

Head's Up!

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you and your families are well.

I had hoped to be bringing you further information on the plans announced by the Prime Minister last weekend regarding the return to school, in particular for years 10 and 12. You may well be aware that the ensuing details issued by the Government have provided a certain level of confusion and are still very vague for secondary schools. I am sorry that we cannot yet publish plans. I will, of course, write again with further details as soon as we are in a position to do so. The school remains open for our vulnerable learners and students of critical key workers.

Remote Learning Feedback...

We recently surveyed our students about our approach to Remote Learning. The responses were overwhelmingly positive. We are working on developing our approach in a number of ways to address the areas suggested to improve. A 'You said.....We did' summary sheet will be sent to students soon.

Later this week we will be asking parents/carers to carry out a similar survey.

We remain hugely grateful for the efforts you are making to support us and your children in these unprecedented times for school and education. A special mention to Archie Worth who has made help sheets to show students how to upload work to SMHW or Google Classroom. Please find these attached with this parentmail.

Pastoral Team Message...

As you will hopefully be aware, tutors have been busy supporting students to ensure they can access and complete any work set via the agreed platforms. Tutors have also been sharing positive news stories with the school. It has been fantastic to see the Murphy challenge project, rainbow artwork and cakes in support of the NHS. Thank you to all students for taking part in these. Keep up the good work!

We have taken on board some of the student feedback and are looking at how we can increase opportunities to be part of the JMS community remotely.

This week, we recorded our first assembly and have sent this to all students. A follow on presentation will also be circulated with tips and advice on wellbeing as well as exploring the word 'community'.

The assembly reflected on time and routines in this period of uncertainty and change. We wanted to ask students to take inspiration from Captain Tom Moore and reflect on how they can make a difference to their education, those around them and their community.

We will continue weekly assemblies. Some will have key pastoral messages, others will be about a challenge, so we can all feel like we are contributing to something bigger and be part of our team.

We have also sent out recognition letters and phone calls to those students who have really engaged with home learning and to those who had reached House Point milestones before lockdown.

In Other News.....

Mr Gilkes has keenly been organising a year 10 and 11 lockdown challenge. The aim is to try and maintain a sense of community by setting students (and teachers) a set of (entirely optional) weekly challenges. To find out more please click on the following link.

<https://sites.google.com/johnmasonschoo.org/10-and-11-lockdown-challenges/home>

Last week the PE department set an Inter-House Step Challenge. Students were asked to record their steps from Monday to Thursday and report them to their teachers. Well done to everyone who has participated. Here are the results so far:

OCK = 525,796

STERT = 437,498

THAMES = 583,773

Congratulations to Isla Barton and Rahem Jamal for having their work selected for the 'Young Art Oxford' exhibition. This is a great achievement as there were 2928 entries for 600 places. The exhibition is usually at the Ashmolean museum but is now a virtual exhibition and can be viewed online at www.youngartoxford.com. All money raised is donated to Cancer Research UK – Kids and Teens.

Staffing Update....

I am delighted to inform you that we have made several appointments since I last wrote to you. Kirsty Rogers has been promoted to Deputy Head (Curriculum and Outcomes) and Lucy Dasgupta has been promoted to Assistant Head (Teaching and Learning).

We have also recruited Alex Hurst to our Maths team and Andy Duxbury to our Science team.

Safeguarding.....A message from TVP

With the situation that we are all facing in light of the COVID19 virus, please can I take the opportunity to update you with regard to the current position of Thames Valley Police, particularly in relation to safeguarding our children. During this period of COVID 19 lockdown children and young people are increasingly using social media. There are positive aspects to this but also challenges. TVP have launched a media campaign which highlights some of the safeguarding issues that this increased use can bring. The key messages highlighted in the campaign are as follows:

For children:

- Don't be afraid of coming forward and speaking to a parent, carer, guardian, teacher or other trusted adult.
- The Police are here to help and support you – you will not be in trouble.
- Know who you are talking to on-line. If something doesn't feel right – tell someone.

Key messages for parents:

- Trust your instinct for signs, you know your child better than anyone.
- Have your children suddenly become very secretive?
- Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why?
- Do they seem distracted.
- Do they have sudden mood swings?
- Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media?
- Have open conversations with children about their internet usage.
- Use parental controls and seek guidance from the available free resource.

TVP is strongly advocating for information on staying safe the use of the NCA CEOP website www.thinkuknow.co.uk – this contains links to advice for children at different age groups as well as parents/carers and professionals including teachers.

Best wishes and stay safe

Best wishes
Adrian Rees
Head of School
