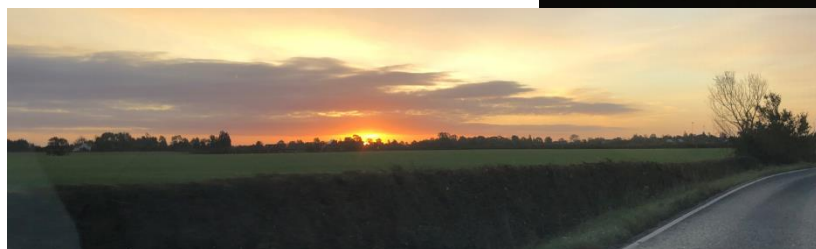
In our darkest moments, lead us to your light

This week's assembly focussed on the power of LIGHT to lift us out of the darkness. We have talked about the need to build up support networks for dealing with difficult times and the need to 'dig deep' in dark times. Students (and staff) are all dealing with a number of different challenges:

- New routines and class layouts.
- Getting back into doing work after time at home.
- Finding out we have forgotten things we thought we knew.
- Generally being anxious about life at the moment – worried about family and friends
- Being worried about what happens next with the virus ??

We have discussed what we can do in such circumstances. Here are some suggestions for 'digging deep':

- Have the right kit.
- Have the right people around us.
- Have the right mindset – both a learning mindset and a growth mindset.
- Have the courage to try again when you fail.
- Have faith in friends, family and your network.
- Borrow networks.
- Talk ... let the stress out!
- Have faith – all will be well.



We cannot emphasise the importance of talking to someone – especially to a trusted adult. If students have any concerns, they must share them with an adult. We can only deal with difficulties and challenges when we know about them. Please don't suffer in silence ... talk to someone who can act on your behalf and be assertive. Students can talk to any member of staff in school and we encourage them all to have at least 5 adults with whom they could talk. Usually, this will be the form tutor to start with. Other members of staff who can help are the Assistant Heads of Year, the Heads of key Stage 2 and 3. As parents / carers, you can also contact the school office and they will find the most suitable member of staff to help.

So, as we approach half term, please keep safe and remember to follow the government guidelines and routines:

Routines at school and at home

- Hand-sanitise
 - Catch it; Kill it; Bin it.
 - Stay alert; Control the virus; Save lives
- HANDS, FACE, SPACE.**



With all best wishes
Mr MG Simpson
Headteacher