



SPOTLIGHT

Summer newsletter | July 2020



National
Teaching
School



WELCOME to our summer newsletter

Today, when I write this, is the 100th day of lockdown. Something I hadn't been able to picture before this started. We talk now using vocabulary I didn't know before; COVID, social distancing, furloughed, PPE, key workers and shielding are just some of the words, now common, but never previously spoken. It's been a year like no other.

We have seen people work in ways we didn't know, doing things we couldn't imagine. Key workers, Captain Tom, kids messaging to see if 'you're ok' and strangers in the park waiting patiently to allow you to pass are some of the enduring images I see when I reflect about the goodness that has shone very brightly during what has been very dark times. A rainbow has new meaning and I feel grateful for many things when I see one.

We also think inevitably about the sadness and loss people have suffered, the uncertainty of what will happen and how things will be. I look at the students and think our future rests in

their hands. I see qualities such as effort, resilience, hard work, intelligence, thoughtfulness and responsibility combined with fun, curiousness and kindness. Whatever is coming, the students have shown their colours and I feel very proud of them and very optimistic for their future.

Charles Dickens – from a Tale of Two Cities wrote: "it was the best of times; it was the worst" and I think that this probably best sums up this time.

Can I thank you for your patience, for stepping up and helping us find a path through the bleakness of lockdown. Looking at how the students have adapted, managed and coped has been a privilege to witness. We have much to do when we return to the 'physical' school but will carry the experiences we have had together to shape what we want for the future.

Miss A Hook, Head of School

Teachers produce PPE for frontline workers

As part of the fight against Covid-19, alongside the five other secondary schools within the North East Learning Trust, our teachers produced protective visors for our local NHS.

Using an approved design from Kitronic, our teachers used the school's laser cutter to make the protective visors using polypropylene and acetate.

Mr Bradley and the rest of the technology team worked very hard making the PPE in a socially distanced way and produced a whopping 3,246 visors, beating the 3,200 target across the Trust.

We were delighted to be able to play our part in the fight against the virus and would like to thank the incredible frontline workers for their tireless efforts and dedication to keeping us safe throughout these past weeks and months.



The votes are in!



This year, your Head Boy and Head Girl applications looked a little different than usual! Of course, the traditional speeches in assembly could not go ahead and so, like everything else, the applications went virtual...

Head Boy and Head Girl are key roles for Year 11 students who really want to make a difference in the final year of their school lives. The roles are not for just anyone; it takes a certain kind of student to fill these boots. To even be considered for these roles, the applicant must be: conscientious, caring, a good listener, prepared to take on the role of mentor and role model to younger students, have innovative plans to make school a better place and have the confidence to go forward with these plans. Sound daunting? Well it

certainly didn't for this year's applicants who were braver and bolder than ever in making their own speeches which were released into the virtual school world for all to see! From there, every student and member of staff at the Academy was invited to place their vote for this year's Head Boy and Girl!

Meet the new team:

Head Boy: Evan Taylor
Head Girl: Ellie Crawford
Deputy Head Boy: Ben Oliver
Deputy Head Girl: Chloe Friberg

This year, the standard of applications was so exceptional that two new positions were made within the team. Your new **Student Council Leads** are: Abby Wood and Katie Fenwick!

Well done to the whole team! We can't wait to see the impact you have on our school over the next year; good luck!

IMPORTANT DATES for your diary

Due to the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we cannot commit to any fixed school events at the moment. Parents' evenings and other planned events in school are postponed until further notice.

Please keep checking our website and social media channels for the latest updates.

HELLO TO OUR NEW YEAR 7 STUDENTS!

Well, as if this time wasn't stressful enough for you all: then came lockdown! Here at The Academy at Shotton Hall we are very excited to meet you and we have a warm welcome awaiting you for your first days in 'big school'!

Until then, we have been busy creating as many virtual welcomes to make your transition that bit easier. Check out our website or Facebook page where you will find: a virtual tour of your new school, welcome messages from your sept tutors, photos and messages from all of your new teachers and lots of vital information on all you will need for your start at the Academy.

Don't be nervous: everyone is lovely and you will be right at home from day one!

See you all soon!



Goodbye Mr Patel!

Would you believe that Mr Patel has been a teacher at the Academy for 40 years?! Unfortunately for us, his 40th is his last as he is leaving the Academy to enjoy retirement.

Over the years, Mr Patel has taught geography, maths and PE. He was also a learning manager, SENco and a member of the senior leadership team.

Goodbye, Mr Patel - you will be missed!

