Alcester Academy WEEKLY BULLETIN

4th December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

We reach the end of another week at Alcester Academy together. Every Friday seems to arrive so quickly at present!

You'll have seen that our tier 3 position is being challenged right now. Remember that this is currently defined as 'high alert'. Please see the poster at the end of the bulletin for further guidance. In the interim I continue to be very grateful for the additional precautions that you are supporting us with. We remain Covid free again this week as a school and hope that we might continue with this until the end of term with this level of joint co-operation. Tuesday saw our best attendance this half term. I'll not jinx that too much by saying any more right now!

Lovely plans for the end of term are now well under way. You'll have seen various opportunities and letters being sent out now for the student enrichment activities. All activities are as Covid safe as risk assessments allow them to be and any planned visitors in school will have been tested before they arrive, or they will be supervised to keep a safe distance away from students.

We are asking for a £5 donation from parents of year 7-9 students please. The school is meeting the costs of all other activities as a bumper Christmas reward for students. I have added various tags and links to some of the treats for you on twitter; @AlcesterAcademy and Miss Buckthorp will arrange a power point presentation to show the students some of the detail of what is being arranged.

Term Dates

AUTUMN TERM 2020

School closed	*Monday 14th December – Teacher training day*
Autumn Term ends	Friday 18th December 2020 at 12.40pm

SPRING TERM 2021

School closed	*Monday 4th January 2021 – Teacher training day*
Spring Term begins	Tuesday 5th January 2021
Half Term	Monday 15th – Friday 19th February 2021
Back to school	Monday 22nd February 2021
Spring Term ends (Easter)	Thursday 1st April 2021

What are you contributing for?
In brief, here are some of the activities planned

Year 7	Christmas Dance Workshop Streamed version of *A Christmas Carol* Christmas crafting Streamed panto *Lost in Limboland* Virtual Bingo
Year 8	Christmas Dance Workshop Adrenaline Activities and Christmas Bounce Streamed version of *A Christmas Carol* Streamed panto *Lost in Limboland* Christmas Crafting
Year 9	Freestyle footballer presentation Visit from Spoz – former poet laureate; Graffiti artist workshop (Art/Photography students)
Year 10	Freestyle footballer presentation Graffiti artist workshop (Art/Photography students) Year 10 Christmas ramble Christmas Quiz
Year 11	Freestyle footballer presentation Graffiti artist workshop (Art/Photography students) Year 11 Christmas ramble Christmas Quiz

AND MUCH MORE THROUGHOUT THE WEEK!

Mr Badham is working with our Rock Academy students throughout the last week, we also have planned Christmas quizzes and bingo for our younger students; and virtual reward assemblies for all students too! Alongside this, you'll have seen how quickly our Academy admin staff are working to process the Warwick Castle ice skating trip too. This was only confirmed as a 'Covid allowed' possibility on Saturday 28th November . For the first year ever, this will be offered to all year groups (at separate times I might add!). We hope that where you are unable to combine with friends and extended family GO TO PAGE 4 >>>

Above: Warwick Castle for an ice skating trip.

Top right: A graffiti artist workshop for our art and photography students.

Right: A freestyle footballer presentation will take place in school.

Student Enrichment Activities

Left: Spoz— a former poet laureate will be running a poetry workshop.

Below: Wellbeing Christmas cracker crafting!

members to do these lovely things this year, we can try to do them as safely as possible in, and from school. All seating plans and bubble details will be meticulously kept for any activities happening. I appreciate that some families may have mixed views on us operating a trip right now. Please remember that each year group is considered a separate bubble and has done since September. In this respect, by running the trip, we are facing similar issues regarding the virus as we would be in school. As always, we are leaving this as your final decision however and presenting opportunities that your child may or may not want to take advantage of. This is absolutely your final choice.

