

LGS Newsletter

15 May 2020



Dear Parents

Welcome to the 8th school closure period weekly newsletter.

The speculation about the reopening of schools has continued this week. I am sure you have seen the media coverage following the Prime Minister's announcement last weekend. There has been an unfortunate level of criticism of teachers' unions in the last few days which has masked the serious questions being asked about how we can guarantee that schools are safe for staff and students to begin to return. I have provided some further detail about this discussion in this newsletter. Hopefully you will take away the message that Langley Grammar School is committed to bring students back into school just as soon as it is considered safe, feasible and worthwhile to do so.

This coming Wednesday, 20th May, is **National 'Thank a Teacher' Day**. I would therefore like to thank - on your behalf - all our dedicated teachers and support staff for their hard work and commitment 'behind the scenes' over the last few weeks. While we have been closed they have been working hard to provide online resources for your sons and daughters, and keeping track of their engagement and completion of work. We know that we have a good idea of what students have been able to do and this knowledge will help us significantly when we return to school properly and plan for the resumption of the normal curriculum. Form tutors have been in contact with their form members to check on their wellbeing and have reported back on how students have been coping during the lockdown. Many of our staff have also been providing support for isolated family members, and also doing what you have been doing - supporting the home learning for their own children. For many, it has been a difficult juggling act but they have retained their commitment, motivation and positive outlook. I am very proud to lead such a dedicated group of colleagues.

The coming week is **Mental Health Awareness Week**. We are conscious of the strain on students and their families during the lockdown and the impact on mental wellbeing. Our student Young Mental Health Champions will be sending out material each day next week which we hope will raise awareness and support your son or daughter's wellbeing.

Next week I will also update you with more detail on our plans for **Phase 3** of the closure period. In the meantime, please could I encourage Year 10 and 12 parents to complete the survey, details of which are given below and in the email to which this bulletin was attached.

Thank you once again for your support.

Mr J Constable - Headteacher

Year 10 and 12 Parent Survey

Following the Government's announcement and as we plan ahead for the phased re-opening of school in June/July, we want to gauge the current views of parents on whether they would encourage their sons or daughters to come into school - and if not, what the main concerns or barriers are at this stage.

Please could Year 10/12 parents complete the survey below? It is anonymous but if you would like us to contact you to discuss any concerns you may have, please include your name and number where requested.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WPPJ7SQ>

Thank you.

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Please visit our website at

www.lgs.slough.sch.uk

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General updates

How to get in touch with us

Throughout the school closure period, please contact us via email.

The school@lgs.slough.sch.uk email address is monitored continually and your query will be forwarded to the most appropriate member of staff.

Reopening schools

What is the current Government expectation?

The Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy 'Our Plan to rebuild' was published after the Prime Minister's speech last weekend. The Government expectation as set out in that plan is that....

Schools should prepare to begin to open for more children from 1 June. The Government expects children to be able to return to early years settings, and for Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 to be back in school in smaller sizes, from this point. This aims to ensure that the youngest children, and those preparing for the transition to secondary school, have maximum time with their teachers. Secondary schools and further education colleges should also prepare to begin some face to face contact with Year 10 and 12 pupils who have key exams next year, in support of their continued remote, home learning. The Government's ambition is for all primary school children to return to school before the summer for a month if feasible, though this will be kept under review.

However, this is conditional on infection rates continuing to decrease. Further guidance from the Department for Education states that....

We will only do this provided that the five key tests set by the government justify the changes at the time, including that the rate of infection is decreasing. As a result, we are asking schools, colleges and childcare providers to plan on this basis, ahead of confirmation that these tests are met.

So why all the media fuss this week?

It would be fair to say that there has been some confusion nationally about the Government's expectations, not helped by some contradictory messages in the guidance which has been published. In addition, the position of the Government in respect of schools in England is at odds with that adopted by the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments, which has all said that schools will not reopen before September.

Teachers' unions, together with the headteachers' professional associations, have understandably asked questions about the basis of the reopening plans, which in some aspects appear to contradict the social distancing requirements and other restrictions imposed elsewhere. Reassurance has been sought about the evidence that children are at lower risk of developing the illness and that they are less likely to spread the virus than adults.

Teachers are very clear that children should be back in school as soon as possible - everyone is acutely aware of the impact of the closure on children's educational progress and mental health and wellbeing. However, the general view is that we must proceed cautiously and on the basis of clear evidence that it is safe to do so.



General updates

Reopening schools (continued....)

