

## Update from the Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer

As we began February this week, the rainy days have reminded me of a 'quiz fact' that the most common Old English name for the month was Solmonath, which literally means 'mud month.' They were not wrong - and, if Lockdown has any positives for parents and carers, it might include not having very muddy shoes and uniforms to deal with on a daily basis!

Staying with the theme of parents and carers, if you didn't make it to last week's webinar '*Coronacoaster - parenting through a pandemic*' with Dr Kathy Weston, the link to the recording is detailed in the article further on in this bulletin, together with details about a live Q&A session on Sunday evening. We know the pandemic and lockdowns have presented new and different challenges for you all and we remain ever grateful for the adjustments and sacrifices you are having to make to support your children's learning which, in turn, is helping to keep them on track, focused and positive. With half-term approaching, we hope our 'no-screen day' on Wednesday might provide a little more 'space' for everyone.

This week marked 'Children's Mental Health Week' and the theme 'Express Yourself' was focused on getting children and adults to find creative ways to share thought and feelings in a variety of ways including by creating or discussing ideas in music, art, dance, poetry, photography etc. If you missed it, I'd highly recommend a quick trip to last week's [virtual art gallery](#) - some stunning pieces created by our students for everyone to enjoy.

As we end the week, we might reflect that the week's headlines seem to have taken us all on a bit of a rollercoaster of news and emotions - vaccine numbers, new variants, doorstep testing, Captain Tom, school return plans...to name but a few. However, there were two that particularly caught my eye. The news of the appointment of Sir Kevan Collins, as Education Recovery minister, promises a strategy to support schools to help students get 'back on track' where needed. The second was the positive response Professor Chris Witty gave to a reporter about the individual who filmed himself shouting at Professor Witty in the street. His sensible attitude that teenagers sometimes make mistakes but still develop into model citizens seemed both refreshing and optimistic.

Wishing you all a restful, optimistic (if not dry) weekend.

James Shapland  
Headteacher

## Hub Provision

If you are a key worker or have a vulnerable child and would like a place for them at school in our Hub please contact [admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk). All spaces must be pre-booked to ensure we have adequate, safe levels of provision.

## PE Weekly House Challenge

Students can upload their attempts at the PE weekly house challenge for house points [here](#). This week was '[get down get up](#)'. You can see how the PE Team got on [here](#).

## Letters this week

- Letter to Hub parents re. ELD
- Y10 Bronze DofE Award

## House Points

Current house points

Bourne	Coram	Handel	Raven
21472	21830	20976	21053
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>

05/02/2021

## School Policies

The Exclusion Policy and Statement of General Principles with Regard to Behaviour have been updated this week and can be found on our [Policies Page](#)

## Remote Learning

Students continue to rise to the challenge of remote learning with a total of 3452 merits awarded this week. Thank you to parents who responded to our remote learning survey last week; these responses were overwhelmingly positive and it was great to see how well parents feel their children are engaging with remote learning.

### Wednesday 10 February - No-Screen Extended Learning Day

February 10th has been designated a No-Screen Extended Learning Day. This is designed to:

- Acknowledge that students need to have time away from online learning, to step away from their screens for the day
- Enable students to experience activities they might not otherwise have attempted
- Allow students to think independently, be creative and offer choice in a way that the 'conveyor belt' of online, teacher-led live learning does not always permit
- Focus on the idea of challenge.

The normal school timetable will be suspended for the day, with no work set on Google Classroom, and students in years 7-11 will be provided with a list of no-screen activities, with a range of physical, creative and reflective tasks, as well as some well-being and kindness suggestions. They should choose at least one task that is something they find challenging or involves learning a new skill, and any others that they are interested in or think would benefit them. Following the day they will be asked to fill in a Google Form, describing their choices and asking them to reflect on the challenge they set themselves, and this will be a focus for discussion in tutor time on Friday. Managing challenge, and learning to challenge yourself and regulate your response to that challenge, are crucial parts of effective learning, and it is important that students embrace this as part of the day. You can see the list of activities [here](#). Sixth Form students are also encouraged to take part in the 'no screen day'. A separate list of suggested activities will be provided to them by their Heads of Year on Monday. However, we recognise that some students, particularly in Year 13, may want to spend this time to catch up on classwork and/or NEA. If this is the case we encourage sixth form students to use this time as they see appropriate with some time away from screens during the day if that is at all possible.

**Please note a separate letter has been sent to parents of students in the Hub regarding ELD.**

### JustTalk: Young People's COVID-19 webinar on 17 February

Following the success of the young people's COVID-19 webinar last year, Public Health Hertfordshire have arranged another follow up session. Hertfordshire's 11-19 year olds are encouraged to take part in this free event on Wednesday 17 February, 11:30am-12:30pm.

This is an ideal opportunity for young people to listen to reliable information from the panel members below, who will be talking about some of the anxieties many people are experiencing and answering questions and

## Bedrock Learning

Another great week for all years on Bedrock, with an outstanding amount of points achieved and lessons completed! Well done to the following classes for their achievements:

### Points achieved

7R1 with a total of 1,063 points  
8B2 with a total of 523 points

### Lessons completed:

7B2 with a total of 56 lessons completed  
8B1 with a total of 70 lessons completed!

