



The
Westminster
School

Newsletter

Safe, Happy and Learning Together

October 2020

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COVID 19 - IMPORTANT

If your child or anyone in your child's home has coronavirus symptoms, however minor, including:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss, or change to, sense of smell or taste

or you have been contacted by the NHS Track and Trace service to say that your child or anyone in your child's home may have been in contact with someone who has COVID 19:

- Do not send your child into school.
- Contact the school to report the reason for the absence so we can instigate our testing and tracing procedures, if required.
- Please ring 119 to organise a test or go to www.nhs.uk to book a test online.

Well that was an interesting and eventful half term for all concerned!

This term has created some significant challenges particularly associated with the climate of COVID-19. It was regretful that we have had to close the WestminStars bubble however it was a decision made to protect our young people. In effect we put in a fire break to prevent any further patterns of infection which was made doubly difficult because the spread throughout the pathway was asymptomatic and in effect created a hidden enemy. I know it has had a huge impact on young people and their families and I thank you all for your support during these challenging times.

We have also seen a huge impact on our staffing levels at times and in the face of adversity the whole TWS family has pulled together to minimise the impact to the school. Everyone involved in the response during these exceptionally challenging times have been incredible and my heartfelt thanks goes out to all concerned.

In conjunction with the local public health teams and Public Health England (PHE) we instigated mass testing of the whole workforce due to the asymptomatic spread we were seeing throughout the school. The outcome was phenomenal and out of more than 100 tests not one single result came back as positive - 100% success. This was an exceptional result and testimony to the risk assessment processes, operational plan, measures we have taken around school and the sacrifices we have all made in order to follow government guidance. For this I would like to thank everyone for their support and cooperation during these difficult times.

COVID has had a profound impact on our lives and due to the local lockdown measures this has also affected our curriculum in relation to off-site educational visits. However, after half term we hope to be going back to some sort of normality as it is an essential part of our provision. Please continue to follow the government guidance to keep you and your families safe throughout the break.

Our young people have made an incredible transition back into school throughout this half term and staff have worked tirelessly to engineer opportunities and learning environments which truly focus on our principles of Safe and Happy this half term. **Please see on page 3 information about the exciting prospects of the TWS Specialist College and complete our short survey.**

Have a safe and happy half term and we look forward to welcoming pupils back to school on Monday 2 November 2020.

Mr O M Flowers
Head Teacher



Supported Internships and Work Experience

Two Post 16 students who were unable to continue with their supported internships at a local hospital due to lockdown have returned to The Westminster to resume their internships with Interserve. They have working in School to complement the increase in cleaning required in line with COVID-19.

Our young people have made an excellent start with their cleaning duties around school and one of them has recently passed her workplace assessments. They have also started to work on shift patterns in the same way Interserve staff do to prepare them for the world of work.

There was also a welcome return for two more of our Post 16 students, Jordan and Kenny, who are continuing to work with Ground Control on campus to maintain the grounds. They were eager to get back to work outside helping to make the campus look fantastic.



Meet Poppy

This year we have welcomed a new furry member of staff - Poppy the Puppy. She is a Spoodle and was born in June 2020.

She loves to play and sleep! Poppy has been coming to school every day since we returned to familiarise herself with the school site and begin to socialise with the pupils and staff.

She has started to visit some classes during social time and has also been helping out with market research in one of our Social Enterprise business lesson.

In time, when she is older, we hope that she will be able to train and become our very own Therapy Dog but until then she is enjoying all the fuss and attention from everyone in school.



Planes Class

This half term Planes have really enjoyed story massage, which we have linked to a story/theme that we are learning about. These have included The Gruffalo, Little Red Hen, The Little Acorn and Don't Hog the Hedge. Pupils are enjoying working with adults and peers to perform different 'massage strokes' on their backs/arms/legs.

We have also used our senses to explore a variety of autumnal items e.g. pumpkins, leaves, spices and hot chocolate at Forest School. We spent two weeks learning about Harvest and pupils enjoyed exploring a variety of fruits and vegetables, digging and making their own scarecrow.

