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THE HOLMEWOOD

SCHOOL



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Newsletter

Friday 15th January 2021

Dear Families,

Welcome back to the new term. I know we have all been here getting on with remote learning for a little while already, but this is the first of our newsletters for 2021, so I will start by wishing you all a very happy new year and hope that it will see our world and our little community at Holmewood soon returned to normal.

Thank you to all those who joined me for our online Parent Partnership meeting yesterday. If you missed it, please note that I have sent out a PDF of my slides to all families via ParentMail. Yesterday we spoke about the new things we are doing to keep those in school as safe as possible; I talked about the testing in schools programme; and Ms Lyon's shared information about examinations for the Summer term and how we must work together to ensure we get the evidence needed to support the grades we believe your children are capable of achieving.

Thank you to Eliza, Isaac's mother who shared her views as a parent and as a volunteer team member of our 'mass testing team' in school. Eliza described her experience from both 'roles' and I hope it was reassuring to you all. Eliza has offered to speak to any parents who have private concerns or questions about the testing process if that is helpful to you. Thank you also to those that subsequently offered your support to join our testing team. I will be in touch with you in due course, particularly as our numbers of staff and students in school increase.

education to all your children, whether at home or school. If you do have any questions, remember that your child's form tutor is the main point of contact.

For the next few weeks, DLR form is severely affected by staffing levels due to illness, but Tara Young will be writing to you to let you know about how we will support you and your children. I raise this here because we do all need to be prepared for such situations where staff become unwell and support within any team is limited. However, we will always work together to find a solution.

Although most of us are at home, I know that my staff have been incredibly creative once again and have an exciting and varied programme of education, therapy and social activities for your children. I hope you will all enjoy them.

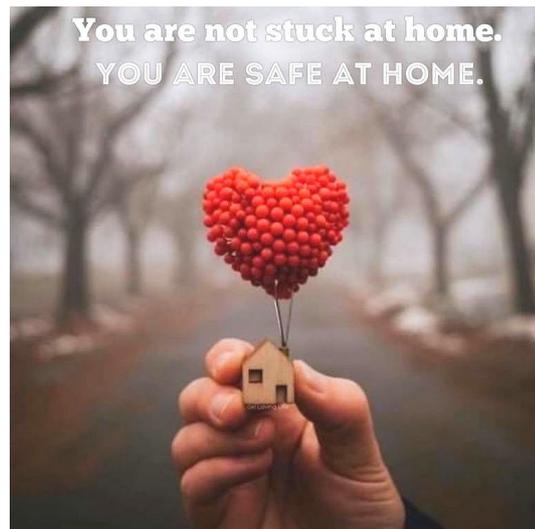
Finally, I will leave you with the lovely news that Ms Clack was blessed with a baby daughter earlier this week and has named her Maisie. Both mother and daughter are home safe and doing very well. Thank you and welcome to Roy Tonkin who will be covering Ms Clack's maternity leave and teaching art across the school for the rest of the academic year.

Wishing you all a peaceful weekend.

Please stay home and stay safe.

Ms Camilleri

Executive Head Teacher



Dates For Your Diary

- **Fri 12th Feb** - Last day of half term (1st half)
- **Mon 15th - Fri 19th Feb** - Half term holiday
- **Mon 22nd Feb** - Spring term (2nd half) starts
- **Fri 26th Mar** - Last day of spring term
- **Mon 19th Apr** - Inset day
- **Tues 20th Apr** - Summer term (1st half) starts

The definition of resilience is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness. There are many of us who grew up with ongoing adverse childhood experiences ([ACES](#)) and more still who have had to fight for a better life for ourselves and our children. These experiences were resilience training for us, preparing us for future difficulties such as this ongoing pandemic.

However we can't allow our experiences to harden us too much. This sort of 'toughness' may result in a subconscious projection of our trauma. Without being aware of it, we put it out to the world and in return we may find ourselves with further drama and hardship, all the while hurting others in the same way we ourselves were hurt.

And the 'recovering quickly' part of resilience is not about burying your feelings and moving on. By repressing these negative feelings they are just lying dormant, ready to be released every time we have an experience that brings on the same feeling again.

Therefore, true resilience isn't just about recovering quickly, nor is it just about being tough. Both of those traits are very important, however resilience must also be about remaining positive, acknowledging and working on our difficulties, and working towards being better. This version of resilience is something we should all strive for in order to be the best possible role models for our young people.