I apologise that some parents were disappointed when the skating trip filled up so quickly in the lower year groups. Frankly, we were amazed to be offered so many places for students by Warwick Castle. We always carry a waiting list for trips and sadly, we do anticipate in the current circumstances that students may have to drop out as they might need to self-isolate. I must also warn parents and students that if we incur a positive case in school, this may also affect a bubble. I'm gutted to say this but it is the reality of the situation.

Miss Buckthorp worked most of last weekend (in between D of E visits!) on the final week plans for everyone; thank you!

Year 11s

We were overwhelmed with the students attendance to revision sessions last weekend. There were three different subject sessions over two days. Words simply are not enough to thank staff for doing this for the students. Mocks continued this week uninterrupted from Covid still! Saturday sessions (and Sunday sessions) now cease until further notice.

School Cloud Feedback – Video Parents' Evening Platform

Last night saw our first video parents' evening in action. I'm delighted to say with a few minor tweaks, it was extremely successful. Some of the feedback from parents was:

All of the teachers were organised and very well prepared. It was very relaxed yet we came away feeling well informed and very surprised that 5 minutes was more than enough time too!

Just a quick email to say how brilliant the virtual parents evening went. It worked great, 5 minutes was enough time for the teachers to explain about the subject and also if we had any questions.

We usually find parents evening very stressful as other parents do not stick to their time slots. Doing this virtually helped so much. The video was very clear and also very private.

Just wanted to say how well organised we thought parents evening was online. I have to say I think it was more private and informative than in a busy hall with lots of noise.

The virtual parents evening was great.

No queuing/waiting or diving in when it's not your turn.

The teachers were clear, concise and friendly (as always).

Personally, I'd prefer future parents evenings were online. Hopefully your staff found the system as convenient and easy to use as we did.

We are aware that parents are able to select 'all teachers' as an option. This is superb, for ease but means that you'll also have appointments made for all SLT staff and the SENCo, Mrs Bush. Whilst we are all always delighted to see you, just be aware of this in case you don't need a 1:1 chat with us all.
Testing your sound quality before the evening is definitely a recommendation as is clearing the household of any other broadband users whilst appointments are running.

Foodbank Collection

We raised a whopping 504kg of food together this year for the Christmas food bank collection. Huge thanks for your help with this last week. The volunteers couldn't fit everything in their cars! This topped 2019 when we still raised a staggering amount together - 450kg! It's great to think that local families will be benefitting from this great support.

Year 10 D of E

Year 10s faced the poor weather and enjoyed a walk around the Shipston area over the weekend, Braving the elements, I heard from one group who arrived to their destination two hours early on Day 1 and then walked 5km too far on Day 2! Oh dear! In the turmoil of finding themselves carrying heavy backpacks for a considerable time, I hope that our year 10s grew some resilience and team building skills whilst enjoying themselves considerably over the weekend making memories! Naturally I'm not neglecting the learning involved. Thanks to Mrs Evason, Miss Buckthorp and other adults who supported this.

Stars in our school

It is important during such a difficult time in schools, that we thank the support staff for their continued hard work. *Stars in our Schools* is a UNISON initiative that recognises the extra value from support staff. We are very grateful to them all.

Sponsor a snowflake local charity Christmas drive

This is now *open* for you on the School Gateway. Each snowflakes cost £3 per family to sponsor and we have decided that the proceeds will go to projects within Alcester at this time such as the Christmas Day dinner for vulnerable individuals or those on their own, and gifts to the various care homes for members of our community. Thank you if you've already sponsored a snowflake - there's still time if not. £360 raised so far! Thank you.

SAMSIC – thank you

Many thanks to our cleaning contractor, Samsic for donating many disposable face masks to school. We are really grateful.

Year 7s – Be Kind!

It's that time of year again where year 7, as homework, have been asked to either create a Christmas card for an elderly person, or bring in a small gift for them so that they can be passed on to a local Nursing Home.

Congratulations!

Very well done to Ollie, Bea and Issy on achieving their Gold *Lions Young Leader Award* recently for their hours of service to the community. We are proud of you.