PD Duke of Edinburgh

Our young people from the Personal Development (PD) pathway have been doing some on-site preparation for their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver awards. They have been learning how to light a fire so that they can cook outside and making shelters to protect them from bad weather. We are very proud of how hard they have worked both individually and as a team. We are very excited for going offsite, hopefully in the near future, so that they can put their new skills in to practice. Well done to all involved.



Specialist College Consultation

The school is actively pursuing the creation of a 19-25 Specialist College for Sandwell in order to address the needs for our young people beyond the current school age. This is an exciting development and we would really appreciate your thoughts about this provision. Please go to our Facebook page for more information or scan the QR code



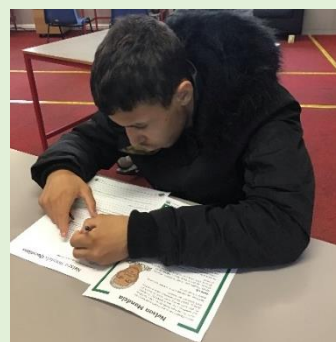
<https://forms.gle/2cRQXoiGPRFrtS2u5>

Raise Money for The Westminster School Every Time You Shop Online

We're now registered with easyfundraising.org.uk, which means you can help us for FREE. Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate to us when you use easyfundraising.org.uk to shop with them - at no extra cost to yourself! All you need to do is sign up and remember to use easyfundraising.org.uk whenever you shop online. It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us at <https://bit.ly/31qQhJR>

Krunch Group

A small group of pupils have been attending Krunch this half term. Amongst the activities they were involved in was a session on Black History Month. Pupils were learning about key black figures in history including Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. They also researched information on black inventors throughout history, discovering what their inventions were and how these have impacted the world.



Social Enterprise

It's been another busy half term for our social enterprise students both in KS3,4 and Post 16. Students are continuing with projects they had previously started as well as some social enterprise projects as part of their curriculum. To name a few we have a seasonal craft company, a face mask company and an outdoor/garden products company, who use recycled wooden pallets to create their products. Students are developing their skills as designers and manufacturers, and are developing the skills needed to use the tools to manufacture their products.



Students are also gaining an understanding of how to set up a small business, market a product and take part in sales in School and in the local community. These valuable experiences equip our students with key employability skills required by employers i.e. teamwork, problem solving, communication, following instructions and adaptability. We are looking forward to the orders to start rolling in!

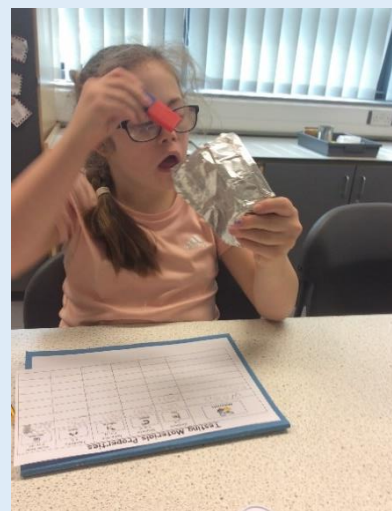
Science

It has been lovely to have the children back in Science and doing experiments. Wenlock and Malvern have been investigating materials and their properties as part of their topic "It's a Wonderful World".

The topic for Year 9 this term is "The Great Westminster Bake Off". They will be using and developing their scientific and maths skills based around the topic of food. They started by making some amazing cupcakes.

Year 10 have been finding out what nutrients are in the foods we eat by carrying out food testing.

Year 11 are on track to complete their Science qualification and are looking at the types of energy that are present in the world around them and in everyday objects.



Parent Governor Vacancy

We currently have a vacancy for a Parent Governor. Being a Governor is an important role in the life of the school; they are involved in important decisions about staff appointments, the school budget and discuss matters such as student achievement and take an interest in the ways the school is continuing to maintain high standards. They support the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team as they lead the school.

If you are interested in becoming a Parent Governor but feel a little daunted by the responsibility you may be taking on, remember that full training will be available and required for aspects such as safeguarding, and you will always act as part of a team. No particular experience or qualifications are required. Your role would be as a typical parent bringing a parent's perspective to the running of the Governing Board and the school.