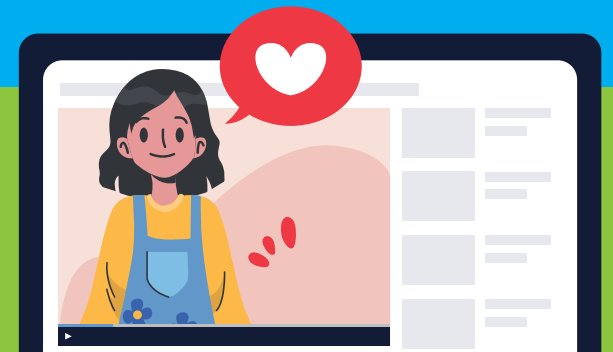
Lockdown artist!

During lockdown, a budding artist has found her feet and truly made the most of the extra time she had!

Student, Sheryl Ejim, threw herself into her art lessons from the beginning of lockdown and has now created her own sketchbook - included is a portrait of Miss Mackay and her dog, which she drew for her sept tutor's birthday. Sheryl has treated a number of staff to a 'virtual tour' of her sketchbook and plans to continue her excellent work now she has caught the drawing bug!

It certainly sounds like a productive use of Sheryl's time over the last few months. If you feel like you'd like to get more out of the extra time spent at home, have a think about what you've always wanted to do but never got around to starting! Here's some suggestions to get you motivated:

- If you're a film buff, start a blog where you review films.
- If you're a runner, set yourself a target of how many miles to do this month (this would also work on your bike of course!)
- If you're an animal lover, dedicate yourself to teaching your pet some new tricks.
- If you're a gym lover, take up a new sport - tennis, running, cycling? Anything where you can keep a distance from your competitors!



A day in the life of a virtual learner

By Isla Jones

Who would have thought we would be in the situation we are in? Answer: nobody! We find ourselves in strange times but the most challenging yet rewarding part for me is the virtual school.

To me, being a student in virtual school is a lot of things. It is having independence over my daily schooling and free time to do what I love. It is having convenience, flexibility and the ability to do more. It is being supported by an amazing team of teachers who genuinely care and it involves learning how to be responsible for myself. It is also getting to experience and be a part of incredible things such as making French speaking videos, chromatography flowers and rockets. Virtual learning is truly full of fun!

Being able to complete my lessons and assignments in my own time without a bell is one of my favourite things about virtual school because it means I get to spend more time doing what I love instead of sitting in a classroom all day. Also being in the virtual school can be fun

and it means we can see what everyone else is up to in our classes.

The downfall of the virtual school is not physically being with your classmates; sharing ideas and banter in the class is what I miss most.

As well as having a timetable that I am in control of, the virtual school has taught me some very important skills. Taking charge of my own work means that I am expected to know what needs to be done each day and get it done. Although this is not always the case, I do try my best to keep up. This has taught me to be aware of how I use my time and manage it so that I have enough time to get my work done. Being responsible for these things has made me much more self-reliant and independent - maybe lockdown has some perks after all!

We're social!

Follow our social media accounts to stay up to date with all of the latest news from around the Academy!



@shottonhall



@shottonhallacademy



@shacademy

Life in lockdown

By Amelia McCourt

Lockdown. Strange isn't it? Life as we knew it changed immediately. However, unexpectedly, lockdown has allowed some positives to shine through.

I know you're all wondering 'how could lockdown possibly bring any positives?' Well, that's what I'm here to tell you...

Despite your family being the people you fight with the most, they are arguably the most important things in your life. Being forced to stay inside with them is a blessing in disguise. Lockdown has allowed us all to spend valuable bonding time with our families, enabling us to truly value how precious that is. Creating new memories and inside jokes (literally).

Picture this: years and years have passed. Your children are sat in, what seems, a boring history lesson.

Little do they know that what they are about to learn is truly fascinating. The teacher explains coronavirus, lockdown and all that came with it: no one truly understands. You do! You are able to say to your children and grandchildren that you experienced a global pandemic.

You may think it's the worst thing in the world that you can't go get your roots redone or a 'fresh trim' but in reality, it's teaching us all the greatest life lesson: to value all of the little things in life. For many of us, the dog walks or daily runs are our new favourite times of the day. If this life-changing experience



has taught us anything, it's taught us to really appreciate everything we have in life. When all of this is over, hopefully, you will never take anything for granted. That can include anything from a simple sleepover with your friends to even going to the dentist!

The pandemic has been such a despairing time but please just take a minute to think about some of the positive ways it has affected you and how your life may change for the better after this is over.