Lourdes devices

We would like to encourage those students in years 9 and 11 with Lourdes IT devices to begin using these in class more. Mr Alexander conducted a superb student voice recently with students with the following outcomes:

- We will look into printing from devices to school printers.
- We will ask staff to encourage the use of the Official Academy Leased laptops in school.
- We will look at a self-help chat line, to see if this is of interest to the students.
- Use a questionnaire to support/encourage laptop use.
- And hold another Forum in January ?

Reports

Data reports for year 9 were published in time for Parents' Evening and years 7+8 will receive theirs next week. For years 8+9 parents, these are revised and will take a fresh approach following a recent parent forum. Year 10 parents and carers will receive a full, written report from subject teachers in the last week of term. And finally, year 11 updates will happen post mock examinations in January. I will write with further details of this event shortly.

Equipment reminder

We are struggling to keep up with replacing equipment in classrooms due to the expense of this. If your child/ren could have their own set of equipment right now, this would help out a lot. Thank you in advance. Black pens, pencils, ruler, pencil crayons, safe scissors, a glue stick and a rubber would all be very helpful. I know that my maths colleagues would advocate a good old fashioned maths set as a Christmas gift too please!

Uniform

Just a reminder that we do not, and have never, allowed piercings in school other than 1 stud in each ear. Plastic nose studs are not an alternative to this either.

As the colder warmer now creeps in and we have to have windows open, it may well be advisable to get the students to layer up! A plain t-shirt under the school shirt, then the school jumper and blazer might be an option for students. I apologise that we find ourselves in this situation. I appreciate that positive learning is hard when children are cold!

Coronavirus Updates

Warwickshire are still advocating Hands, Face and Space as measures to support the current situation.

Our tier status will be reviewed every fortnight but there are definite indications that the 7 day rolling average number of cases has decreased during the second lockdown in our area. I appreciate that contradicts our tier three status but I think that we're are all aware that we are joined with other geographical areas that have experienced worse cases.

The first community mass testing site should be opened next week in North Warwickshire; Water Orton. This will see rapid lateral flow testing (LFT) that will be considered for schools once the success has been assessed.

Warwickshire Welfare Scheme

Please call 0800 408 1448 for support for vulnerable families with paying bills during this difficult time.

Warwickshire Family Information Scheme (FIS)

https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/children-families
Please sign up for the FIS newsletters in order to keep up to date.
FIS can support families with:

- PIP
- DLA
- FSM
- Food Bank Vouchers (other than for school holidays)
- Charity applications for household equipment
- Housing
- Parental contact/conflict

Tel: 01926 742274
Email: fis@warwickshire.gov.uk

family information service warwickshire

The reality of Christmas

Just a reminder from PHE that individuals in close contact of a positive case after 10th December must then self-isolate through the Christmas period. I'm sad to remind us of that right now.

Confirmed cases

I haven't reported for a few weeks but any positive Covid cases must still be reported to me please head@alcesteracademy.org.uk Thank you. We then work on identifying the close contacts and will update parents accordingly as soon as we can. Details for what to do over the Christmas period will be issued via the bulletin at the end of term. We will still have an obligation to be informed up to a certain point and identify close contact if required.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend. Best wishes,

Sarah Mellors—Headteacher

Department of Philosophy, Theology and Ethics

Mindfulness & Wellbeing
How to stay happy and healthy during the winter season

Winter has always been my favourite season. Maybe because it reminds me of childhood Christmases, collecting up leaves from our giant oak tree as a child on a frosty Sunday morning, or my love of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and snowy Narnia. For me, winter is magical and full of possibilities, but not everyone feels like this.

For some, the dark nights, grey skies and lack of sunlight can lead to a feeling of lethargy and even depression. If you are one of these people, here are some tips to help you beat the winter blues.

Learn to love the winter landscape

With a little effort, you can really learn to appreciate the winter season. Reframing how you think about this time of year can make such a difference. Wrapping up warm, and taking long walks can help you feel connected with nature and part of something greater than yourself. You could go alone and appreciate the stillness of a white winter sky, the glistening frost beneath your feet and the muted colours that look so beautiful during the winter. Alternatively, you could go with a friend, take a flask of your favourite hot drink, and go hiking across a dramatic landscape. Even taking the time to stand in your garden with a cup of hot chocolate watching the steam rise up, curling into the cold, can be peaceful and incredibly relaxing.