If you become a Governor, you will be taking on the following commitments to help make sure the school is well managed:

- Share the responsibilities of the Governing Board as summarised above.
- Attend and participate in meetings on a regular basis - Governors attend four Full Governing Board meetings and are normally a member of two committees which usually meet about 3 times a year each.
- You may also be invited to sit on appointment or other panels
- You will be required to sign the Governing Board's code of conduct, and to apply for a DBS enhanced disclosure.

Parents/carers who have paid employment in the school for 500 or more hours per academic year or who are elected members of the Local Authority are not eligible to stand in these elections. Nominations must be from parents or carers with children at the school on the day that nominations close.

If you would like to stand for election, **please complete the nomination form online** (<https://forms.gle/dRiYdhbtL8PaPdX66>) **no later than 9.00am on Friday 13 November 2020**. You may also include a short personal statement to support your nomination, which should be no longer than 250 words. Self-nominations will be accepted, but if you are nominating another parent, please seek their prior consent. If there are more nominations than vacancies, the election will be by secret ballot. If that is necessary, voting papers will be sent to all parents together with details of the ballot procedure.

Advice for Halloween - a message from Sandwell's Director of Education

You will probably be aware that the government has announced new COVID-19 restrictions, naming Sandwell and many other areas in our region as a 'High Alert' zone. At this time of year many families will be preparing for Halloween at the end of October. There is no reason why this annual event cannot be celebrated in your own home or garden with people you live with. However, in light of the government restrictions because of the high infection rates, we believe it is far better for your children not to call at other houses to trick or treat as this will increase the risk of infection, either to your children and family or to people answering the door.

While we know this may be disappointing for some children who enjoy 'trick or treating', please stay safe, protect yourselves and others and look at alternative, safe ways to celebrate Halloween this year.

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/localrestrictions for more details about the government restrictions.

We would like to thank all parents and carers for their ongoing support to schools this term. Schools have detailed infection control measures in place and, while we are seeing cases among some children and staff, the risk of an outbreak is significantly reduced by everyone following the guidance issued by your school, public health and the government.

If your child has been sent home to self-isolate because of a confirmed case in their school, please keep your children at home and play your part in stopping the spread of the virus.

Thank you again for your assistance during these difficult times.



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INSET Days - school closed to students
Holidays

Contacting the School's Senior Leadership Team

If you have any questions or queries, please do email us on

headteacher@westminster.sandwell.sch.uk.

This is the quickest way to contact the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teachers and Pathway Senior Managers.

We will respond to all emails as soon as we can.

Evidence for Learning (EfL)

We are continuing to use Evidence for Learning to capture and record evidence of your child's learning. This is used by all teachers throughout the school to evidence their achievements across all subjects. You will also be able to upload pictures, videos and make comments about learning achievements at home. If you haven't already received your log in, we will be in touch with this over the next few weeks.

For more information and details on how to log in, please go to <http://thewestminsterschool.co.uk/efl>

Class Webpages

To make it easier to communicate the plans for this academic year with parents and carers each class group now has their own webpage.

On the webpage you will find useful information including:

- A video introducing your new teacher
- Class timetable
- Drop-off and pick up times
- Curriculum Pathway Handbook

We will update this throughout the year with useful information and celebrations of pupil achievements. To see the information please go to <http://www.thewestminsterschool.co.uk/classgroups> and click on the relevant class group.

Open Events and Parents Evenings

Due to the local lockdown measures we made the decision that it was unsafe to open the doors to a wider community of people. As a consequence, we have to make the difficult decision to complete virtual Open Events and Parent Evenings.

Our Open Events were run virtually using MS Teams at the start of the month. We were able to showcase our fabulous school and curriculum and field questions from prospective pupils as the school continues to grow and attract more pupils. During the event we showcased our new digital footage of our curriculum and school which can be found here: <https://youtu.be/OfgbwwTsp5g>

We also had to move pretty quickly in relation to an online and virtual method for our parents evening. This was a quick turnaround from our team to implement a technological solution in less than a week following updated local guidance. Although there were some initial teething problems with the system we have since overcome these. We also received some feedback from parents about alternative methods using traditional telephone lines. Previously this would have been challenging however we have been able to tweak our systems so all teachers now have access to a call facility through their laptop and MM Teams as an alternative solution if we experience any future problems with the system.