# *Alcester Academy WEEKLY BULLETIN*

## *22nd January 2021*

Dear Parents and Carers,

Good afternoon. Thank you for a super week of lock-down learning again. You deserve medals for keeping everything going right now frankly; juggling jobs, home school, family life and wellbeing is absolutely huge and shouldn't be underestimated one bit. I hope that our students are able to immerse themselves in their classes and forget about the bigger picture momentarily during their day at home. The quality of work being submitted is superb. Please thank the students for this; we do try convey this in assemblies each week.

It's been quite a week in the news; I found the televised inauguration of the new USA president finally very uplifting. And then we had the suspension of the close contact lateral flow tests in schools! After setting up the lateral flow tests process over Christmas, I could share my opinion about this...but for now, I'll spare you all from that! I'm sure that you can imagine. There is an official statement outlined later on in this bulletin regarding this. I must convey my thanks to those members of the school community who offered to help to support us with this process as 'volunteers'. Obviously our next steps are all on hold for now. We will be in touch.

### Return to school message – Gavin Williamson 20th January 2021

As schools, we received an update from Gavin Williamson this week regarding a number of relevant topics. In order to keep your understanding as current as possible, this was the insight shared about a return to school for us all:

*'I know there are significant challenges in the coming weeks for school and college leaders. We know that receiving face to face education is best for children's and young people's mental health and for their educational achievement.*

### Term Dates

**SPRING TERM 2021**

| | |
|---|---|
| Half Term | Monday 15th – Friday 19th February 2021 |
| Back to school | Monday 22nd February 2021 |
| Spring Term ends (Easter) | Thursday 1st April 2021 |

**SUMMER TERM 2021**

| | |
|---|---|
| Summer Term begins | Monday 19th April 2021 |
| May Bank Holiday | Monday 3rd May 2021 |
| Half Term | Monday 31st May – Friday 4th June 2021 |
| Back to school | Tuesday 8th June 2021 |
| Summer Term ends | Tuesday 20th July 2021 at 12.40pm |
| *School closed* | *Wednesday 21st July 2021* |
| | *Teacher training day* |

*It is therefore my sincere hope that with the efforts we are all making to contain the virus, children and young people across England will be back in the classroom, spending time with their friends and teachers, and getting back into the rhythms of the school or college year again soon. We are keeping plans for the return to school and college under continuous review and will ensure that children and young people return to face to face education as soon as it is possible. We will inform schools, colleges and parents ahead of the February half term. I will continue to work with you as we deal with this evolving and challenging situation, as well as with health colleagues, the Chief and Deputy Chief Medical Officers.'*

### Elevate Education

https://uk.elevateeducation.com/

For those parents that were able to log in to the *Motivation* Elevate Coaching session on Tuesday, I'm sure that you found it as useful as I did. I can really recommend these to you. Our next session is on student *Stress and wellbeing* at this time on Tuesday 9th February at 6pm. Remember if you can't commit to watching these sessions in real time, you can register to see the recording.

# Updates

### Online lessons - support from home

Please try and keep an overview on the use of mobile phones with students from home. We are trying to keep this as positive as possible but on occasion, staff are finding some distraction is caused from these being used during the live aspect of teaching. We are aware still of some students logging on to their Google Meets but not actually engaging in the lesson. When staff ask questions…the students are not there! If your child is working in a bedroom away from you, I'd be grateful for some spot checks when time allows. Thanks so much.

# Elevate parent webinar

***The webinar series is completely free for parents at Alcester Academy. The complete schedule of webinars for this term to support parents as much as possible during lockdown is:***

***Tuesday 9th February:***
***Stress & Wellbeing***
***Tuesday 2nd March:***
***Preparing for Assessments***
***Tuesday 23rd March:***
***Managing Technology and Distractions***

***Parents will also be sent the replay link if they have registered so if they miss it live, they can still access it.***

***Registration link: https://get.elevatecoaching.info/uk/register***

## Attendance snap shot

On Tuesday 19th January 2021, we took an attendance snap shot of participation in real time lessons for years 8 and 11:

Year 8 was 89% (daily average)

Year 11 was 83%

This is superb considering the illness rate currently and I hope to strive to beyond 90% if you can help me at home please?

## Free School Meals

FSM support for over half term will be issued to those parents eligible via the Winter Grant Scheme again (similar to Christmas time). This will cover the period 15-21st February amounting to £21.