Staying positive about the future in the midst of adversity and tragedy is the epitome of being tough. I'm sure I'm not alone in admitting that it has been a real struggle to be positive over the past few months. I'm very thankful for the resilience shown by our staff, students and parents in carrying on this term as it has been a source of true strength.

Ms Young

Head of Upper School

The Importance of Sleep

Welcome back and Happy New Year to you all!

This half term I have decided to teach Victoria Class about the importance of sleep during our life-skills sessions every Thursday.



I began to become interested in sleep and more specifically the impact of the lack of sleep after reading 'Why we Sleep' by Matthew Walker last year. He is a medical doctor

Walker's book (which I would highly recommend) examines the effects of this epidemic in detail and he is passionate about educating people about the powerful links between sleep loss and Alzheimer's disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity and poor mental health. As the boundaries between work and personal life, particularly in light of Covid, become even more blurred and the expectation that we are 'busy' all of the time is clear I think it is particularly relevant. We as humans are the only species who voluntarily deprive ourselves of sleep. Walker asks when did a doctor last prescribe sleep, not sleeping pills, but sleep itself? He feels that sleep needs to be prioritised, even incentivised as sleep loss costs the UK economy over £30 billion a year in lost revenue, or 2% of GDP.

This then made me start to think about how many of our students struggle with sleep and after a recent CPD training on sleep with Ms Tokekar, our Occupational Therapist, we decided to introduce it to the life-skills curriculum. Sleep significantly aids our ability to make new memories and restore our capacity for learning, clearly crucial for our students. This week I am looking forward to exploring 'sleep hygiene', hours of sleep needed by age and the different stages of sleep with Victoria class.

I will report back soon!

Best Wishes,

Ms D'Silva

Assistant Head (and sleep advocate!)

Coping With A Second Wave

Back in March I am sure that none of us expected to still be in this situation.

However, if nothing else, it has taught us to be resilient: well done, you have survived.

Nonetheless, this on its own is not enough - we also need to thrive.



Let's look at the path ahead: what can we do to bring back joy into our lives? It's often those really small things that can make the difference:

- Grow some herbs on your kitchen windowsill or some flowers in a window box if you don't have a garden. Some of you will have planted the seeds we sent out months ago, and I hope seen the flowers bloom at last

- Think of one kind text message you can send to someone you know each day, even if it's just a thank you to them for being a friend: people really appreciate that you have remembered them.
- If you're feeling down yourself, phone a friend: the chances are they are probably feeling just the same.
- Write a list of the places you want to visit once we have the freedom to travel again, and maybe do a little research into the things you can see when you are there.
- Invent your own recipe, and give it an exotic name: I'm sure you will have lots of time to practise during lockdown.
- Don't watch the news more than once a day - try to get out for a walk and list all the wonderful things you can see, the puddles you can jump in (plenty of those at the moment), the funny house names, the weird clothes some people wear
- Last thing at night before you go to sleep, count ten good things that have happened to you during the day - even if it is only the big smile you got from the postman. I'm normally asleep by number 6 ZZZZZZZZ.

Mrs Row

PA to Executive Head Teacher

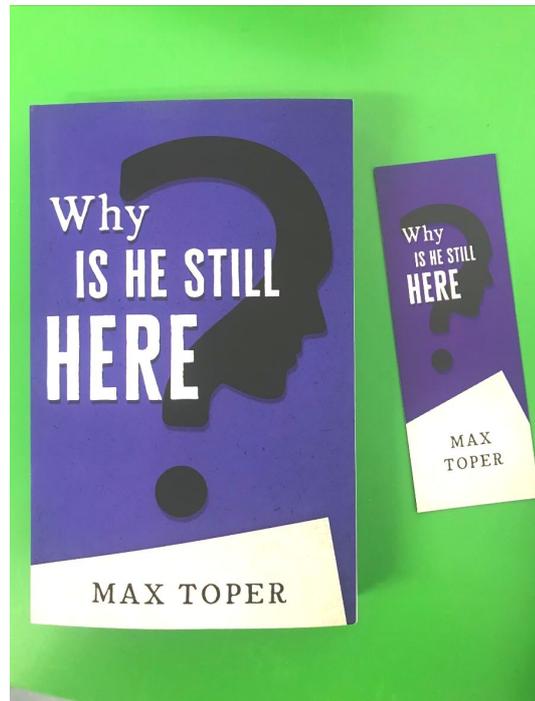
Sixth Former, Max, Has Book Published

DLR student, Max, has raised monies to self fund and publish his book 'Why Is He Still Here?'