Find calm and space amongst the madness

Christmas can create a lot of stress and anxiety for many people. In the quest for a perfect Christmas, we can forget that the things we remember about Christmases past, are just relaxing and spending time with the people we love. We can become so fraught with the spending, the cooking, the cleaning, the socialising and all the rest of the expectations we put on ourselves, that by the time we sit down and relax we can't properly enjoy ourselves. Opt for a simple Christmas. Scale back the socialising and the expense, and just enjoy the simple act of laughing and spending time with friends and family.

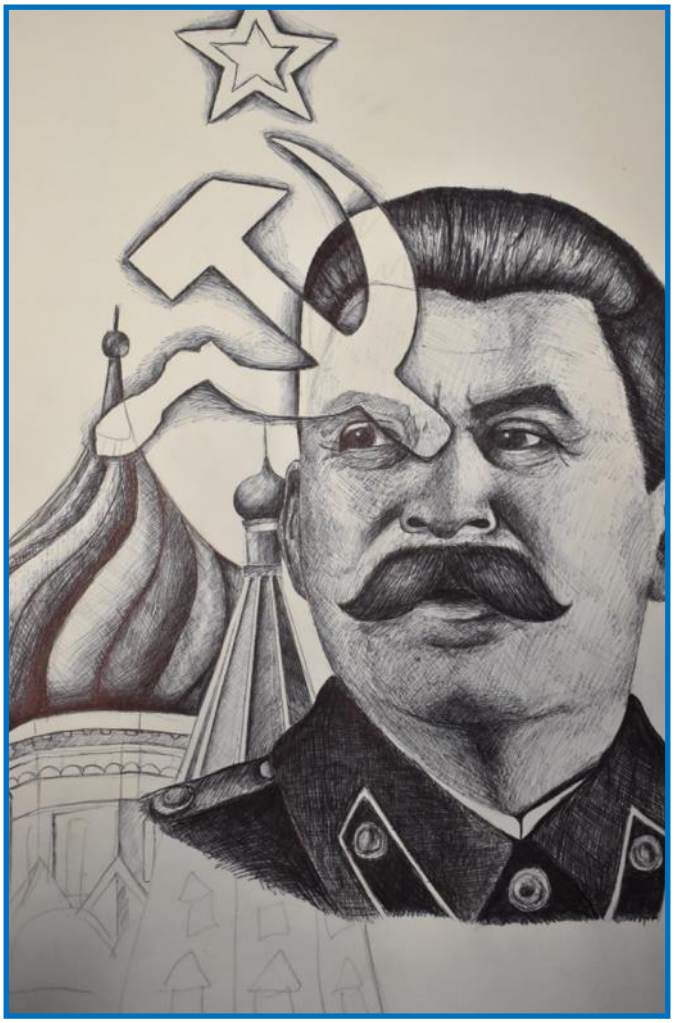
Nurture yourself

This winter, rather than indulging in all of the excesses of the season, why not take the time to really look after yourself. Try eating more fresh food- fruit and vegetables, organic where possible, and cutting down on the usual indulgences. Go for brisk walks, get some regular exercise and really consider your physical wellbeing. The short days might not encourage us to be active, but there is so much to be gained if we try to increase our time outdoors and to just move around more. Winter is the perfect time to retreat from the world, and nurture yourself. If exercise isn't for you, try starting a meditation routine. Just 20minutes a day is enough to fit into your morning or evening, and will make such a difference to your emotional state of mind and coping mechanisms. Regular meditation is also proven to improve your happiness and contentment levels. Curl up with a good book, create a spa day at home, start a journal, or just sit quietly listening to your favourite music. Bake, craft, whatever makes you feel happy, do more of that!