## Regular weekly lockdown features

**Tuesday—Tutor Time 8.45am**

**On Tuesday 26th January, year 8 will have an assembly about options at 8.45am. Link to be sent out. Just for next week, they don't have to join their normal Thursday assembly therefore.**

**Wednesday— Year 7 Assembly at 8.45am**

**Thursday— Year 8, 9, 10 Assembly at 8.45am**

**Friday— Year 11 Assembly at 8.45am**

## Thank you!

Further thanks to parents; Kerri Sparkes and Kelly Webb for their work redeveloping the gardening plots at school and securing sponsorship for this from Inspired Villages. I am so grateful for this.

As ever, I extend my thanks to all of the staff here at school or working from home right now too. Our midday supervisors are in school every day. Our Catering Manager is feeding students (and us!). The office staff are working hard behind the scenes here, site team and TAs. The LSU team is in every day making calls, looking at attendance and being in critical professionals meetings. Our IT technician is in school every day along with reprographics support on top of all of the teaching being done in very unusual circumstances. I feel extremely grateful for the superb help, guidance and support that our students are getting. Thanks also to Mrs Woodman and Miss Buckthorp for keeping me buoyant each day too.

# Headteacher Challenge

## Headteacher Challenge this week

Design a memorable image to celebrate the inauguration of the USA President Joe Biden; a shield to represent President Biden's values, a photo montage, a decorative series of quotes from the event, a recreated flag etc etc. Use your creative licence. MORE entries required this week please.

Deadline is Thursday 28th January 2021 9am head@alcesteracademy.org.uk

Our *Show You Care* entries from last week's challenge are outlined later on in the bulletin. Congratulations to Ewan in year 7, who wins epraise points, house points and an entry into the end of lockdown prize voucher draw. Congratulations Ewan, thank you for your entry!

# Coronavirus & Lockdown Updates

## Confirmed cases

Keep me informed of any positive cases

head@alcesteracademy.org.uk

## Key workers and children considered vulnerable

We ask respectfully that for those children with places in school, parents should NOT send these individuals in if they are exhibiting any of the coronavirus symptoms. Stay in touch with Miss Buckthorp as needed regarding this: karenbuckthorp@alcesteracademy.org.uk

## Lateral flow testing in schools

Further to my earlier statement in this bulletin, be aware that we are ceasing the close contact lateral flow testing with students in schools following the circular from Gavin Williamson on Wednesday 20th January 2021 as follows:

*'Both NHS Test and Trace and PHE have now reviewed that advice, and concluded that, in light of the higher prevalence and rates of transmission of the new variant, further evaluation work is required to understand the impact of daily contact testing, instead of self-isolation for those who have been in contact with a case, to make sure it is achieving its aim of breaking chains of transmission and reducing cases of the virus in the community.*

*In light of that assessment, we are pausing daily contact testing in all but a small number of secondary schools and colleges, where it will continue with detailed evaluation to inform any future resumption and to make sure nobody in the remaining settings is put at any risk. Regular testing of staff should continue and will increase to twice weekly as further reassurance and to break chains of transmission during this period.'*

Like you must be now, we are rapidly losing patience with the u-turns in guidance and the time being wasted on central decisions currently. I can only apologise and offer to update you all as we hear more on this.

If you want to read more around this decision, please see more detail: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/daily-contact-testing-in-schools-statement-from-phe-and-nhs-tt-about-next-steps/position-statement-regarding-daily-contact-testing-in-schools-from-phe-and-nhs-test-and-trace

## Public Health England Updates

Public Health England have asked schools to remind families to take care when young children are playing at home. With us now working from home more, there is concern that play spaces might be dangerous or windows left open causing home hazards.

We have also been asked to remind families where to seek support at this very difficult time for domestic abuse situations https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/domesticabuse :

https://www.talk2someone.org.uk/

http://dacservice.org.uk/

DOMESTIC ABUSE COUNSELLING SERVICE
A service provided by
'INSIGHT' Counselling Coaching & Support Services
Charity Registration 1125103

https://www.refuge.org.uk/our-work/our-services/refuge-warwickshire-domestic-violence-service/

Refuge
For women and children.
Against domestic violence.

