

# School Newsletter

December 2020



Dear Parents

Once again the Christmas holidays are approaching and I wanted to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Upton community for all the extra efforts we have had to put in place in order to cope with unprecedented Covid times. Thankfully, we have a vaccine on the horizon and I hope that in the meantime you all stay safe and well and can enjoy some family time, albeit in a different way than usual.

## Pupil achievements and activities

There have been numerous events to note and celebrate this term.

### Year 8 Retreat Days

In November each Year 8 form enjoyed a retreat day. The theme for the day was 'You are God's work of art' and were led by Sr Els (chaplain) and Miss Statham (PE).

There were various activities such as people bingo to break the ice and get us thinking about all the things that can contribute to our identity.

We looked at the various factors such as advertisements, social media, peer pressure, ...that make us question ourselves, pulling us away from what Christianity teaches us: that we are all unique and loved. We then made our unique fingerprints, reflecting on who we are and decorated them. Later we watched video clips of the Greatest Showman with time for discussion, followed by a dance session on 'This is Me', expressing our confidence.



In the afternoon we learned a new way of praying for us, but which is really more than 1500 years old, called 'Lectio Divina'. Sr Els read psalm 139, which

gives praise for the wonder each one of us is, but she read it very slowly, repeated the lines and left time for silence, while we could write down words that spoke to us and/or draw. Everybody was quiet and very prayerful.

Afterwards we brought the various elements of the day together in a group prayer. We concluded that feeling loved helps us to love others and we wrote kind and affirmative messages for each other so everybody had an envelope to remind them of the day they could take home.



This is what our ethos reps wrote about the day

*"We really enjoyed this relaxing day and loved how every activity was organised, especially the dance and drawing about Psalm 139. During this day, we could sort out any doubts and questions that we had kept for a long time.*

*In addition, we feel that we have become closer to God. The people bingo brought a happy buzz into the room while we got to find out more about each other. We thoroughly enjoyed retreat day as it was a lovely break away from the normal school day schedule.*

*We felt so refreshed spiritually throughout the day and just really appreciate the time and effort Sr Els put into it. Thank you!"*

*Steffy and Amelia. Ethos reps 8C.*



## Fire House wins the Reading Engagement House Cup

Fire House has won the termly house cup for the most reading engagement points. Throughout the Autumn term students have been earning achievement points for reading efforts in their Library



lessons and around school. Mrs Seed (Head of English) and Miss Pearson (librarian) presented the House Cup in assembly to Fire House in which the students had earned an impressive 327 points. Individual reading champions were also awarded certificates and badges for their excellent efforts in reading this term. Miss Pearson said 'it has been incredible to see the passion our students have for reading, well done to our individual champions for leading the way in their houses and of course well done to Fire House!' Reading continues to be a focus this year. Every department in school has reading as part of their development plans. We have had a pop up library for the 6<sup>th</sup> form which has been hugely successful and the loaning of books from the library is 3 times higher than it was this time last year.

## Acts of Kindness

Pupils and staff have been collecting toys for Ferries Family Groups. We are hoping that these will bring a bit of Christmas cheer to some less fortunate children. This is one of our house charities, chosen as part of our year of kindness for the FCJ Bicentennial.

## Pupil Rewards

**Nutcracking Festive Fun** On December 8th, Year 7 watched a performance of the Nutcracker Ballet as a pre-Christmas treat. They also enjoyed a Festive Tuck

shop with popcorn, chocolate and sweets. A 'cracking' time was had by all.

## Christmas Celebrations

During the lead up to the end of term, pupils have been involved in the following activities:

- ❖ **Feast Day** Our school community celebrated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 11.12.20 and we raised in excess of £2,000 for our FCJ community in the Philippines as well as 'Action for Children'. We had a range of experiences for our students from a 'winter wonderland' experience, designing decorations for our Jesse tree, form auction, Christmas stories and even some donkeys from the local sanctuary made an appearance too!

During the day our students wrote a range of letters to our local, national and global communities. Our Year 7, 8 and 9 pupils wrote letters to fellow FCJ companions in schools in Ireland, Australia and Belgium. Last year, we received responses from our Australian counterparts and our year 8 girls were able to respond to those letters. Some of our year 12 and 13 students also got involved in the campaign to write for Amnesty International. Our students in Year 11, 12 and 13 responded so well to an online appeal from a care home in Lancashire. They wrote letters and cards and even drew pictures for the residents who will be unable to have a 'normal' Christmas this year due to Covid restrictions, and this act of kindness will help the elderly residents feel more connected with the outside world. Residents are unlikely to see their own families so this was such a lovely thing for our students to do for them. One resident used to be a beekeeper so we sent her some Upton honey and lip balms to help bring her some festive cheer too! Our students in Years 9 and 10 wrote Christmas cards, letters and drew pictures for many local residents identified by our local Priest. It was so lovely to see so many letters from our girls for local people who may be alone or unable to see friends and family due to all the restrictions in place.