It has taken him over 18 months to write and read it. Max then found a publisher and proofreader and is currently writing a blog. An amazing achievement Max!

The reviews so far have been very positive and struck a chord with his experiences within the early years of his education.

The book will be available from the 24th February on Amazon.



Nicky Undertakes English A-level Presentation

DLR student Nicky did an excellent presentation online in English Language

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His talk was focused on early years Child Language Acquisition with theorists and terminologies specially discussing Biological Preconditioning. Well done Nicky!

worked with other prominent theorists including Noam Chomsky. He believed the ability to learn language is innate within humans, that the ability cannot be acquired and no other species possesses it. Most linguists agree with this stance Lenneberg set out in his 1964 paper titled "The Capacity of Language Acquisition".

- Lenneberg was also the first to hypothesize the notion of the "critical period"; the first few years (roughly five) of a child's life where they can develop their language use with considerably less difficulty than were they to do so after this time window. He believed those past this period would find learning a

yr 13 A Level English Lang ^



Raise hand

Turn



Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy new year and a warm welcome back after the winter break.

I hope you are all well and keeping safe in the difficult times.

We are back in full swing to remote learning. I am so proud of how Metropolitan has accepted the change and switched quickly back to remote learning. They are engaging in their learning and interacting with each other well. As they have done this a few times now, they are getting to grips with how to find all of their classes, locate their work and turn it in.

Amazing work for all of the students.

Alongside me, I have an excellent team. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mr Murphy, Ms Eva and Ms Khalil for their support with helping the students complete their work, finding their classes and supporting their cooking lessons. You are all amazing!

Ms Perera's highlights of the week:

Guy for completing his Humanities and PSHE work. Not only has Guy been working hard to complete this work, he has made the most incredible models during the holidays! He has worked really hard to create a replica of Pink Panther. The detail he has incorporated into his model is outstanding.



All of Metropolitan had a fantastic cooking session on Monday.

They made some amazing bread loaves which looked amazing. I can only presume they smelt as good as they looked! I know my house smelt like a bakery for the rest of the day.



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Next week, the students will be baking baking bread again, but with a twist. They will be thinking of two ingredients they would like to add to their dough. I look forward to seeing their final loaves!

On behalf of myself and the Metropolitan team, we would like to thank you for your continued support. You are all fantastic!

Have a wonderful weekend and please keep safe!

Best Wishes,

Ms Perera

Metropolitan Class

The Name's Bond... Just Bond!

Bank and I spent a wonderful Christmas with Miss Bär. We don't actually share a cage yet as Bank (like all banks) can be a bit territorial: she tends to use up energy throwing the purple corn cob around, whereas I like to do zoomies around the armchair. We love eating broccoli, and have even had the odd sneaky strawberry!



We have made some good progress with our new chew toys, although we really like making little holes in cushion covers and just sharpening our teeth on the rather nice leather armchair. I'd like to get to work on the wiring, but we have some interesting egg boxes and toilet rolls to get through first.

We've also allowed some human cuddles - we like it when they cover our eyes and stroke our heads, we purr when this happens.

have.

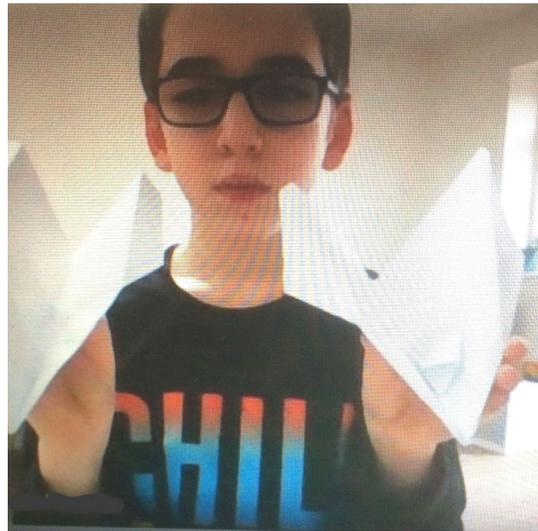
A huge thank you to Maddie from Central class who has been kindly taking care of our Muswell Hill bunnies Hazel and BigWig since Christmas. Maddie is amazing with animals and is very caring so we are extremely lucky to have her looking after them.

Maddie will keep us updated with pictures as I know many students have been missing them.



The Holmewood Gallery





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