Freephone 24-Hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247
or visit www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk (access live chat Mon-Fri 3-10pm)

## Information to how to become a Warwickshire Foster Carer

https://fostering.warwickshire.gov.uk/

*Why Warwickshire?*
*We always aim to place Warwickshire children with Warwickshire foster carers, meaning you are our first choice. If you are already a foster carer we would like to chat with you about transferring to us.*
*We are currently recruiting all types of foster carers with a particular focus on those interested in caring for:*

- *Teenagers*
- *Children aged over eight on a permanent basis*
- *Brothers and sisters*
- *Children and young people from Black and Asian backgrounds*
- *Children and young people on an emergency basis*
- *A child with a disability on a short break.*
- *A parent and their child*

And finally in the updates for this week, sometimes all we need is something to smile at. It gives me the greatest pleasure to introduce Baby Harrison Andrew Jordan to you (AKA 'Baby Bishop'). Mum and baby are doing fine and we send them both all of our love and good wishes right now! Huge congratulations from our community to Miss Bishop at this exciting time! How cute! All 9lbs 2ozs (I missed an ounce in my earlier update this week!). Miss Bishop has conveyed her thanks to those of you who have been in touch with lovely messages. These are appreciated a lot.

I'm delighted to report that all is well after my own dad received his first vaccine last Friday. This was a relief to know and I hope that you are able to find reassurance right now if your extended family are going through the same. We're thinking about you all regarding this.

Please stay safe as we see the covid statistics grow daily now regarding very tragic deaths. I must take this opportunity once more to remind our students that they should not be out with friends playing after school hours if they are adhering to the lockdown guidance. Please check where your child is or where they say that they are going.

Wishing you a rest over this weekend. Have a relaxing and safe couple of days.
Best wishes

*Sarah Mellors*
Headteacher

## Ofsted – Parent View

https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/

As crazy as it might sound hearing this (and writing it!), Ofsted might still call upon us for an inspection at this time. If you have not completed Parent View for this academic year, please could you do this. It is REALLY important to us and it just takes a few seconds. We do use these results in order to form any improvements as needed. Thank you.

# epraise news—week ending 20.1.21

**Congratulations to the Top Three Students:**
**1st—Jack—Year 7 SECOND WEEK**
**2nd—Maya—Year 7 SECOND WEEK**
**3rd—Isabelle— 9WA STANDING FIRM**

**Topping the charts in other years:**
**Year 8—Josh SECOND WEEK**
**Year 10—Dan STANDING FIRM**
**Year 11—Archie STANDING FIRM**

**Top Tutor Groups:**
**1st—7HT**
**2nd—7TY**
**3rd—7BW**

**Top Subject and Staff:**

Science leads as a subject again this week.
Go science AGAIN!

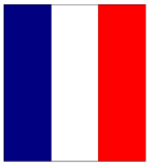
Mr Bastock leads on the staff board.

Well done everyone!
*Mrs Mellors*

## Year 10 Science Revision Guides

Please complete the google form questionnaire about revision guides. If you would like to purchase through school then these need to be paid for on school gateway as soon as possible.
Any questions then please refer to the class teacher. *Miss Burgess*

# MFL Idiom of the Week



*English*: Every cloud has a silver lining
*French*: Après la pluie le beau temps
Literal meaning: After the rain comes good weather
*German*: In allem Schlechten liegt das Gute im Ansatz schon verborgen
Literal meaning: In the beginning the good is hidden from the bad

# Photography of the Week

**Photo of the Week is from Will in year 11.**

**Will said "The thinking behind this photo, is to highlight how the world has changed and adapted to live with the virus. All newspapers behind are articles about Covid-19, with the main headline, on the paper being read, reading *Christmas cancelled for millions*. This shows how the pandemic is relevant in all aspects of our daily lives and can make an appearance at any time."**

# Food Technology Stars of the Week

**Kobe (7NE) has been cooking at home in the evenings. He is in school during the day, as he is in the key worker bubble.**
**Kobe wanted to do some practical Food Technology that had been encouraged during lesson time.**

**Thank you for practising this essential skill Kobe!**
***Miss Wincup***

**Olivia in year 7, has made a fruit salad at home. Great practical work on lunchbox snacks! Well done.**
***Miss Wincup***

# LRC News

Each year we take part in the **Warwickshire Secondary Book Award** which offers year 7 pupils from schools all over the county the opportunity to read six shortlisted titles, promote the enjoyment of reading and review their favourites with their peers.