What is the local view?

Schools in Slough work closely together and with the Local Authority. Following discussions this week, the general consensus of local headteachers is that

- *We would like all children in primary school, and young people in priority year groups in secondary school to have the opportunity to return to school, for at least a little while, before the summer.*
- *The main value and purpose will be to support the wellbeing of children and young people and help to psychologically prepare them for a full return to school in the autumn.*
- *There will clearly be some educational advantage to being back in school, but this may be limited because of the part time nature, split classes & limited staff availability. Existing remote learning will continue to be the main educational offer, supported where possible by attendance at school.*
- *However, this can only happen when we feel that we can offer provision in a way that is safe for children, safe for their families and safe for staff. The nature of school buildings, the ages of children and their individual needs and the availability of staff mean that what will work in one school may not work in another.*

What is LGS planning to do?

We are currently looking at various models for bringing Year 10 and 12 students back into school to support their remote/online learning. We are holding discussions with subject teams to ensure we really think through the purpose and value of the face to face contact.

We are also looking at how we can further develop the online learning provision for Year 7, 8 and 9 as the Government guidance currently suggests that these year groups will not be returning to school this term.

It is clear that significant levels of planning and preparation are needed, and any return is still subject to the 'green light' from Government if the five tests are met. We do not believe it is either desirable or feasible to bring Year 10 and 12 students back in school immediately after the half term break - the guidance does say from 1st June, not on 1st June - but we will work to do so as soon as the national position is clarified and we have suitable arrangements in place.

What are our concerns?

Our overriding concern is that we must ensure that we can operate the site safely for both staff and students, in line with the best advice available. This is essential so that staff feel confident returning to work, students feel safe, and parents are confident that their children will be looked after.

We very also aware that more than 50% of the students in Years 10 and 12 do not live locally, within walking distance of the school. Under normal circumstances, a significant number of students use public transport or shared private cars and that increased use of such transport is currently discouraged.

We will update you on our plans as they develop.



Opportunities

For students interested in Robotics

From Mr Oakley in the Computing department.....

I was hoping to start up Robotics Club again this term, but there is plenty you can do from home...It's open for any student from the current Year 7-9 (next year's Year 8-10) to join the team. Take a look at the 'awesome' kickstart video...

<https://youtu.be/9XtUIQLRvA>

The competition in the UK is run by the Institute of Engineers and usually contains a research project, Robot game and teamwork skills related to The first Lego League core values (look them up!). I have a feeling this year's theme might be Star Wars related and the challenge is usually released at the start of August...

You can practice for any of these by looking at the resources below. If you have any Mindstorms EV3 kit at home, (or you can ask for one as a lockdown birthday present - they're on Amazon!) you can try some of the lessons in these links to practice designing your own robots...

<http://flltutorials.com/RobotGame.html>

<http://ev3lessons.com/en/>

Just as soon as we can get back into school, we'll get cracking as we have plenty of kit and a game board in the new building but as you can see there is so much you can do from home...!

If you are interested, let me know by email, and I'll add you to the Robotics Team in teams. Previous Roboteers welcome too.

Mr Oakley

Virtual talks from Speakers for Schools

HOW TO JOIN THE VTALKS

Join 10 minutes before the VTALK to be ready. You can join without needing an account – [Watch how here](#)

For full speaker descriptions visit the [VTALK Schedule here](#)

DATE	SPEAKER	INFO
Mon 18 th May 10am	Aleida Rios, Group Head of Engineering, BP.	Why choose Engineering as a career? John, a graduate who works at BP, interviews BP's Group Head of Engineering, Aleida Rios on how she got into Engineering and how students can build a career they enjoy.
Mon 18 th May 2pm	Penguin VTalk Featuring: Malcolm Gladwell, journalist, author, and public speaker	How to Talk to Strangers. Author of five international bestsellers, Malcolm Gladwell, joins academic and author Emma Dabiri, to discuss the consequences of mis-communication, how to interview others and the art of storytelling.
Tues 19 th May 10am	Robert Peston, Political Editor, ITV	Join Robert Peston, Political Editor, ITV and Founder, Speakers for Schools in his very own Virtual Talk!
Tues 19 th May 2pm	Kathrina Mannion, Director of Environmental Policy, BP	Kathrina will discuss her career and role in Environment and Policy. She will also discuss her motivations and career progressions. Kathrina used to be a Senior Advisor for the government so has a really interesting career story.
Wed 20 th May 10am	Dr. Maria Faraone, Director of the RIBA Studio, RIBA	What does an Architect do? Dr Maria Faraone will explore with students more about the career, what it might entail and how students can pursue the career.
Wed 20 th May 2pm	David Dein, Former Chairman of Arsenal and the Football Association	David's presentation is aimed at 15-18yr olds and features the phenomenal success of the Premier League since its inception. David will also impart inspirational messages about how to be successful.
Thu 21 st May 2pm	Peter Mather, Group Regional VP, Europe & Head of Country, UK, BP	Carbon emissions need to fall fast to meet the Paris climate goals. At the same time, the global population continues to grow – and demand more energy. How can we tackle this dual challenge?
Fri 22 nd May 10am	Tom Dore, Head of Education, British E-Sports Association	Tom will talk about transferable skills that can be gained from playing esports, He aims to demystify the esports sector and describe the opportunities that exist.



