

15<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents

Last week I sent out our virtual Reading/Assembly – I hope you enjoyed it! This week is a more traditional newsletter – and I have plenty of news from teachers about how well pupils have been working from home.

I want to celebrate how hard everyone is working as well. As I'm sure you would expect we are monitoring the engagement of our pupils, especially Senior School pupils, who are more independent in their work. We do this through Show My Homework, which allows us to see exactly who has logged on and when! In our latest check, these are the statistics for our Senior pupils:

Year group	% of pupils who had logged on in previous 48 hours
Year 7	74%
Year 8	76%
Year 9	85%
Year 10	97%

Firstly a big well done to Year 10 – it is amazing to see how hard you are working! We'd love to have 100% of Year 10 engaging with the work set – and do get in touch with your teachers if there is anything that is stopping you from getting things done! We are here to help. And let's see whether the other year groups can catch up with Year 10...

In Junior School we monitor this differently – as work is set and accessed in a number of different ways, though Marvellous Me as well as Show My Homework. But Junior School teachers have been very impressed by the engagement of pupils and parents alike – and so grateful for all the help and support that parents are giving to their children.

In school we are all very conscious that this would have been SATs week for our Year 6 children. Mrs Goodwin and Miss Blair asked me to include a message from them here:

*Year 6 - we know that some of you may feel sad at the missed opportunity of showing us what you can do in your SATs, while others of you are no doubt delighted about not having to take the tests! We want to let you know that we are very proud of you all and that we've always known that you are more than just a SATs score and so to us, SATs or no SATs, we think our Year 6 children are amazing.*  
*Mrs Goodwin and Miss Blair*

The same is true for Year 11 – I have felt a little sad this week as it would have been GCSE English Literature Paper 1 (always my favourite paper as it contains the Shakespeare play!). I would like to send a similar message to Year 11 and Year 13 as to Year 6 – we are very proud of you and of everything that you have achieved and we do not need you to have taken your examinations for us to know what exceptional young people you are.

I know that those parents with children in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 are keen for us to send out our plans for wider re-opening, which may happen from the 1<sup>st</sup> June, if the government says that it is safe for us to do so. We have had a number of emails asking us for

further details of what we will be doing as a school. I want to be clear that I will send out information about the provision that we will offer towards the end of next week. As you can imagine there is a great deal of planning to be done to make school as safe as we can possibly make it for both pupils and staff. We have to measure classrooms, ascertain how many pupils will be in school, plan our staffing, purchase the necessary equipment, develop one way systems around school, plan lunch provision and timetables...We cannot rush into this and we must ensure that we have all the necessary information and guidance before we write to you. Our plans must also be approved at Trust level before we can communicate them to you.

I will send letters to all parents in Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 next week which will give you the details of our planned provision. I will also be writing to parents of Year 10 about the face to face contact that we can offer for them. This will be part of a larger package that we are currently working on for our Year 10 students. Thank you for your patience.

Mr Buchanan has asked me to include a message about the House Art Challenge:

*Thank you for all the incredible entries for the House Art Competition this year. It has been an absolute pleasure receiving and judging the numerous entries and gaining an insight to who your heroes are. All works submitted really demonstrate the abundance of creativity our Polam students have to offer, from Reception all the way through to Year 13. I am currently compiling results and these will be released on Monday with individual winners, examples of entries received and of course the overall Winning House. A big thank you again to all who took part and I am very excited to keep this amazing creative house Competition running each year from now on.*

There has been a lot of fabulous work going on both in and out of school this week. Mrs Crosby has sent this from RC: *We have had another successful week of home learning in RC and I am so amazed at the fabulous work the children are producing. Some of us enjoyed the VE Day celebrations and I thought you would like to see them too.*



Mrs Hood has also asked me to include something about how 4DH have been getting on:

*Mrs Hood is very pleased with the effort that children are putting into their new Convince Me... topic (rivers, mountains and coasts). Many children are undertaking research of their own and presenting information in a clear*



way. The artwork is by Freya who has clearly spent a long time representing the different stages of a river and she has labelled it accordingly. Well done, Freya!

Mrs Bailly has also sent some information about how well her classes are doing: Two pieces of work attached: an excellent newspaper front page from Phoebe Jenkins and a thought-provoking poem about the earth from a giant's perspective from Charlotte Nunn.