Eleven of our students have committed themselves to take part this year and have already started on their first books. They would usually be asked to cast their votes at the beginning of March and the winning book would be revealed at an exciting ceremony at the Bridge House Theatre in Warwick, where at least one of the shortlisted authors is present. This would usually be a wonderful opportunity to meet with students from other schools.

This year, however, the Schools Library Service have postponed the voting process and the award ceremony until the summer term to enable the students to have more time to access and read the six shortlisted books and increase the likelihood of them being able to host the event in person at the Bridgehouse Theatre, Warwick - although it may still very likely have to be a live virtual event.

The shortlisted books for the 2020/21 award are:
***The Last Paper Crane* – Kerry Drewery;**

***The Enigma Game* – Elizabeth Wein;**

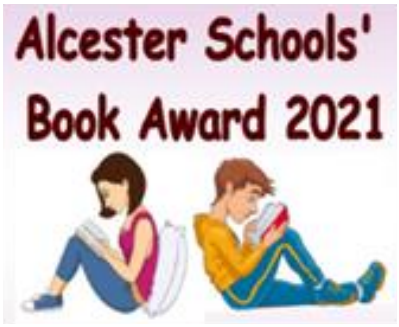
***That Time I Got Kidnapped* – Tom MItchell;**

***Deeplight* – Frances Hardinge;**

***Gloves Off* – Louisa Reid;**

***Nothing Ever Happens Here* – Sarah Hagger-Holt.**

## The Alcester Schools' Book Award




The Alcester Schools' Book Award takes place annually with year 8 students from Alcester Academy, St. Benedict's and Alcester Grammar School.

Books are chosen to appeal to a range of readers and abilities and five titles will soon be shortlisted ready for us to launch the award. Sadly this year St. Benedict's have decided not to take part, but Alcester Academy and Alcester Grammar School are looking to continue this year with a slightly different 'book club' version that will be tailored around the current COVID situation.

We are hoping to include an author session, although this may have to be a live virtual event. Year 8 students who would like to take part that have English with either Mrs Farnell (set 1) or Miss Hoskin (set 2), are able to commit themselves to reading the five books and take part in various activities around the shortlisted titles, please sign up to the **Google Classroom – oxh22hh** in readiness.

# Accelerated Reader

The LRC and the English Department encourage pupils to develop a lifelong love of reading with Accelerated Reader. Did you know that Accelerated Reader (AR) produces an average of two years' reading age growth in just one year, while promoting reading for pleasure? All of our pupils, from years 7, 8, 9 and 10 who are on the AR system, have been avidly reading and taking quizzes this term. If your child is on the AR system they will be using a software program called Renaissance Place at school. This program has a special feature called Renaissance Home Connect, which your child and you can access outside of school from any computer with an Internet connection. Renaissance Home Connect is fun and easy to use. It allows the teacher, you, and your child to share information about their progress in Accelerated Reader and the books they have read.

**To log in to Accelerated Reading:**

**Website:**
**https://ukhosted26.renlearn.co.uk/1893467/ - this link must be used to access to our school's data.**

**User Name:** ***is your child's school computer log-in ID, for example j.smith or j.smith12***

**Password: abc**

***Please encourage your child to read and quiz, because……***

***People who read are more likely to be involved in the world around them:*** *Research shows that reading makes you more engaged in life around you, helping you to make the most of opportunities that come your way in life.*

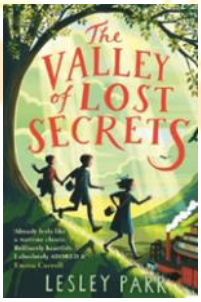
***Reading helps your memory:*** *Every time you read something new, your brain 'makes room' to fit it in. With these new spaces, you can take advantage of any new information. Good news when you have to revise for exams!*

***Reading helps to boost your analytical thinking:*** *Reading helps you to recognise various patterns that occur in writing. If you are looking for a law or medicine career, this is important!*

***Reading expands your vocabulary:*** *The more that you read, the more words you will come across. The more often you read these words, the more likely you are to understand them, and use them in your own writing and speaking.*

# New Book Releases

These books and lots more new titles for 2021 can be found online and delivered directly to you from companies such as:
Bookshop - https://uk.bookshop.org/
Blackwell's - https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/home
Waterstones - https://www.waterstones.com/

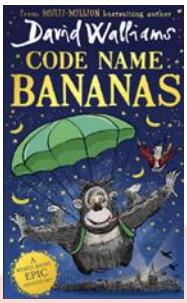



## The Valley of Lost Secrets

ISBN: 9781526620521 – all year groups
September 1939.
When Jimmy is evacuated to a small village in Wales, it couldn't be more different from London. Green, quiet and full of strangers, he instantly feels out of place. But then he finds a skull hidden in a tree, and suddenly the valley is more frightening than the war. Who can Jimmy trust?