# School Newsletter

December 2020



Thanks to all our parents/carers who contributed to the charitable donations of gifts for 'Ferries Families' and food for a local foodbank.

As we prepare for Christ's coming this Christmas, may we take this opportunity to thank everyone, (students, parents and staff) who have brought light into the lives of others this joyous season.

❖ **You Tube Christmas Carols** Despite the Covid restrictions, we still wanted the students and our wider community to have the opportunity to share in the joys of Advent and preparation for Christ's coming this Christmas. Our virtual event was a lovely way to share some carols and readings as well as some extra songs for your entertainment. We hope you enjoyed this virtual event from our school Chapel. Thank you for the lovely comments we have received so far.

❖ **Food Donations** One of our site staff delivered food donations from our school community to a local Mission for the vulnerable in society. In addition, our school community has been collecting gifts for 'Ferries Families'. We believe that this is a fundamental part of our mission in a Catholic school to help the more vulnerable in society. We would like to take the opportunity to thank you for all your support in bringing hope and light into many families this Christmas.



## Physical Education



Congratulations to the following Pupils for their outstanding sporting success. Jessica on her selection for Manchester Thunder Bees Pathway Squad for Netball.



Mae on her player's contract at Manchester United Football Club RTC



Ellen-Mary (year 12) for her on her number 1 ranking for the U17 Girls 1500m Steeplechase



Congratulations also goes to former pupil, Emily (talented older sister Ellen-Mary) on her recent success in breaking the South Carolina Half



Marathon record with a time of 72.21 ranking her second in Wales. Emily has also been selected to compete in the Olympic Games marathon trial event in March at Kew Gardens, we wish her the very best of luck.



Congratulations to Niamh for achieving her black belt in Taekwondo.

## KS3 Computing

Ms Smith: KS3 Computing: In November, 300 Year 8s and 9s took part in the annual Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge. This is an international competition organised by the University of Oxford. The tricky Bebras challenges develop problem solving skills and require students to think logically. Congratulations to 80 of our students who achieved Distinction, and 75 who achieved Merit.

A special mention to:

- Best in School: Daisy G Year 9
- Top performing Year 8 pupil: Bethany A

## Become an Internet Legend

Will your child spend more time on tech this Christmas? The Legends Family Adventure from Google and Parent Zone will help you all become Internet Legends – and have festive fun along the way!

The Legends Family Adventure – Google and Parent Zone's new animated series – is the perfect winter watch for families. It's part of the Be Internet Legends programme – helping children to be safer and more confident online.

When Lumen's bear goes missing, the whole family must brave Interland to get it back. Along the way, the family learns lessons from the Legends Code – including helpful tips on what to do with cyberbullies, how to spot scams and set strong passwords, as well as important lessons on kindness. And, Lumen discovers they're stronger and braver than they ever thought they could be.

Once you've watched the films, it is time to test your family's online safety knowledge by entering The Legends Family Challenge, proving your legendary status and maybe even winning some prizes for our school. The prizes include an international assembly with a school in the USA – and some fantastic goodies to help us decorate our classrooms in 2021. Embark on this adventure as a family by visiting [g.co/legendsfamilyadventure](https://www.google.co.uk/legendsfamilyadventure)

## Collecting pupils for medical appointments

The office staff have reported increasing problems with parents collecting pupils at the last minute for medical appointments or pupils calling home and asking to be picked up from school.

If a pupil has a medical appointment and needs to leave school, we must be advised of this on the morning of the day that they need to leave. This has always been the procedure. If a parent arrives at school to pick a pupil up for an appointment that they do not know about, we will not be able to find pupils from lessons in order to send them. We do not have the capacity for a member of staff to do this multiple times in the day. Of equal importance, if your daughter is unwell and she feels as if she needs to go home, she must speak to her Head of Year or a member of the leadership team. She must not call



home and arrange it with a parent first. This is a safeguarding issue and it is also a disciplinary issue as pupils are not supposed to be using their phones in the day.

## Masks & Health and Safety

In school we have been asking pupils to wear masks on corridors since the start of the year. It is now a requirement in all schools. Please could you continue to work with us to remind your daughters that there will be no loosening of the rules regarding Health and Safety until it is appropriate to do so. If pupils forget or misplace their face masks they are able to purchase a disposable mask for 50p from Reception. Girls need to understand that this is part of their uniform and they need to ensure they have a face mask with them. We have been fortunate in seeing a real downturn in the number of Covid19 cases this half term. This has enabled our pupils to be in school and learn. It has been by everybody working together to be vigilant that this has been possible.

## Mobile Phones

As you know, our school policy is to not allow pupils to use their mobile phones in school. We have noticed this term a few incidences where pupils have called parents for them to come and pick them up or to come and pass things to them through the gates. Please refrain from engaging with this, as pupils should follow the correct procedures.

