



# NEWSLETTER

29th March 2020

**Years 7 and 8**

Hello Year 7 and Year 8,

I hope that you are all well.

I know that I have spoken with many of you already and many of you will have received a phone call from your tutors or another member of staff. I really enjoyed speaking to you and your parents or carers. We will continue to call once a week to check that you are well. Please let the staff member know if you are struggling with anything – the reason that we are doing this is we want to make sure we can help resolve your problems at this difficult time.

It is our aim to ensure that you keep making progress in all your subjects and in order for this to happen we are relying on you to focus at home by logging onto TEAMS daily and checking in to see what work has been uploaded for your class. You should spend time going through lessons and submitting work by the due dates. Make sure that you have a routine. You could create your own timetable, so that you have some structure to your day. Make sure that you have a break time and a lunch time! You could even have two breaktimes in your timetable!

Please communicate with me, your form tutor or directly to your subject teacher by email if you are having any difficulties or if work has not been assigned.

## **WHAT'S HAPPENING?**

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Well, as you know, school is effectively closed, apart from for the children whose parents are essential for resolving the crisis and who cannot be left safely at home, or those who are especially vulnerable. I know many of you will be finding this very difficult – though I am also sure that you are doing your very best to keep others in your families and wider community safe, by staying in as much as possible and helping your parents or carers as much as possible too!

In terms of what else is happening, I'm afraid we don't really know in lots of ways. All of you will have been preparing for end of year exams this summer. In addition, Year 7 students were looking forward to going to the Mill at the end of the year. Year 8 were looking forward to the Mill trip in June. Due to current circumstances these two major events will have to be postponed until a later date (updates will follow).

## **WHAT MIGHT BE WORRYING YOU?**

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I am sure that many of you may be very worried about your futures, in terms of qualifications and other things... Many of you will also be worried about your families – especially those with underlying health conditions, or those who are vulnerable because of their age.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP YOURSELF?

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### 1. Socialise – safely!

We are social animals – all humans crave contact with other humans: it is who we are! So, at a time when this is impossible to do physically, think about how it could be done virtually. I have been using lots of social media apps this weekend, and although it does feel a bit strange, actually it's great to see lots of my friends and be able to chat to them, as if we were all together. Try and work out a time when you can all hang out together. I am sure that you will already know how to do this – maybe you can also help your parents learn the necessary tech, too? I've taught my mum to use the video call facility on Whatsapp. It's made a big difference to her as she can now see me when she's talking to me!

### 2. Continue to learn and READ!

As well as schoolwork, set regularly by your teachers on TEAMS there are other things you can be doing, to keep your brain cells going, when you get bored... Take advantage of the online opportunities you have. Why not learn how to do something new? Learn how to do origami or to play chess, Monopoly or Scrabble - even learn a new language on Duolingo. Anything is possible.

And of course, keep reading! I have just started reading a book that was bought for me five years ago! It's called Chaucer's People and it's all about everyday lives in medieval England. I learnt that in 1340 one penny would get you eight herrings or a snipe or four larks or a dozen finches or six pigeons! And I could have bought a warhorse or a suit of armour for £15!

### 3. Be creative

As well as social animals, we are also creative ones. Many people find the act of creating something helpful for their mental health – and who knows, it could even lead to an unthought-of career path! Maybe you could use youtube to learn to knit, paint, draw or sew; write a poem each week with prompts from this website

<https://thinkwritten.com/poetry-prompts>; or use your creativity to invent new and delicious meals from the rather random ingredients in the cupboard (see #JackMonroesLockdownLarder on Twitter for inspiration!)....

### 4. Take comfort in the world outside

Although it is a very different spring for us humans, it is absolutely business as usual for the natural world. Indeed, many parts of the world are showing wonderful signs of recovery from human interference already – wildlife is returning to the waters of Venice, and carbon emissions have been halved over some cities, because of the lack of “normal” human activity. I'm lucky enough to have a small garden with a small pond. I have lots of tadpoles, frogs and even a newt! I can't wait for the tadpoles to turn into tiny frogs! If you don't have a garden, try and get to your local park (with a family member, and as long as no-one in your family has any symptoms), then take a look at what is growing, listen out for the birds, and revel in the glory that is the natural world.

### 5. Be active

My wife and I have started to do Joe Wick's morning workout, my eldest son has joined in too! I've also put a Yoga app on my phone. Imagine that! Mr Altmann doing Yoga! This website could be helpful for all of us <https://www.sportengland.org/news/how-stay-active-while-youre-home> – and again, as mentioned above, many of your parents might not feel confident using technology in this sort of way, or feel embarrassed or self-conscious about exercising. Can you help them?

## OVER TO YOU?

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We will be sending out something like this every week – but want to include some stuff from you, too. So, let us know what is helping you out, or what you would like to celebrate.

## PLEASE KEEP LOOKING AT THE WES WEBSITE FOR UPDATES...

**Any questions not answered on the website? Send me an email.**

**altmann@williamellis.camden.sch.uk**

**Stay safe**

*Mr Altmann*