## Concrete Rose

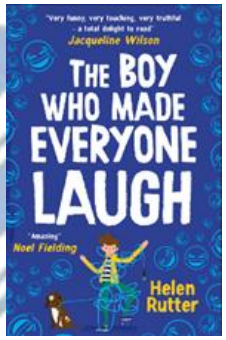
ISBN: 9781406384444 –
year 10 upwards
A hard-hitting return to Garden Heights with the story of Maverick Carter, Starr's father, set seventeen years before the events of The Hate U Give. With his King Lord dad in prison and his mom working two jobs, seventeen-year-old Maverick Carter helps the only way he knows how: slinging drugs. Life's not perfect, but he's got everything under control. Until he finds out he's a father...Suddenly it's not so easy to deal drugs and finish school with a baby dependent on him for everything. So when he's offered the chance to go straight, he takes it. But when King Lord blood runs through your veins, you don't get to just walk away.




## Code Name Bananas

ISBN: 9780008305833 – all year groups
1940. Britain is at war with Nazi Germany. Eleven-year-old Eric spends his days at the place that makes him most happy: London Zoo. And there's one animal in particular he loves: Gertrude the gorilla.
With bombs falling all over London, Eric must rescue Gertrude.
Together with his Uncle Sid, a keeper at the zoo, the three go on the run. But while hiding out at the seaside they uncover a top-secret Nazi plot…

## The boy who made everyone laugh




ISBN: 9780702300851 – years 7, 8 and 9
Billy Plimpton is an eleven-year-old boy with a big dream. He wants to be a stand-up comedian when he grows up: delivering pinpoint punch-lines and having audiences hang on his every hilarious word. A tough career for anyone, but surely impossible for Billy, who has a stammer. How will he find his voice, if his voice won't let him speak? The idea for this story came from Helen Rutter's son, who has a stammer: she wanted to write the book that he would love to read, starring a child like him.

## The Gilded Ones

ISBN: 9781801310277 – years 9,10 and 11

The must-read epic fantasy of 2021. In this West African-inspired world, girls are outcasts by blood and warriors by choice, perfect for fans of Children of Blood and Bone and Black Panther. Sixteen-year-old Deka lives in Otera, a deeply patriarchal ancient kingdom, where a woman's worth is tied to her purity, and she must bleed to prove it. But when Deka bleeds gold - the colour of impurity, of a demon - she faces a consequence worse than death. She is saved by a mysterious woman who tells Deka of her true nature: she is an Alaki, a near-immortal with exceptional gifts. The stranger offers her a choice: fight for the Emperor, with others just like her, or be destroyed...

## LRC Worth Remembering!

The LRC has its own twitter account, please follow us for all our latest news: @AA_LRC_Library

Accelerated Reading: https://ukhosted26.renlearn.co.uk/1893467/

LRC Online Google Classroom: **Joining code - dt6iw3u**

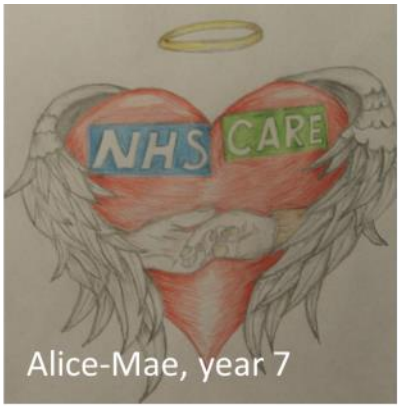
myON: https://www.myon.co.uk/login/index.html

Alcester Academy School Library Accounts: https://apps.libresoft.co.uk/9374240-hmlpg8jkqb72jyx911bd-aa

Warwickshire Libraries: https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/jointhelibrary

Warwickshire Libraries Borrow Box: https://fe.bolindadigital.com/wldcs_bol_fo/b2i/mainPage.html?b2bSite=6404