## Uniform

When I see our pupils in the green uniforms I am delighted with the changes that we made to them and they definitely look smarter than they did previously. It was a massive challenge to get the new uniforms out in the summer under Covid conditions but it was worth it. At the moment, pupils may come to school in their PE kits on some days in order to avoid congested changing rooms. There are unfortunately some pupils who are not coming into school in the correct kit. Of particular concern are the leggings that they are wearing. These must be plain black and free of any logos. These are available to buy through our uniform shop. It is essential that pupils look as smart in the PE kits as they do in the

green uniform. Pupils also need to come into school in black coats. It is not acceptable to use the excuse 'I only have a grey coat'. I know that I have high standards in terms of appearance. I never apologise for these high standards as they translate into high standards in all areas of Upton life, especially lessons. Nobody would ever want me to let those slip and therefore I do not let them slip anywhere.

## Pupil Voice

Earlier this term, I sent a questionnaire to pupils in Years 7 – 11 (6<sup>th</sup> form will be next term) to gain their views on a few matters. I was interested to know some of their views on celebrating diversity, bullying, the work we do on mental health awareness and safeguarding. 60% of pupils responded to the questions. This is what they told us:

- The vast majority of pupils feel that we have high aspirations for them
- The vast majority of pupils feel safe in school and know what to do if they don't
- Most pupils think that we encourage strategies for positive mental health.
- The majority of pupils think that we take bullying very seriously and deal with it.
- The vast majority of pupils think that behaviour in school is very good.
- They told us about all of the countries from which their families have originated and what their favourite family recipes are.

Our actions that will arise from this are that:

- We need to make pupils more aware of all of the agencies and services that we buy in, in order to help pupils with their mental health. We have realised that if pupils don't use these services, they aren't aware how many we engage with. We began this in Year 7/8 assemblies this week.
- We realise that pupils aren't sure what happens as a result of bullying. Our intention isn't to shame bullies but to talk to them and allow them to mend their ways. As we aren't public about their consequences, this can sometimes appear that they have 'got away with it'. We need to let pupils know that this is **never** the case.

# School Newsletter

December 2020



- We are purchasing a map of the world that can be used to demonstrate what a diverse community we are.
- We are going to make a cookbook from Upton families around the world. Some of these recipes will be cooked in our dining room next year for us all to try and enjoy.

## Parking

Please could I give a polite reminder to parents about parking when you drop off and pick up your daughters from school. Parking on the lines outside of school is prohibited. If parents ignore this, we have no jurisdiction to do anything about it however, I would hope that the prospect of causing harm to a child is deterrent enough to act safely in your cars around school.

## Website & Social Media

Our website is constantly being updated, so please use it to keep up to date with current activities. [www.uptonhallschool.co.uk](http://www.uptonhallschool.co.uk). Significant dates for next term are shown in the website calendar. Similarly look out for latest news on our Twitter page (@UptonHallFCJ), as well as our Facebook (@uptonhallschoolfcj) and Instagram (uptonhallschoolfcj) pages.

## Reward Afternoons

During the course of this week, Years 7 to 10 have been enjoying Reward Afternoons to recognise excellent attendance and behaviour. These have included a pyjama party, box rounders and various film screenings. They were also able to enjoy a tuck shop with festive chocolate treats thanks to the efforts of Mrs Spiby.

## Reporting Covid Cases

You only need to report Covid cases to us if your daughter tests positive and has been in school 48 hours before the symptoms started. For example, if your daughter develops symptoms on Monday 21 December, you do not need to let us know. If your daughter has a positive test tomorrow but has had no symptoms, you do not need to let us know as she

may only have developed it on that day. There is a link on our website for you to let us know. Please indicate when the symptoms started.

## Those in need of additional support over the holidays

For urgent safeguarding enquiries, or if you feel that a child or young person is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect please report it to the Wirral Integrated Front Door Team:

Mon-Fri, 9:00am – 5.00pm Tel: 0151 606 2008

Outside of these hours Tel: 0151 677 6557

E-mail: [IFD@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:IFD@wirral.gov.uk)

**FOR ALL EMERGENCIES PLEASE DIAL 999**

## Upton Community

This Christmas will be difficult for many families associated with the school because they are coping with the illness of a family member or a recent bereavement and even more so during the course of this very traumatic year. We have had a number of pupils who have lost a close family member this term or indeed have suffered through illness themselves. I would ask you to remember these families in your prayers.

*Season's Greetings*



# School Newsletter

December 2020

---



## Staff Farewells

This Christmas we say goodbye to 2 staff members who have made a valuable contribution to our school community. Miss Flanagan, Teacher of English has decided to leave us to study for a PhD at the University of Birmingham's Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon which she will begin full time in January.

Mr Patrick Harper, Teacher of Physics is also leaving Upton to further his career elsewhere.

We wish them both every success in this new chapter of their lives.

Finally, I want to thank you for your support this term and wish you all a very happy and joyful Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'A Gaunt'.

Mrs Andrea Gaunt  
HEADMISTRESS