Friday 8th May 2020 was a very important day in Britain that saw huge celebrations and socially distanced street parties up and down the country: it was of course Victory in Europe (VE) Day.

VE Day marks the end of World War II in Europe.

In anticipation of the celebration, English teacher, Mr Favaro, wrote to Dame Vera Lynn's daughter, Virginia, to ask if Dame Vera might write a message to students - he was delighted to receive her reply:

"Hello everyone, I am thrilled that you are all very interested in that period of history. It is so important to remember those times and the sacrifices that were made for you to be able to live in a

free country. Because of the present problems everyone is pulling together and we think of you all, and hope you are all well and safe, just like we did in the War. It doesn't matter who you are, or where you live, you are all very important people and need to look after each other. Keep well and safe. Dame Vera."

Dame Vera has since sadly passed away, which makes us even more grateful to have received this message while she was still with us. Rest in Peace Dame Vera.

Reading Club goes virtual!

This half term, students have been taking part in a weekly virtual reading club. They have been listening to Miss Hunter and Miss Pounder reading 'The Sound Machine' by Roald Dahl. Students listen and take part in a discussion and quiz after listening in!

Students will vote for the next book they wish to listen to us read!

Email katie.pounder@shottonhallacademy.co.uk or lucy.hunter@shottonhallacademy.co.uk if you would like to take part.



Ask the teachers

Here at Spotlight, we are all about having PMA (a Positive Mental Attitude) so for this edition's question to the Academy's teachers, we asked: 'What will you change about your life after lockdown and what are you most looking forward to?' Here's what they had to say...

Mrs Sharpe: "I am looking forward to seeing my Dad and sisters and giving them a hug - they all live in Doncaster so I haven't seen anyone. I cannot wait to go to a cafe to have lunch with my friends and a proper catch up. I love my husband and son but seeing other girls will be lovely!"

Mrs Armstrong: "I'm most looking forward to hugging my family and friends! The simple things we take for granted..."

Miss Eddy: "I will go walking a lot more and try to keep up my exercise which tends not to happen on a school day (hopefully then I can beat Mr Simson in our weekly step challenges)! I really look forward to meeting up with friends and family when it is over and cannot wait to see all of my work friends."

Mrs Meir: "Slowing the pace of life down - continue enjoying walks on a weekend instead of packing it full of days out at places you have to pay for when all the beauty of nature is free and on your door step! I'm looking forward to family coming for an afternoon in the house with lunch and laughter."

Mr Bradley: "Having a family walk every day will continue, especially when our new family member comes (a cockapoo!) I'm looking forward to being able to get back at the gym and fishing with friends and family."

Mrs Manghar: "I hope to keep exploring new places with my family. I love walking and being outdoors and have tried to make the most of not being able to visit shops

and restaurants by instead adventuring to outdoor places we've either never been to before or places we love. I hope we can keep it up!"

Miss Mackay: "Something I will be doing differently after lockdown is to not put off seeing my friends; I want to make a proper effort to see them and make so many memories with them. It was easy for me to get caught up in work and turn down chances to see them which I do not want to do anymore. Friends are very precious!"

Miss Pounder: "I have spent a lot more time painting and reading. I am going to make sure that I dedicate more time to doing both of these things. I might even join a class to learn artier skills! I have also walked more and found some great routes near my house. I am most looking forward to having all of my friends together in one room and maybe getting a dog to join me on my walks!"

Miss Wearmouth: "I will try to keep up the amount of exercise I am managing to fit in. Walking, Pilates, resistance bands and my rebounder. I am looking forward to going to something 'live' - a play, a concert, a ballet, even a film at the cinema would keep me happy."

Mr Robson: "I have noticed time is the biggest change I will be making. My life is often very busy; I have noticed it doesn't need to be. I am going to try and spend time relaxing and just shutting down. I am looking forward to using the extra time I am going to have to spend time with the family and exploring our lovely island."

Lockdown lessons

By Adam Elliott, Year 7

I think, personally, that lockdown this year has taught us a valuable lesson. We mustn't take the company of others and the necessities that we cling onto in daily life for granted.

Take for example, the ability to go wherever we want. Whether it be to go to a park and have an ice cream, or to book into a hotel, or even to go abroad. These things that we all think of as a given in Western society are all just assumed to happen. My point being, that because we are so used to living in a world where we can have almost anything - to a certain extent - that we are all completely dumbfounded and discombobulated as to what to do when these things are suddenly taken away.

We need to be more aware of our privilege that allows us to do almost anything that we want. We need to learn to be more grateful and less fault-finding when our opportunities are taken away from us.