# Headteacher Challenge



**The winners this week is Ewan, year 7. Congratulations!**

**Ewan will be entered for an *End of Lock-down* prize draw to win a voucher.**

**epraise points have been awarded to all the students who entered.**

**Thank you!**

***Mrs Mellors***

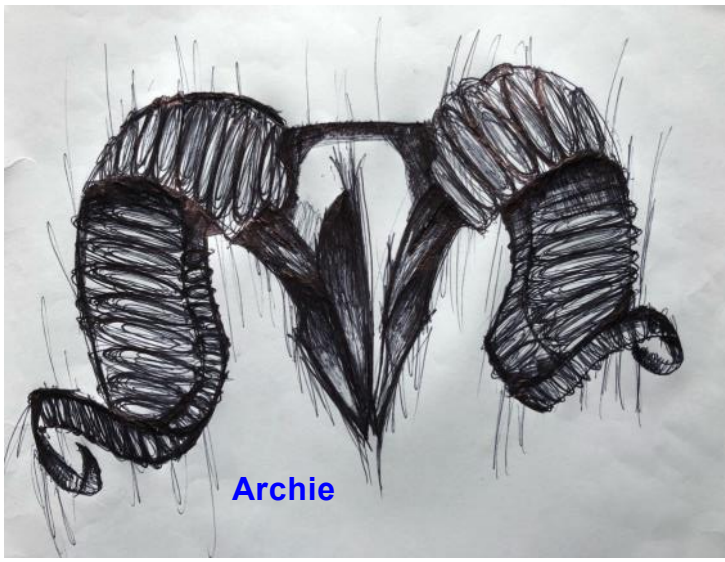
**https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/showyoucare**

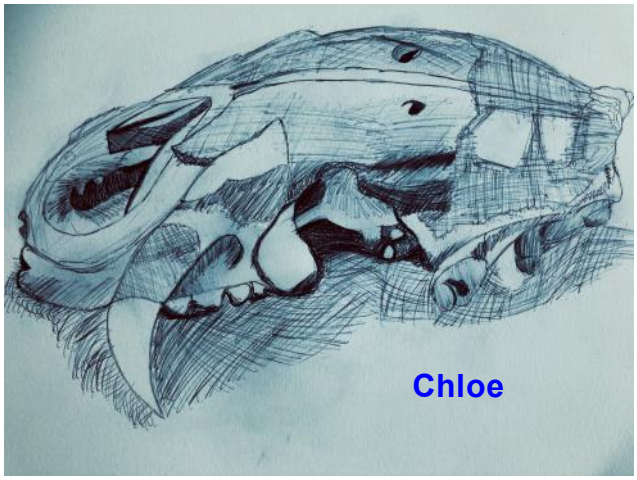
# Artwork of the Week

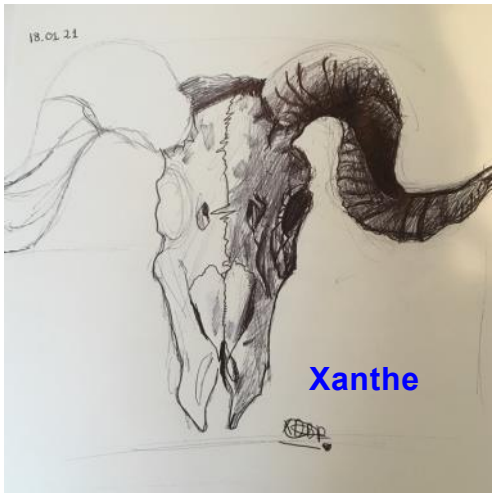
**Our year 7 artists have been developing their observational drawing through the investigation of drawing and tone using a biro/ballpoint pen.**