April Bedrock Vocabulary awards for my classes: Phoenix Gault and Shinayomi Tajudeen are still storming ahead having done the most lessons. Oliver Ridley and Natalia Smurthwaite made the most progress in April - very well done!

Excellent achievement this week in English: Eva Cherry, Erika King, Charlotte Nunn, Phoebe Jenkins, Olivia Dalton-Ayres, Cleo Auton, Sophie Ansfeld, Tilly Snowball

Excellent effort and conscientiousness this week in English: Poppy Atkinson, Sophie Maltby, Beautice Tait, Rubi Purwal, Alex Wilkins, Ashley Duncombe-Shafto, Ella Gibbon, Kacie Fulleylove, Ellis Hughes, Holly Taylor, Jonny Jiang



Mrs Jones has sent me a really interesting opportunity for Senior School students:

The company that came into school last year for the Prepare a Doctor Day are putting on a Live Autopsy event online over May Half term. Mrs Jones is going to get them into school again next year, so Polam Hall students can take part in their own autopsy event so this will be great to get you interested in the event ahead of next year. Students can tune into a unique live channel with nationally acclaimed human anatomist Samuel Piri and his clinical team as they embark on a live 5-part post-mortem dissection experience, using the world's first semi-synthetic human cadaver and real organ specimens. For more information how to sign up and what will be dissected each night then please click on the below link <https://www.thepostmortemlive.co.uk> Mrs Jones will certainly be watching and getting involved and it will be a great event to take part in over May Half term! A strong stomach recommended but if you're curious I definitely recommend you watching it.

Mrs Jones has also asked me to mention the following students for individual hard work, curiosity and confidence:

Hugh and Olivia Dent - enthusiasm and curiosity throughout their dissection video, correct naming of all the anatomical parts!



Mrs Mawson has sent me this report about the work that 2M have been doing: *Thank you to Year 2M for all your marvellous work! You're all doing such a great job with your home learning. Again, a big thank you to parents for your ongoing support.*

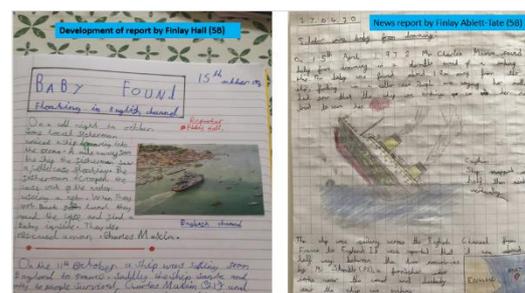
*Joel created a colourful red, white and blue poster for VE Day and Connie produced a power point presentation with 7 slides to demonstrate her ICT skills and the information that she'd researched! Connie included photographs of her great-grandparents that had both fought and survived World War 2. Lily revelled in an optional task this week and designed and made a wonderful lighthouse from recycled materials and a solar powered light! Keep going, Year 2M. You can do it!*



Mr Turnbull has asked me to say a big well done to 4T for the fantastic work that they have been doing on Rivers:



Mrs Bury has also sent me some brilliant pictures of the work that 5B have been doing at home – some fantastic creative ideas!



Mrs Straughan has sent me the following report about the work that her Year 7 pupils have been doing:

*Continuing with our work on Ecology, Year 7 students were asked to create a fact file about Red Squirrels and how their numbers have decreased over the years. Once again the work I have had in is of a fantastic quality and I would like to mention three students in particular. Ella Miller who set her work out in a way that was clear and informative with extra information explaining what we can do to help increase the Red Squirrel population. William Conway who completed the challenge question and included a graph in his fact file and Thien Anh Diep who was able to include diagrams to ensure the reader understood the issues associated with the Red Squirrel. Well done!*

I want to encourage all those who have not done so yet to enter one of our House Challenges. The Creative Writing Challenge closes today – still a little time to send in your entry. And there is one more week to complete the PE Challenge so we can see which House has travelled the furthest and can complete the most kick ups!

Next week the focus of our Concordia Crescimus Curriculum will be on Careers. Mr Robson has organised a series of Careers Challenges, which are on the Powerpoint attached with this newsletter. I hope that lots of you will get involved! He has also asked me to say to Year 10 in particular that he is working on ways to rearrange both work experience and the taster days at QE and Darlington College, which would normally have taken place this term.

Again, as always, my thanks for all that you are doing at home and for your support of our staff during this difficult time. I hope you and your families have a good and restful weekend.

Best wishes



Kate Reid