Let's keep working together to make the world a better place...



Lockdown runners!

Throughout lockdown, Year 9 and 10 students were set a fitness challenge to find out who could travel the furthest distance by running or jogging over a number of their PE lessons.

Well done to Leah Robson, Brandon Henderson, Luke Odgen, Kate Burnhope, Jamie Kincade and Mia Beeston who collectively travelled over 70 miles! Mia actually completed 100 kilometres in May alone and said: "I started running when I joined a rugby team to keep my fitness up. In May, I completed a 100k with my dad for charity. My favourite thing about running is the feeling after you have finished: I feel ready and fresh and able to take on the day!"

Jamie said: "I first started running at the beginning of lockdown as I was not able to go to the gym. It helps with my physical and mental health, allowing me to be stress

free throughout the rest of the day and have relaxing time to myself." Kate said: "I started running because it is my favourite sport and it made me feel good about myself. Running clears my mind as I focus on my breathing and makes me feel happier by releasing stress and tension."

Did you know...

- You use 200 muscles every time you take a step
- Feel-good brain chemicals and hormones are released when you run, helping to ease stress and anxiety and treat depression. In addition, your risk of dementia and stroke falls as brain circulation is kept healthy.

Concentration, memory and motivation sharpen and sleep improves, too

- Those who run 20-30 km a week have a stronger immune system and are less prone to colds
- Listening to your playlist can boost your running performance by 15%
- Conditions such as psoriasis and eczema often flare up with high stress levels. The calming influence of running can help improve skin, which improves self-confidence.

With all of these benefits, you'd be crazy not to give it a go! Lace up those trainers and see how many miles you can manage!



Across the globe, the month of June sees the LGBTQ+ community celebrating. A lot of different events are held during this special month as a way of recognising the influences and the history of LGBTQ+ people.

In virtual assemblies, students were taken back to where it all began... The Stonewall Riots.

June 28 1969 saw a riot break out in front of the Stonewall Inn, New York City. In the 1950s and 60s, homosexuality was still illegal in 49 states in America with punishments ranging from heavy fines to imprisonment! The Stonewall Inn was a safe place, a refuge for gay people at the time but it was owned by the Mafia who extorted their wealthy customers,

threatening to 'out' them to their employers and families. For the first time on 28 June, customers of the Stonewall Inn resisted arrest and a violent protest began outside. The riots continued until July 1st. This large scale defiance made a massive impact on society. On the one-year anniversary of the riots, the very first Gay Pride Parade took place.

What else have we learned about Pride this month?

The well known symbol of Pride is the rainbow flag and it was created in San Francisco. Gilbert Baker, the creator of the flag, said: "The rainbow is a beautiful part of nature; it includes all of the colours,

even the colours that you can't see. So that really fit us as people because we are all of the colours."

Before the pink triangle became a worldwide symbol of gay power and pride, it was intended as a badge of shame. In Nazi Germany, a downward-pointing pink triangle was sewn onto the shirts of gay men in concentration camps—to identify and further dehumanize them. It wasn't until the 1970s that activists would reclaim the symbol as one of liberation.

Today, we celebrate Pride across the world annually! The world has changed... and it's better!

by Anon



Lockdown positivity

by Katy Cooper, 8S1

For me, life in lockdown has been one huge rollercoaster, I'm sure you can relate. One day you're entertaining a five-year-old and trying to work at the same time, the next day you're on a 'virtual meeting' with your entire class!

Anyway, maybe focusing on the positives for once would be a good idea: I've got one! Surprised? Well, lockdown has been a great opportunity to get my nose stuck in a book. Of course, I mean that literally as I fall asleep when reading and wake up with a book on my face! Seriously though, I have read a few brilliant books and I would encourage all of you to read, just be careful you don't get your nose stuck!

Let's have another go: I know! I have absolutely no idea what day it is! My guess is a Tuesday in May? What's yours? I know what you're thinking; 'how is that a positive? I forgot my birthday!' But, if you think about it, it's a good thing. I mean, remember how much money you spend each year on people's birthdays and special occasions. It's a lot, right? So you could just not buy anyone anything, if they ask why you can just say you forgot what day it was. Genius.

Shall we try once more? How about that lockdown is the perfect opportunity to binge watch your favourite series? However, I would like to urge you to be careful when doing this. I think I may have watched everything on Netflix. The result is ten million questions: will Eleanor make it to the Good Place? Who is the Black Hood? And, most importantly, were Ross and Rachel on a break? That question must be thought about VERY carefully.

