



## Message from the Head



The start of 2021 was certainly one that we weren't expecting as we broke up for Christmas. To be again plunged into lockdown due to the exponential rise of COVID -19 transmission and the emergence of new variants , was quite a surprise.

Yet again, as a school community we have to come together to support each other, and to find a sensible way through the latest directives and guidance.

On a positive note, we are pleased to share with you that staff from Shenstone Lodge, along with the other special schools in Sandwell are eligible to receive the Coronavirus vaccine as a priority group.

This is a significant 'game changer' with regard to establishing the full opening of the two sites. Once the majority of staff are vaccinated we would hope to quickly increase our student numbers as immunity to the Coronavirus is established.

In the meantime our blended and remote learning programmes appear to be working well for the most part. Of note, we have been able to support access to the technologies and WiFi data required for all those who have needed it.

As a reminder, the best way to stop the transmission of the virus is to stay at home . If you, or a family member is suffering with any of the following symptoms : a new continuous cough, a high temperature or a loss of taste and smell... PLEASE STAY AT HOME and arrange to have a COVID -19 test.

Failing that, our Year 6 group can offer some good advice on 'how to keep yourself safe !'



## LOCKDOWN

### Lessons from History !



Year 6 have been having 'fun' learning about the Plague and how places locked-down and social distanced, just like we are having to do today.

Both in school and home learners have made clay sculptures of rats, medieval houses and crosses. They have also made some amazing cardboard 'Plague Doctor' masks.

The children found it a bit grim when they were told that toilet waste was thrown out on to the streets as they didn't have flushing toilets in 1665! Ethan from Phoenix liked being a Plague doctor, especially when he was given a 'pokey stick' to keep patients away! Sajjad, from Cyclops, said if he had been around back then, he'd have wanted to be rich, so he didn't have to stay in London !

Staff agree with you there Sajjad ! Mrs Burbank

## Good to Know... Working with Families In Sandwell



The **Family Information Service**, as part of Sandwell Council, have the lead responsibility for the Children and Young Adults with Disabilities and are on the SEN Register, this is a legal requirement for all local authorities.

The Register is a voluntary register, however parents are encouraged to join so that they have regular communications specific to disabilities and SEN, such as changes in legislation, support groups and activities and events.

The registration form is now available to complete online on the **Sandwell Local Offer** website .

Kind Regards

Family Information Service

E: [family\\_information@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:family_information@sandwell.gov.uk)

W: <https://fis.sandwell.gov.uk/kb5/sandwell/directory/home.page>

### RESIDENTIAL .. Looking Forward !

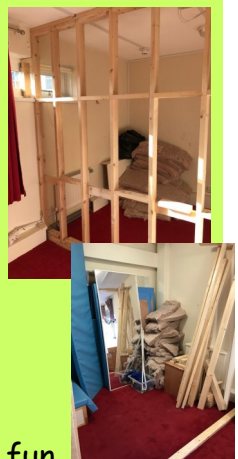
It's been a tricky start to the year with lockdown preventing residence starting up as normal, and we miss you all lots. However, this hasn't stopped us from staying motivated for when we can all return and stay over in school again.

As a team we have been continuing with key worker sessions, focusing on targets to support wellbeing, offering 'light touch check-ins' and fun activities with the residential children who have been offered places in school. In addition we've been colouring, playing Lego and working through our 'be brave book' .

We're looking forward to getting back into residence full time and having even more fun when it's safe to do so.

In the meantime we are in the process of redecorating the bedrooms, moving some furniture and making sure the new radiators and associated pipework look as tidy as possible.

Dee Hart (Head of Care)



### Snow Day Fun !

After the snow fell over the weekend of the 23rd of January , the school was sadly closed as we waited for the roads to clear. In the meantime we were thrilled to receive pictures from some of you showing us how much

fun you were having while the white stuff was still covering the ground.



