

25<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Parents

It is hard to believe that it is almost the end of September already. Today Mrs Ryan was wearing a hat to teach PE – and her shorts had been replaced by long trousers. Proof indeed that autumn is here!

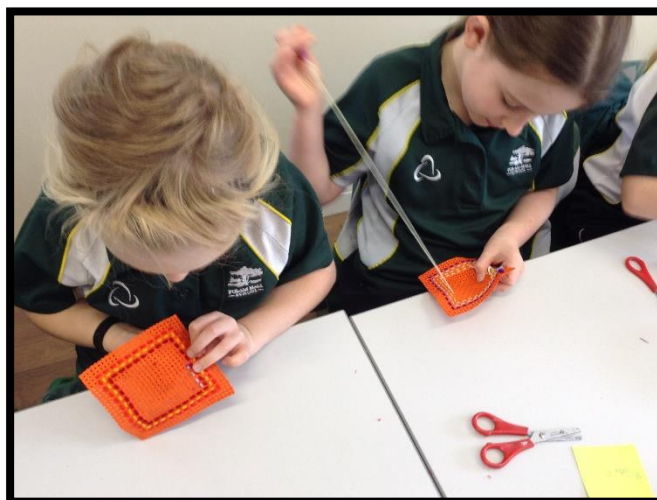
The normal rhythm of school life is slowly returning. Next week we hope to run the first extra-curricular activities after school for Senior pupils as we gradually get back to a full programme. Combined Cadet Force will begin on Wednesday after school, with Vocal Ensemble beginning rehearsals on Thursday and Football training on three different evenings. Mr Wilkinson will be sending details home.

Our CC Curriculum Senior Activities are now firmly underway on Wednesday afternoons and the pupils have responded very well to the current need to do these in their bubbles rather than the usual vertical groups. We have still tried to offer a variety of activities which we will review as the year progresses.

Current programme:

Autumn Term Activities – Half Term 1	
Y7	Film Club, Drama and Theatre Masterclass, Mixed Futsal, Science Club, Mixed Netball
Y8	Cartoons and Comic Strips, Quick Cooks, Table Top Games and Activities, Mixed Football, Musical Theatre and Disney Appreciation
Y9	Chess and Mind Games, Film Club, Polam Press – Creative Writing and Journalism, Mixed Football, Guitar and Ukulele Skills
Y10	Art Club, Russian Language and Culture, Heretics Society – Discussion and Debate, Rounders and Cricket, Jamming Session,
Y11	Careers, Study Skills, Catch Up Programme

Junior School children are also very much enjoying their activities – here are 4 Venus very involved in their sewing this week:



5 Neptune took part in their second activities session today. They have learnt a range of moves in boxercise over the last few weeks and blew Miss Blair away with their effort and determination in a boxercise circuit this afternoon. Well done!



Our careers programme is certainly up and running. Mr Robson has sent through the following information about some of the exciting opportunities that we have been able to offer to Year 10 and Year 11:

### **ONE VISION COHORT INTERVIEWS**

*The Year 10 cohort involved in the One Vision project have started their virtual interviews with a careers adviser, who has talked them through their strengths and areas for development. The response has been positive from students. Jane Devise, the careers advisor wishes to convey to all parents and students how impressed she was by the way students interacted and responded during the interviews which, held virtually, were out of usual comfort zones for not only the students but herself.*

*A humorous aspect of this was that Jane was working from home with a squawking parrot in the background on occasions. She said it was prone to swear - I'm not sure if it did!!*

### **YEAR 11 EXTERNAL CAREERS INTERVIEWS AND COLLEGE VISITS**

*All Year 11 students will have a 45 minute interview with an external careers advisor this term. These have started and there has been positivity from students. The external advisor has said she has rarely seen students engaging so well at these interviews - so well done to all who have had them.*

*QE and Darlington College have also been in on Wednesday afternoons to speak to Year 11 about possible destinations - other providers will follow. Please do not worry if illness has made you miss any of the information sessions. The week before half term I will send out to all Year 11 students and parents an email containing all the presentation information from providers so it can be all together and students can make an informed choice.*

*Remember though - because of Covid it is even more important that students go online and research courses available to them, use the virtual chat sites and email questions to the colleges. Take responsibility!!*

*Year 11 should also have a CV and a letter of application prepared for half term. I have been impressed with the ones submitted this term and during lockdown and I have awarded a Concordia Crescimus to Kate Graham this week for an outstanding CV. Well done Kate!*

Mrs Jones has sent me some reports about the work that her classes have done this week – sadly no exciting Science photos this time!

*Year 9 have been learning about elements, compounds and mixtures at the start of their GCSE Chemistry topic. 9 set 2 were brilliant at making their own chemical formulas using marshmallows and cocktail sticks. They could not only make a compound from a given formula but also made their own models and could then tell me the formula that would make. For example  $Pi_2Wh_3$  meant they had a compound containing two pink marshmallows and 3 white ones! Their understanding was brilliant and they were very mature using the edible tasty treats!*

*Year 11 Separate Chemistry students have also been brilliant the last few lessons. They starred in the whole school video shown to prospective Year 7 students, demonstrating how to carry out their Potable Water practical expertly. There was some great skill on show in terms of setting up a distillation practical as well as then being able to write up a 6 mark exam question method afterwards. They have just been set a home investigation to analyse the conditions needed for iron to rust. The groups have been sent home with three small iron nails and a disposable nappy as their key equipment. The nappy was clean much to their amusement and the students now have to research the practical they need to conduct and then write up a report with the chemistry and equations to back up their findings. I look forward to seeing the pictures and reports in the next couple of weeks!*

On Tuesday night we held our first ever virtual Open Evening by Zoom – and released the video which we have made about the Senior School. If you would like to see it then it can be found here – do direct anyone you know with a child in Year 6 to have a look at what the Senior School can offer: <https://www.phs.woodard.co.uk/1279/year-6-open-event-2020> If there are current Year 6 parents that were unable to attend, then the slides from the evening are also available on the website and please don't forget that you can make an appointment for a face to face meeting with either one of the Senior Leadership Team or with Mrs Herbert, our SEN Manager, by contacting Mrs Carroll: [carroll.d@phs.woodard.co.uk](mailto:carroll.d@phs.woodard.co.uk)

This year we have added House Weeks to our school calendar, to make sure that we prioritise House events right across the school. We will be running House Poetry competitions in both Junior and Senior Schools, with some housepoints for staff as well... I will report back next week!

I hope you and your families have a lovely weekend

Best wishes

Kate Reid