Snapshots

What have students been doing this week?

From the Maths team...

Most students have been working well on their Maths using a variety of resources. Years 7 – 9 have been using MyMaths to submit their work and their teachers are pleased with the progress that is being made. Year 10 continue with the curriculum, learning new concepts through PowerPoints, MyMaths and other resources that their teachers provide for them. Year 12 have now finished learning the content for Year 1 work and are currently doing some revision using the online Integral resources before their teachers start working on some Year 1 Practice Papers.

Mrs Mangat

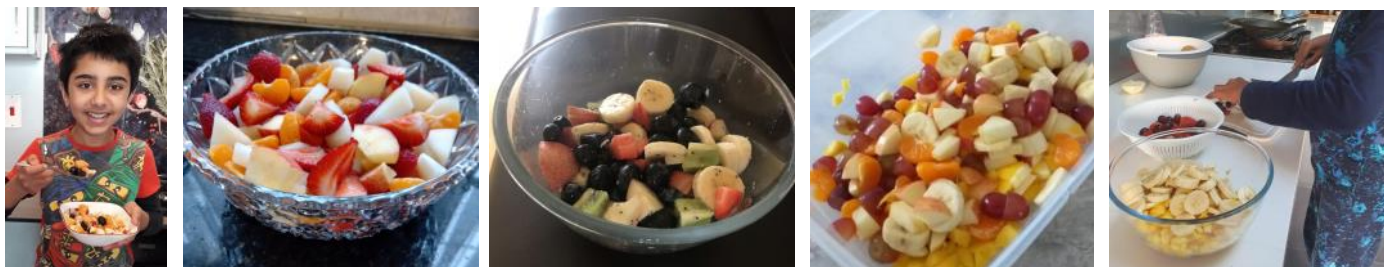
From the Technology department

I've had pictures back from Year 9 students wearing face masks they made as an extension task. I am now going to run this task with Year 7s and 8s with prizes for the funniest and most sophisticated.

Mrs Young

7SV and 7KR in Food Tech have been learning about the Eatwell Guide and knife skills, and those that had ingredients and permission at home sent in some great photographs of some fruit salads they made! Great examples from Akaisha Anand, Ishveer Mudhar, Jagjot Nahal, Leighann Kariuki and Munam Kashif.

Miss Walker



From two of our Year 11 tutors....

We are in touch with our form group regularly but have been very impressed with two students in particular who have been doing amazing things since closure - we'd want to let you know about them because they are being very productive when, given the cancellation of their exams, they could have chosen not to be.

Ahmet Kucuk has been working through parts of the A Level maths specification, is currently working through a Java tutorial and has created a basic game on Java. He has built a PC and managed to transfer data to it and is now working on using Java and Python programmes together. He's also been doing regular exercise and completed the work given to him on Classcharts. And he's fasting in Ramadan...

Vedarth Harikrishnan has sent us pictures to show how he's been busy with computer software Python and Blender, doing some baking and just being quite lovely to his family. He's learning new music on the piano, raised funds for a Covid 19 charity by playing the piano, has been experimenting with a "weird physics property" called tensegrity as well as doing his school work. He's also found time to chat with friends.

We think these are excellent examples of what we hope all LGS students will be like. What's more, they have taken time to communicate with us about these things rather than just saying 'I'm fine' each week - we really appreciate that.

Mrs Paice & Mrs Ettridge, 11H tutors



Snapshots

What have students been doing this week?

From the Art department

A selection of recent portrait drawings from Year 8.....





Snapshots

What have students been doing this week?

From the Art department

...and some pen drawings of animals from Year 9.