Care for your planet

Even the most environmentally aware amongst us, can lose our way at Christmas. The stress of purchasing last minute presents, covered in plastic, the excessive food that doesn't get eaten, the mountain of sparkly decorations that will end up in landfill – all of these things are incredibly damaging to our planet. This Christmas, why not decide to look after our planet a little bit more. Rather than wasting money on cheap, mass produced products and decorations, why not sit down with friends or family and make presents with meaning. Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest are full of fantastic ideas. It will be fun, relaxing and you can feel guilt-free knowing that the planet will be smiling too :)

Artwork of the Week



This week's work is a stunning drawing by Thalia in year 9. This is part of the GCSE Conflict project, where students incorporate imagery from their chosen conflict, using layering, transparency and varied tone using pen. A very difficult technique executed superbly. Well done Thalia!

epraise news

Top Three Students this week...
1st—Year 9—Kaitlyn (Billesley)
2nd—Year 9—Issy (Billesley)
3rd—Year 7—Harvey (Billesley)

Topping the charts in the other years…
Year 8—Elliot (Ragley)
Year 10—Dan (Ragley)
Year 11—Millie (Billesley)

We are really enjoying this new system and the excitement of watching the students make progress. Well done to all. *Mrs Mellors*

Wonders Beyond Numbers
Christmas Lecture

Johnny Ball Christmas Lecture
Wednesday 9th December
6:30pm
On-Line
Please register at
https://lnkd.in/dfuAgGh

Johnny will feature amazing stories from our magical Mathematical past, like how to calculate the distance to the horizon, find the square root of absolutely any number easily and how long Archimedes lever would need to be for him to move the earth.

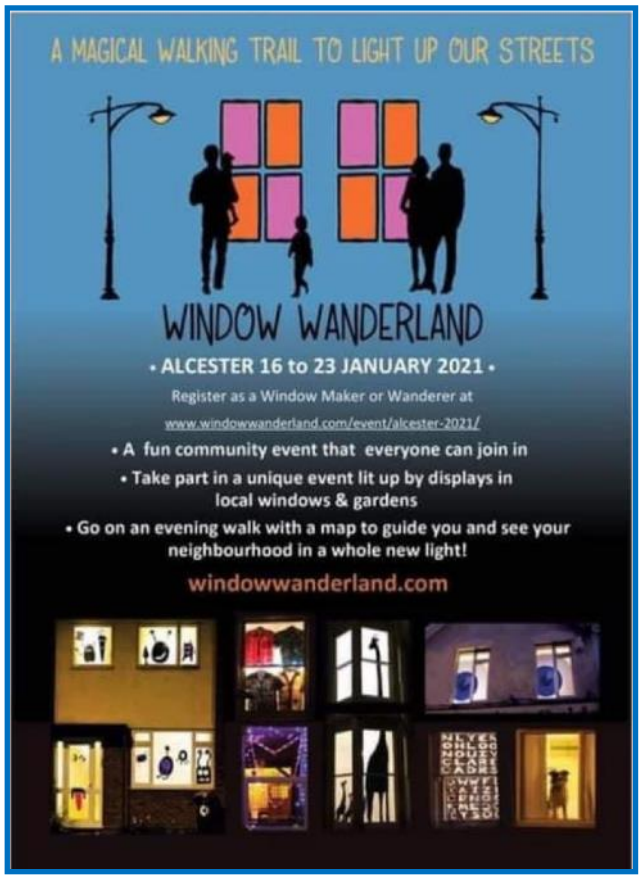
He will also explain how one famous explorer ended up further away from his goal than when he started and show why the Isaac Newton apple story is just rubbish and how gravity really works.

