

HOLYWELL SCHOOL

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

Update letter 19-11-2020

Dear students, parents and carers

I trust that this letter finds you all well and coping with Lockdown 2! We are over half way through the current planned restrictions and, with the recent news of promising vaccine trials, we hope that we will soon return to something closer to normal!

In the meantime, life at Holywell continues, with students and staff adapting well to the stark and stricter measures. Thank you for supporting us with our move to having face coverings while moving between classes and on school transport. Please encourage the students to have their face coverings with them at all times and to see their face covering as a part of their uniform. The revised school plan and updated risk assessment is now available on the school website – as ever, if there are any further suggestions or comments, please let us know.



This week in school marks our annual focus on anti-bullying as part of the national anti-bullying week campaign. This year the theme is 'United against bullying'. At Holywell, we define bullying as behaviour which is:

- intentional,
- deliberately hurtful
- and repeated over a period of time.

This mirrors the Anti-Bullying Alliance's definition which states: *"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online."* AS the Anti-Bullying Alliance goes on to say, *"This year, more than ever, we've witnessed the positive power that society can have when we come together to tackle a common challenge. Anti-Bullying Week is no different. Bullying has a long lasting effect on those who experience and witness it. By channelling our collective power, through shared efforts and shared ambitions, we can reduce bullying together. From parents and carers, to teachers and politicians, to children and young people, we all have our part to play in coming together to make a difference. We are all a piece in the puzzle, and together, we are united against bullying."* Fortunately, bullying is very rare at Holywell, however, when we are aware of bullying situations, we deal with them swiftly and effectively. We always try to have a peaceful resolution and try to mediate a way forward, however, bullying in any form is not tolerated in our school. We have challenged all students to play their part - we are all a piece in the puzzle, and together, we are united against bullying. These are some of the immediate things we can do to ensure Holywell stays 'bully-free':

- Include everyone.
- Celebrate and appreciate difference and diversity.
- Before you judge, walk a mile in someone else's shoes.
- Be kind.
- Think before saying or doing something.
- Be assertive – don't be a bystander.



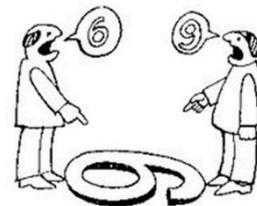
Headteacher: Mr MG Simpson MA, NPQH

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

Acting Assistant Headteacher / DSL: Mrs J Davies

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We also encourage parents and carers to contact us if there are any concerns – sometimes, students do not want to mention things at school but will talk at home – please contact form tutors as a first ‘port of call’ – we can only help if we are made aware of any unpleasantness ... and there are always two sides to every story. We always investigate incidents fully and try to come to a measured and reasonable outcome. In line with DfE guidance, “When establishing the facts the investigating teacher will apply the civil standard of proof; i.e. ‘on the balance of probabilities’ it is more likely than not that a fact is true, rather than the criminal standard of ‘beyond reasonable doubt.’ This means that the investigating teacher will accept that something happened if it is more likely that it happened than that it did not happen.” Sometimes, where there are conflicting statements, we have to have an ‘uneasy’ but fair compromise. One of the scheduled ways of ‘talking’ is through our Tutor catch up evenings. This year we are doing these by telephone and we have already completed Year 5 and Year 6 appointments. Year 7 and 8 are coming soon, so watch out for details.



Last week we had our annual Remembrance Day silence at 11.00am on the 11th day of the 11th month. We presented wreaths at both the Cranfield and Wootton Village Memorials – it was a strange experience presenting these without the usual parade and community tribute – however, our thoughts and prayers were nonetheless still heartfelt. In school, our reflections were focussed on commemorating 80 years since the Battle of Britain.



Curriculum-wise, last week, we had a big focus on Maths as it was Maths Week England! Our students took part in a Primary Maths Challenge and also ‘Rocked Out’ with Times Tables Rock Stars. Izzy, Max and Ezra earned Gold Certificates in the Primary Maths Challenge – with Ezra being the overall champion. With TT Rock Stars, most students took part at some point during the week and, as a school we came 37th out of about 5000 schools! We scored 658,772 correct answers!!! The top 5 classes at Holywell per average user scores were...5AJS, 5HL, 6MF, 6GLJ, 7SM and our ‘Rock Stars’ were:



1	 AVRIL FOX 5AJS	60,994
2	 CAPTAIN PRIME 6MF	40,855
3	 REX JACKSON 7EVT	33,822
4	 OZ ONE 5HL	22,299
5	 MARC PAGE 6GLJ	20,398

These are obviously their 'Rock Star' names ... they all know who they are !!! ... amazing efforts all round! Thanks to Mr Jones, Miss Lau and the Maths Team for organising.

It has also been a pleasure over the last couple of weeks for myself and the senior team to visit lessons (socially-distanced and wearing face-coverings of course!) to see how everyone is coping in the 'new normal'. The quality of the lessons has been amazing – apart from the obligatory seating in rows and the new hand-sanitising routines, teachers are still providing students with a challenging, rich and fun learning experience: there are so many highlights so far but some examples include:

- full-on Science lessons (all fully prepared and resourced by our new Science technician Mr Evans);
- outside representations of how the Earth, the Sun and the Moon revolve and rotate;
- innovative and creative Music lessons involving a wide range of percussion instruments, Boomwhacker lessons and slick cleaning processes to enable 'normal' keyboard lessons;
- challenging Maths lessons all fully differentiated;
- engaging English lessons based around some brilliant books;
- PE lessons which make the maximum use of all of our indoor and outdoor spaces;
- 'near-normal' Technology lessons with teachers in PPE;
- creative and relaxing Art lessons;
- self-study ICT lessons with Mr Crapnell's engrossing and accessible video tutorials
- ... and so many more!

We are incredibly lucky to have such a dedicated and determined staff team and, on behalf of all the students, I thank them for all they are doing to ensure we continue to have the best educational provision possible in these challenging times. If your child has enjoyed a lesson or been inspired by one of our teachers, a quick email to say 'thank you' would be really welcome too.

As you'll be aware, we had the opportunity to share our experiences with an Ofsted research team just before half term. We have now received our official feedback and our comments are also included in the second report from Ofsted – both documents are being sent out with this update letter.



... and a final thought: We are not all in the same boat, but we are all in the same storm". We are aware that some of our families are having a tough time during Lockdown 2 ... and generally during this 'storm'. Please contact us if you need some help – we will try our best to support (or at least point you in the direction of some support) – sometimes, just a chat will help. Please be patient if you do contact us as we all have teaching commitments and will get in touch as soon as is possible. Use your parent networks and ... Be kind.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Take care.

Mr Simpson.