Year 9 Bedrock X band classes are marginally leading Y band in the number of merits awarded.

The top performing classes overall were 9YEn1, 9X En2a and 9XEn2b.

Keep up the good work!

## Half Term Challenge



**UN CLIMATE  
CHANGE  
CONFERENCE  
UK 2021**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

Herts County Council are supporting the Creative Earth challenge - an art competition for people aged 16 and under run by the United Nations COP26

Climate Change Conference. Hertfordshire students can paint, draw or design a piece of art that shows how they'd like our planet to look in the future and share with HCC by tagging a photo at #SustainableHerts. You can download the official template and find more information about the campaign on the [Together for Our Planet website](#).

concerns raised by young people living in Hertfordshire:

Young people can submit questions in advance to [JustTalk@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:JustTalk@hertfordshire.gov.uk). There will also be a chat function, so questions can be submitted live during the webinar. There is no need to book or pre-register, simply visit this website on the day: [www.justtalkherts.org/coronaviruswebinar](http://www.justtalkherts.org/coronaviruswebinar)

## Virtual Work Experience

Over the past few years Year 12 students have had the opportunity to complete work experience at the end of the summer term. This has been invaluable for their personal development, university applications and CVs. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, most Year 12 students will not be able to complete work experience in the way they had planned; we are therefore encouraging students to look at ways they can undertake **virtual** work experience or voluntary work. There will shortly be suggestions of the sorts of things students can get involved in on Google Classroom. We would also actively encourage students to begin to do their own research. Although students will still be able to undertake virtual work experience at the end of the academic year, as calendared, they are also able to take advantage of opportunities in a more flexible way, as and when they arise - as long as they have informed the Sixth Form Office Team of their arrangements. If any parents/carers feel they may be able to offer a virtual work experience opportunity they should make contact with Rebecca Gorst: [rgorst@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk](mailto:rgorst@ashlyns.herts.sch.uk)

## Student Wellbeing

Lockdown has thrown up many challenges for our students, including being able to organise their day with a good balance of activities. This [checklist](#) from the EEF is a really useful document to help students achieve this.

Getting teenagers to talk openly about their feelings can also prove challenging. This [resource](#) from Minded gives some useful strategies.

## Tooled-Up Education

We were pleased to learn that last Friday's Webinar '*Coronacoaster - parenting through a pandemic*' with Dr Kathy Weston was a great success. Kathy received some lovely feedback over the weekend and it seemed to resonate with parents. To those of you who missed it, you can watch the recording [here](#)

As you might be aware, it is currently Children's Mental Health Week. During this thematic week, we may well be tempted to turn all of our focus towards our children. However, it is important to bear in mind that parental mental health is highly correlated with children's mental health, so do focus on self-care. Think about what might be stressing you out and consider strategies for lessening your load. Check out the newly added [Stress Less](#) resource in the Tooled Up library, an activity created for parents and carers, and identify someone with whom you can talk through your trigger points.

To help address some of the challenges that all families are currently facing, Dr Kathy Weston is hosting a 40 minute live Q&A session on 'Parenting Through a Pandemic', on Sunday 7th February.

As part of our Tooled Up membership, this is free for all parents of our school. At the moment, Dr Weston is receiving unprecedented volumes of questions from parents, and this webinar gives you the opportunity to have your own worries addressed, live (anonymously, of course). Expect to leave armed with simple to apply tips, designed to build children's resilience and energise the whole family. Please do take advantage of this valuable extra support available by registering your space on the link below.

## ASA News

### BAG 2 SCHOOL

Thank you for all of the donations so far - open until Thursday 25th Feb - [see attached flyer](#)

Drop off at: 30 Oakwood (off Shootersway), Berkhamsted, HP4 3NQ (in front of the garage)

### WINE TASTING EVENT ONLINE

Friday 19th February 7.30pm  
£15 / £25 (deadline to order by 12th February)

[Click here to book.](#)

When: Feb 7, 2021 7:00 PM

Topic: Parenting through a Pandemic: Q and A with Dr Kathy Weston - 11 - 18 year olds

Register in advance for this webinar [here](#).

## SEND

### SEND Parental Survey

Thank you to everyone who has completed the SEND questionnaire. If you are a parent/carer of a child with SEND on the SEND register, and not already done so, we would like to hear your thoughts and would ask you to complete this short survey about your experience. Please complete the form [here](#).

The Latest DSPL8 Parent/Carer Communication can be viewed [here](#) along with a Herts Parent Carer Involvement [leaflet](#)

### I Can Network facebook page

The I Can Network is an Australian-based ASD mentor service. Their facebook page has useful resources, like the one [here on anxiety](#).

## Safeguarding

Please click below for links to our online safety advice sheet for parents, and resources for parents and children on Mental Wellbeing:

### Online Safety Advice for Parents



With many of our children currently off school and staying home due to COVID 19, the potential for online exploitation will be at its highest.

Although rare, there is a risk that with increased online activity, feelings of stress and isolation may be exploited. An understanding of digital safety will help parents and carers safeguard loved ones from a range of harms, whether that's child sexual exploitation, fraud, or extremist influences seeking to radicalise vulnerable people.

Extremists may also use the current situation to promote hateful views, for example through conspiracy theories or through spreading misinformation.