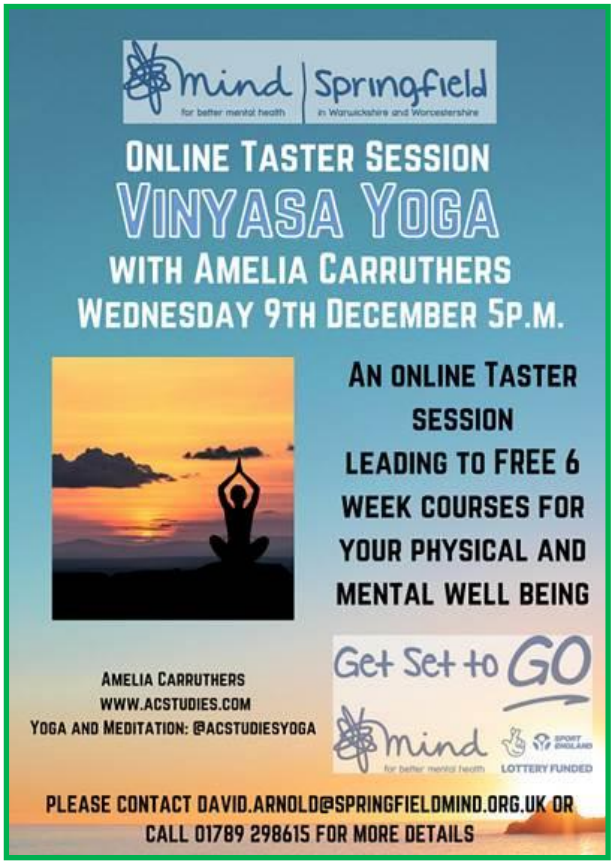
Sponsor a Snowflake

After the success of the Poppy Appeal, we are asking if you would like to *Sponsor a Snowflake* for £3 per family.

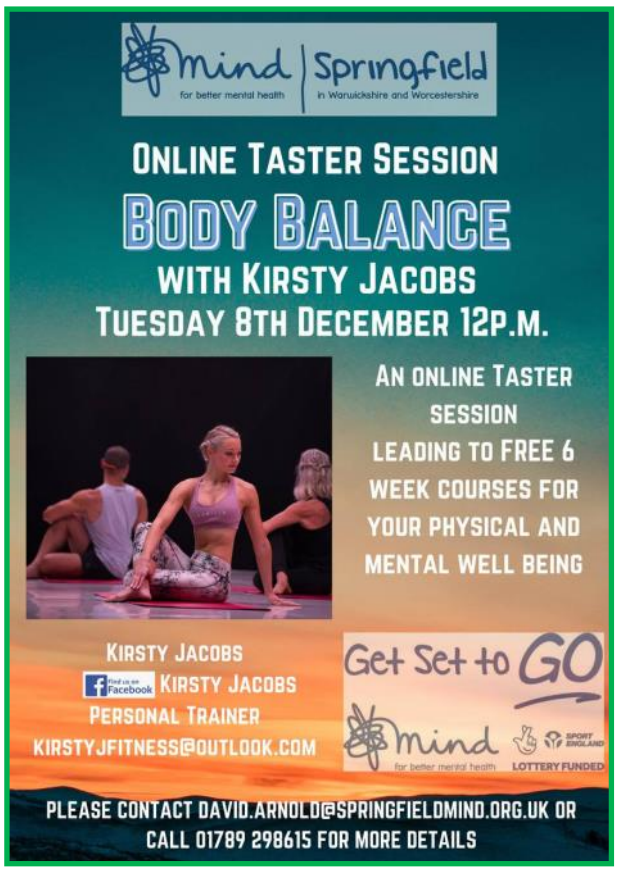
These will be displayed on our trees outside the front of school and proceeds will go to selected local groups and charities.

These are available on the School Gateway for you to purchase.


