



Weekly Newsletter

HEAD OF SCHOOL UPDATE



This week's Newsletter is another in the unprecedented events following us globally, as we publish it only online. However, despite not producing a printed edition, I felt it necessary to recognise the huge shifts in our country, and highlight the state of play, as Q3 Academy Langley closes its doors, this afternoon, for the foreseeable future. As I am sure you have, we have been keeping up to date with the guidance from the Prime Minister, and Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

I have actually put this week's address together from my kitchen, having been in self-isolation since Tuesday morning. My youngest son developed a new, continuous cough, and following government guidelines, we have stayed at home, and will do so for the full, fourteen days. With that being said, I have been up at my normal time of 05:30, in constant communication via email, Skype, WhatsApp or Facebook with staff and parents, including a twice-daily briefing with my Senior Leadership Team. I must pay the most solemn and heartfelt tribute to my Vice Principals: Mr. Mills, Mr. Gee and Ms. Cox (who made a welcome return to us this week) – their work ensuring that students have been provided for, and are learning, is simply staggering. Also, I must thank my Director of Behaviour, Mr. Karim, and my P.A, Miss Quamar. With the constant communication I have had with her this week, I think that she has gone above and beyond our #HardestWorkingStaffInSandwell tag! Finally, I must thank our pastoral leaders – Mrs. Fogarty, Mrs. Goodman, Mr. Alexander, and Mr. Rahman (who has deputised for Mr. Snell, as he has been in self-isolation). Their calmness, positivity and commitment has made a huge impact on our students this week.

You will have seen in the news that local food banks are really struggling with maintaining stock levels, a very worrying fact for the most vulnerable in our society. Therefore, it filled me with immense pride this week, that our Year 9 Food Drive, as part of their Active Citizenship project, was delivered to the Smethwick Food Bank this week – I am told that it arrived just at the right time to replenish their dwindling stocks.

We have done our absolute best this week to maintain a provision for our students, which has led to some innovative practice. For example, Mr Willetts, our Senior ICT Technician, has worked with SIPs, and our wonderful Music Learning Consultants, Mr. Partridge and Miss Silverton, to deliver external music lessons via Skype! I thank our staff for their commitment, and also SIPs, for going above-and-beyond for our students' musical education.

I have noticed, when looking at the list of 'Key Workers' from the government guidance, lists of roles that are not glamorised in society, but are undoubtedly essential. The unsung heroes of Langley, this week, must be recognised. Our Administration and Reprographics team: Mrs. Kandola, Miss Loxton and Miss Marchant. Our Attendance, Learning and Welfare Champion, Mrs. Fields (who has surely done about four weeks' worth of work in just five days) and our Family Liaison Champion, Mrs. Gaur, who has been relentless in her support of our students' medical needs, and coordinating with parents and carers. I think Mrs. Gaur might have worn out a FitBit with all the steps she has done this week! We simply could not operate without you – thank you so much.

One of the additional announcements this week related to examinations, with the announcement that all GCSE and A-Level examinations will, for this year, be cancelled. That means that for our GCSE in English Literature, and our GCSE in Citizenship (as well as some home languages), students will not be taking those papers this year. Obviously, this is heart-breaking news, as I have marvelled all year at the quality of provision offered, and the extraordinary effort from all of our students. The Education Secretary has stated that students will receive grades, but only in Year 11 and 13, meaning our students will have the chance to excel next year. I know that it hurts, and

that it might seem like all of the work has been for naught, but I guarantee to you all – the hard work done now, will pay massive dividends next year.

In order to support our students in working from home, we have sent home a Bonus Challenge for Years 7-9, containing a huge range of academic and holistic tasks to keep them occupied – I have already seen several posts from parents showing their children getting stuck in! Additionally, our Curriculum Director for English, Mr. Dawes, worked with subject leaders in the Academy to put together bespoke packs for our Year 10 students, so that they can continue with their development away from the Academy. My thanks to the following for providing the work: Miss Davis, Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Meredith, Miss Williamson, Mr. Dale, Mr. Mills, Miss Jones, Ms. Martin, Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Hainsworth, Mr. Partridge, Miss Deasy and Miss Rowson. Packs were either given to students individually, with an accompanying letter, or posted to students who were not in the Academy – they can also be found online at: <http://www.q3langley.org.uk/independent-learning/>

This week, our morale has been boosted by our Chair of Governors, Mr. Pope, who has been sending inspirational messages to our staff team every day – I have been in contact with him constantly, as he self-isolates. Additionally, I was thrilled to hear that Mr. Forrester, our Parent Governor, brought in a selection of pastries and chocolates to boost the energy levels of our staff team – thank you!

As you will have seen on Thursday evening, the government published a list of 'Key Workers', for whom schools may still continue to operate to cater for, as their work is essential for the combatting of the virus, or the running of the country at large. There will be a letter published, from our Trust, online, and updates on our social media pages (if you do not follow us on Facebook yet, please do). I can state, for now, that we will be open next week to cater for children of Key Workers, and will provide students with Breakfast and Lunch. I hope you understand that the provision offered to students is changeable, so we are requesting that students attend in their P.E kit each day, with their Q3 coat, Q3 bag and equipment as normal. Of course, five days with P.E kit might be challenging, so we are happy for students to alternate their P.E t-shirt with other, dark, t-shirts, whilst rotations are made at home.

There has been so much fall-out from the spread of this virus, and one very difficult impact is that our colleagues in their Initial Teacher Training with us have been pulled out of their placements. We thank Miss Dean, Mrs Gourdon -Kelly and Mr. Sohail for all they have done with us.

Furthermore, with this the last Newsletter for the foreseeable future, we can announce that at Easter, our fantastic Leader of Learning in English, Mr. Morrison, will be leaving the Academy. From his interview lesson (definitely the most creative and spell-binding I had seen to that point), to his extraordinary teaching, incredible work with his Tutor Group, and his honest, passionate views on education, he will be sorely missed. However, the fact that he will be relocating to London, to the 'best school in country', our great friends Michaela, just shows the quality that he possesses – I know he will be a huge success. I am looking forward to bumping into him during my annual pilgrimage; the door is always open for you if you find yourself back in the Midlands. Thank you for everything you have done for us, Mr. Morrison!

I wish everyone a calm and peaceful weekend. As the Prime Minister has said, if we pull together, follow government advice and continue to be kind, we will get through this. I have faith that when we come out of this, we will be a stronger, fairer and more tolerant nation and community – let's all act in a Good, Right and True manner towards each other.

Please keep an eye out for all updates on our Academy website, and our Facebook page.

Best Wishes

Peter Lee
Head of School