**There have been some excellent outcomes. Thank you.**

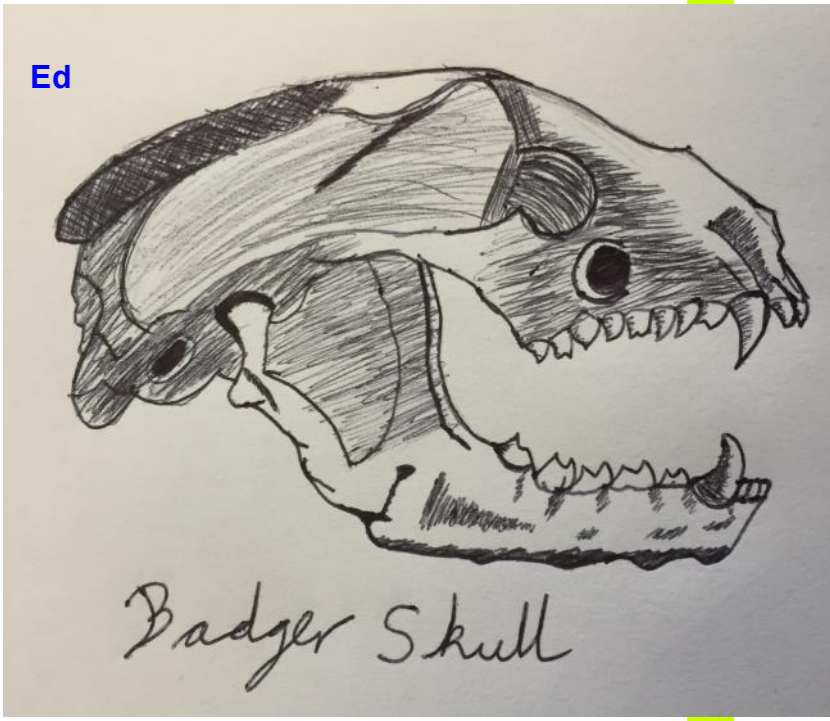
***Miss Nemeshanyi***

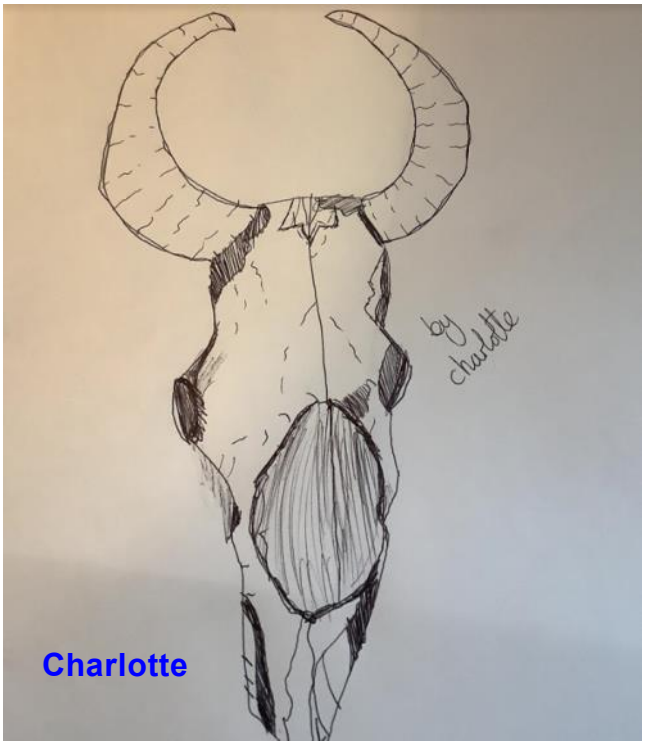




Diego



HM Government

NHS

# ENGLAND LOCKDOWN

# STAY AT HOME

**THE NEW VARIANT OF CORONAVIRUS IS SPREADING FAST.
WE ALL NEED TO PLAY OUR PART TO STOP THE SPREAD.**

### LEAVING HOME

You must not leave, or be outside of your home or garden, except for a very limited set of exemptions e.g. to shop for basic necessities, exercise, go to work if you cannot do so from home, or to escape risk of harm.

### MEETING OTHERS

You cannot leave your home to meet socially with anyone, except with your household or support bubble (if eligible to form one). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

### EXERCISE

You may exercise on your own, with your household or support bubble, or with one person from another household (when on your own). Stay 2 metres apart from anyone not in your household or support bubble.

### BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

Hospitality closed aside from sales by takeaway (until 11pm), click-and-collect, drive-through or delivery. Alcohol cannot be purchased through takeaway or click-and-collect from hospitality venues.

### RETAIL

Essential shops can open. Non-essential retail must close and can only run click-and-collect and delivery.

### WORK AND BUSINESS

Everyone must work from home unless they are unable to do so.

### EDUCATION

Early years settings open. Primary and secondary schools and colleges move to remote provision except for vulnerable children and children of critical workers. Most university students to move to remote learning.

### LEISURE AND SPORTING FACILITIES

Closed, with limited exceptions.

### ACCOMMODATION

Closed, with limited exceptions.