## Cheer Us Up Mr D !

Mr Daniel at the Brades Lodge is well known in school for telling the odd joke or two to raise a smile in the staff room before a hard day at the 'chalk face' ... Given the current state of the nation he has kindly offered to share a few witty words to keep us all going.. Thanks sir !

- *I'm entering the worlds tightest hat competition. Just hope I can pull it off.*
- *To the person who invented zero, thanks for nothing.*
- *Can February March? No, but April May.*
- *What do you call an alligator in a vest? An investigator.*
- *What do you call the ghost of a chicken? A poultry-geist.*
- *The past, the present, and the future walk into a bar. It was tense!*
- *In 2017 I didn't jog. In 2018 I didn't jog. In 2019 I didn't jog. In 2020 I still haven't jogged.*

*This is a running joke.*

## Quiz Corner

1. How many football teams are there in Serie A ?
2. How do you say hello in German ?
3. How many new words can you make using the letters in CORONAVIRUS ?
4. The 'Andes' cross which countries ?
5. If you were born in Malta, what is your Nationality ?
6. What colour is a dog fish ?

## CHESS MASTERS

At the Brades Lodge we have been encouraging students to take up chess. The idea is to capitalise on some of the potential cognitive benefits of playing the game. Studies have shown, chess can boost fluid intelligence, brain processing speeds and memory capacity. Many students have taken on the challenge and have quickly shown increased knowledge of the game as well as critical thinking before each move. A special well done to Callum, Riley and Jayden .. Our future Grand Masters !

Kane Cabellero (Well Being Support Team (TBL))



## COMMUNITY HERO !



Year 4 student Jimmy has found a fantastic way to fill his spare time during lockdown. Whilst children across the country are sat at home playing computer games, or messing about in their gardens, Jimmy is donning a high visibility jacket and collecting litter from the streets of Sandwell. This community spirited activity not only gets him out and about it serves a great purpose too !

Well done Jimmy .. And THANK YOU !

Year 9 have been working on a textile project. The tasks develop new skills that they will need in future life, sewing buttons, using a sewing machine and sewing by hand. The group are currently making cushions and after half term it will be puppets. Jaggie Bassi





## A.O.B.

- Although the Government appear to be manoeuvring the media to indicate that schools will be fully open by March 8th. Please consider this as an aspirational target and that until we get closer to this date we are unable to say with any certainty what our plans will be.
- We have said goodbye to Residential Care Officer Emma Yardley this half term. Emma has been a great asset to the team and we wish her well as she embarks on a new career as a student councillor.
- For information and confirmation, we will be continuing with the school hours as they currently stand at the Shenstone Lodge site. We will be consulting with you in the new Term to make these changes permanent. Please look out for the 'consultation document'.
- Roofing works have been completed at the Shenstone Lodge site. Heating works however are ongoing. Although the new heating system is largely finished there are some elements of the project where access to classrooms is required. As a result contractors will still be on site during the half term and Easter breaks. This will minimise disruption to students.

### Diary Dates...

**Half Term 15th - 19th Feb**

**Easter Break 2nd - 16th April**

**(1pm finish on 2nd)**

**Bank Holiday 3rd May**

**Half Term 31st May-4th June**

### School Data Box 2020/21

Whole School Attendance for 2019 /20 school year  
(pre 'lockdown') : **83.7%**

Attendance for 2020/21 Spring 1 c. 30%

Attendance across Sandwell Schools

Primary 16% Secondary 4% Special 18% PRU 26%

**STAY SAFE ONLINE ....**

**Childline** have a fantastic website that offers lots of good advice to protect us all from scams, identity theft and other problems you can encounter online. The information is set out so children and adults can quickly access help and information in the form of videos as well as sign posting to other specialist groups.

Here are a few starter tips :

**Cover your webcam**

**Watch out for phishing and scams**

**Don't share personal details**

**Think about who you're talking to**

**Never give out your  
password**

**Think before you post**

**Keep your device secure**

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/staying-safe-online/>