Lockdown has opened us up to many positives and negatives and I know that many people have many different opinions about that, especially Piers Morgan on Good Morning Britain. Just imagine what future generations are going to think about lockdown; they'll probably think we all went mad!

Everything, Everything

By Isabella Corr, Year 7

One way I have found to successfully beat the lockdown boredom is by travelling to other worlds, transporting myself into the mind and body of other people, throwing myself into someone else's life for 5 minutes – all in my imagination of course!

If you haven't tried reading as a technique to relax you and take your mind off things during lockdown then here is one book I would recommend: Have you read the book 'Everything, Everything' by Nichola Yoon?

If you haven't, you should! It is probably my all-time favourite book in the whole entire universe. It is about a young teenage girl who is kept inside (sound familiar?) because she has a medical condition. Her mother and her nurse look after her. After her father and brother were killed, her mother is extremely cautious. This girl hasn't been outside in years and is always bored. If she goes outside, she dies. Everything was perfect until her new neighbour came along. Together, they plan a trip to Hawaii without their parents knowing but whilst they are there, disaster strikes!

Trust me - you have to give this book a read. You won't be sorry!



Boredom busters!

by Neve Lynch, 8S1

Write a blog

Isn't it fascinating how we are living through what is going to be history one day? Why don't you write a journal or blog that one day students our age could use as an information source?

Games night

Missing friends or family? Why don't you play a game with them on FaceTime, Zoom call them or download a game where you can play against your friends?

Bake off

Why don't you become the next Gordon Ramsey or Mary Berry? Bake a cake, make a pizza or pie.

Pamper night

Have a pamper night: cleanse your skin with a face mask, have a soothing massage or take a relaxing soak.

TV show binge

How about sitting down to a good show? Some of my suggestions are: Modern Family, Stranger Things, Riverdale, The Mandalorian, Merlin and Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.

Movie night

Movie night! Sweets, popcorn and a good movie, cuddled up on the couch with loved ones.

Create a masterpiece

How about having a crack at the arts? Who knows, you might be a secret painter or poet.

Green finger

Take advantage of the lovely weather and grow a plant companion.



Fix your Feng shui

Sick of seeing the same old thing? How about a switch up: move your room around or re-decorate? Pinterest has some lovely ideas.

Treat yourself!

Finally, to conclude our list: we all love a bit of online shopping, and a lot of stores are having sales so splurge a little if you can!

I'm grateful...

This edition, Spotlight wanted to hear from more of YOU! We asked you 'What has lockdown made you thankful for?' The responses were overwhelming!

Lana Rain, Year 7: "that everyone has been so careful and I will be going out to see my friends again!"

Tegan Million, Year 9: "having a family and friends and I can't wait to see them... and to go shopping."

Ethan Bowles, Year 9: "for my health more than ever."

Charlotte Longstaff, Year 9: "for the time to get myself into shape and pamper myself!"

Katie Fenwick, Year 10: "for how well my mam and dad look after my family and I can't wait to see my nanna and grandad."

Ellie Holmes, Year 10: "for my grandad's Godly pasta-making skills!"

Hollie Cammis, Year 8: "for my family. It's made me realise to not take them for granted as you never know the next time you will see them. It's also shown me how social media can bring us all together in these uncertain times."

Harry Rayner, Year 7: "the internet!"

Eden Thomson, Year 7: "for the extra family time!"

Poppy Davies, Year 9: "for how lucky I have realised I really am."

Jessica Smith, Year 10: "for the simplicity of being able to spend time outside with the people I love."

Amy Hamilton, Year 9: "for the outdoors - I need to stop spending so much time on my Xbox!"

Sheryl Ejim, Year 7: "that I used to actually HAVE a school to go to in person and I will now acknowledge how lucky I am."

Skye Downing, Year 7: "for the NHS and key-workers. I never knew how important they were until this pandemic started."

Mia Brownless, Year 10: "for school, it has made me realise how much I miss it when I'm not there."

Mia Beeston, Year 9: "you should never take anything for granted: friends, family etc. because you never know what is around the corner."

Leah Malcom, Year 7: "I have got to spend more time with my family, I am baking more and me and my brother are closer."

Ellie Crawford, Year 10: "for having such a loving and supportive family. with friends! Hopefully, returning to school and seeing teachers."

Andrew Ward, Year 8: "I'm grateful that I have an amazing mam and dad, as well as my garden. I don't think I would have survived if I didn't have that to escape to."

Summer Million, Year 8: "for my friends and family and how I always took them for granted but I will make sure I will never take anything for granted again!"