### PERSONAL CARE

Closed.

### ENTERTAINMENT

Closed.

### OVERNIGHT STAYS

You must not stay overnight away from home. Limited exceptions apply e.g. to stay with your support bubble.

### WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

Funerals of up to 30 people permitted. Weddings up to 6 people permitted in exceptional circumstances. Wakes and other linked ceremonial events of up to 6 permitted.

### PLACES OF WORSHIP

Places of worship can remain open and communal worship is permitted, but you must not mix with those outside your household or support bubble.

### TRAVELLING

You must stay at home. If you do leave home for a very limited set of exemptions, you should stay local in the village, town, or part of the city where you live where possible. Do not travel abroad unless an exemption applies.

### CLINICALLY EXTREMELY VULNERABLE

Shielding reintroduced across England. You should not travel to work, school, college or university and should limit the time you spend outside the home. You should only go out for medical appointments, exercise or if it is essential.

### CARE HOME VISITS

Visits can take place with arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, or behind windows. Close-contact indoor visits are not allowed. No visits will be permitted in the event of an outbreak but end of life visits are permitted in all circumstances.

**STAY HOME › PROTECT THE NHS › SAVE LIVES**

For more information go to:
**gov.uk/coronavirus**

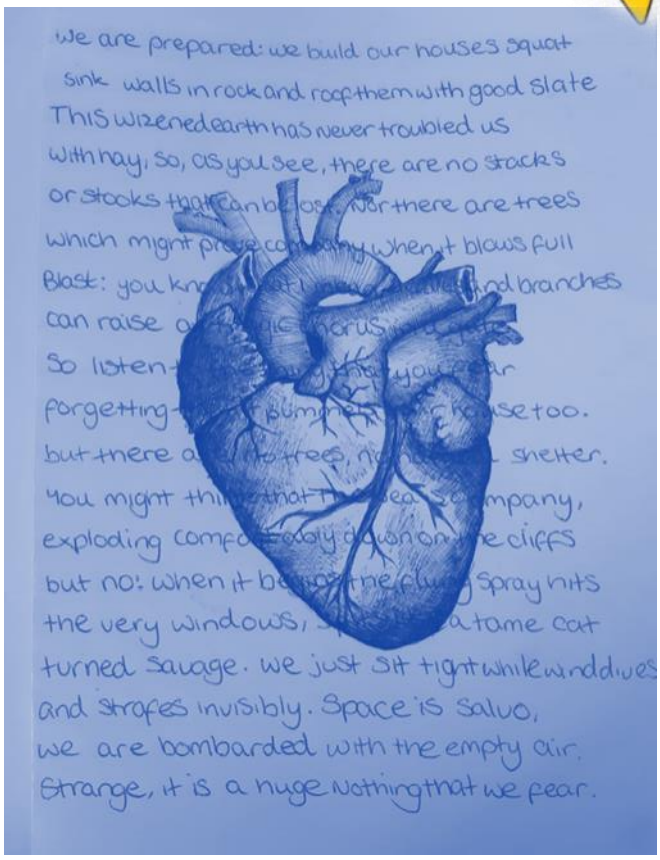
# English Work of the Week

My year 9 English group have had a list of tasks to choose from that were inspired by poems from the GCSE Anthology.

I have had some terrific work sent to me.

To highlight the outstanding work I have chosen two pieces; Ella's is a short story inspired by the poem *Exposure* by Wifred Owen and Thalia's is a piece of artwork inspired by the poem *Storm on the Island* by Seamus Heaney.

*Miss Watson*




*He stayed awake all night in a staircase. Unable to sleep in weather like this. He looked out longingly as the snow began to fall again, drifting against the windows, politely begging for entrance and then falling with disappointment to the ground. If he sits or lies down he will freeze so he just kept moving around until security moved him on in the morning. Staggering outside, he looked to the floor and let out a soft smile, there's just something beautiful about walking on snow that nobody else has walked on. It makes you believe you're special, even though you know you're not.*

*He wrapped himself in his blanket and sank into the hard, rotting bench beneath him. As the sun rose above the building, the people started flooding the streets. Snow flurries began to fall and they swirled around people's legs like house cats. The hours merging into one and before he knew it the misery of dusk was upon him. Snow-dazed, he searched for a place to hide from the cold before it pierced into him. Somewhere to stay and relive the day over again.*
*Ella, year 9.*