A MAGICAL WALKING TRAIL TO LIGHT UP OUR STREETS
WINDOW WANDERLAND
• ALCESTER 16 to 23 JANUARY 2021 •
Register as a Window Maker or Wanderer at
www.windowwanderland.com/event/alcester-2021/
• A fun community event that everyone can join in
• Take part in a unique event lit up by displays in local windows & gardens
• Go on an evening walk with a map to guide you and see your neighbourhood in a whole new light!
windowwanderland.com


mind Springfield
for better mental health
in Warwickshire and Worcestershire
ONLINE TASTER SESSION
VINYASA YOGA
WITH AMELIA CARRUTHERS
WEDNESDAY 9TH DECEMBER 5P.M.
AN ONLINE TASTER SESSION LEADING TO FREE 6 WEEK COURSES FOR YOUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL BEING
AMELIA CARRUTHERS
WWW.ACSTUDIES.COM
YOGA AND MEDITATION: @ACSTUDIESYOGA
Get Set to GO
LOTTERY FUNDED
PLEASE CONTACT DAVID.ARNOLD@SPRINGFIELDMIND.ORG.UK OR CALL 01789 298615 FOR MORE DETAILS

The Air Ambulance Service
Virtual Santa Fun Run
12th – 13th December 2020
Walk, jog or run either 1.5k or 5k anywhere you like to raise funds for our lifesaving service
Tickets
Individual: £10
Family ticket: £25
Includes a Santa hat and beard for each participant
Join us for a fun, festive event with your family, friends or local club** Sign up at theairambulanceservice.org.uk/santa-fun-run
0300 3045 999
fundraising@theairambulanceservice.org.uk
*Includes two adults and any amount of children as long as they are all from the same household.
**Please ensure you are following the most up to date government guidance when completing any activity that requires you to leave your home or have contact with others.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ONLINE TASTER SESSION
BODY BALANCE
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KIRSTYJFITNESS@OUTLOOK.COM
Get Set to GO
LOTTERY FUNDED
PLEASE CONTACT DAVID.ARNOLD@SPRINGFIELDMIND.ORG.UK OR CALL 01789 298615 FOR MORE DETAILS

MFL Department updates

Many thanks to all students in years 7,8 and 9 who entered the Routes into Languages *Christmas Traditions in France and Germany* competition. There were many excellent entries. The following students have had their entries sent for judging at Aston University. We will also issue them with prizes and certificates in school.
Congratulations to:

Charlotte
Hannah
Duncan
Chloe
Mia
Archie
Chloe
Ed
Katherine
Carys
Holly

Mrs Weatherley

Language Idiom of the Week

English: To have a lot on

French: Avoir du pain sur la planche
Literal meaning: To have bread on the board
German: viel am Hals haben
Literal meaning: Have a lot on their necks

School Attendance — up to 3.12.20

Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11	Whole School
96.6%	94.2%	94.9%	92.5%	93.4%	94.4%

This week's top tutors per year group — well done!

7TY - 99.3%, 8MA - 98.4%, 9AN - 98.8%, 10RO - 98.6% and 11BA - 99.2%

HM Government

NHS

TIER 3

VERY HIGH ALERT

FROM 2 DEC

MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY

No mixing of households indoors, or most outdoor places, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six in some outdoor public spaces (e.g. parks, public gardens).

BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS

Hospitality is closed, with the exception of sales by takeaway, drive-through or delivery.

RETAIL

Open.

WORK AND BUSINESS

Everyone who can work from home should do so.

EDUCATION

Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Childcare, other supervised activities for children, and childcare bubbles permitted.

INDOOR LEISURE

Open. Group activities and classes should not take place.

ACCOMMODATION

Closed (with limited exceptions)

PERSONAL CARE

Open.

OVERNIGHT STAYS

We advise against overnight stays other than with household or support bubble.

WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships and wakes; 30 for funerals. Wedding receptions not permitted.

ENTERTAINMENT

Indoor venues closed.

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.

TRAVELLING

Avoid travelling outside your area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply. Reduce the number of journeys where possible. Plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble.

EXERCISE

Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but people should avoid higher-risk contact activity. Group exercise activities and sports indoors should not take place, unless with your household or bubble. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.

RESIDENTIAL CARE

COVID-secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor/airtight visits only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).

LARGE EVENTS

Events should not take place. Drive-in events permitted.

Find out what support you can get

For example, if you're out of work, need to get food, or want to take care of your mental health.

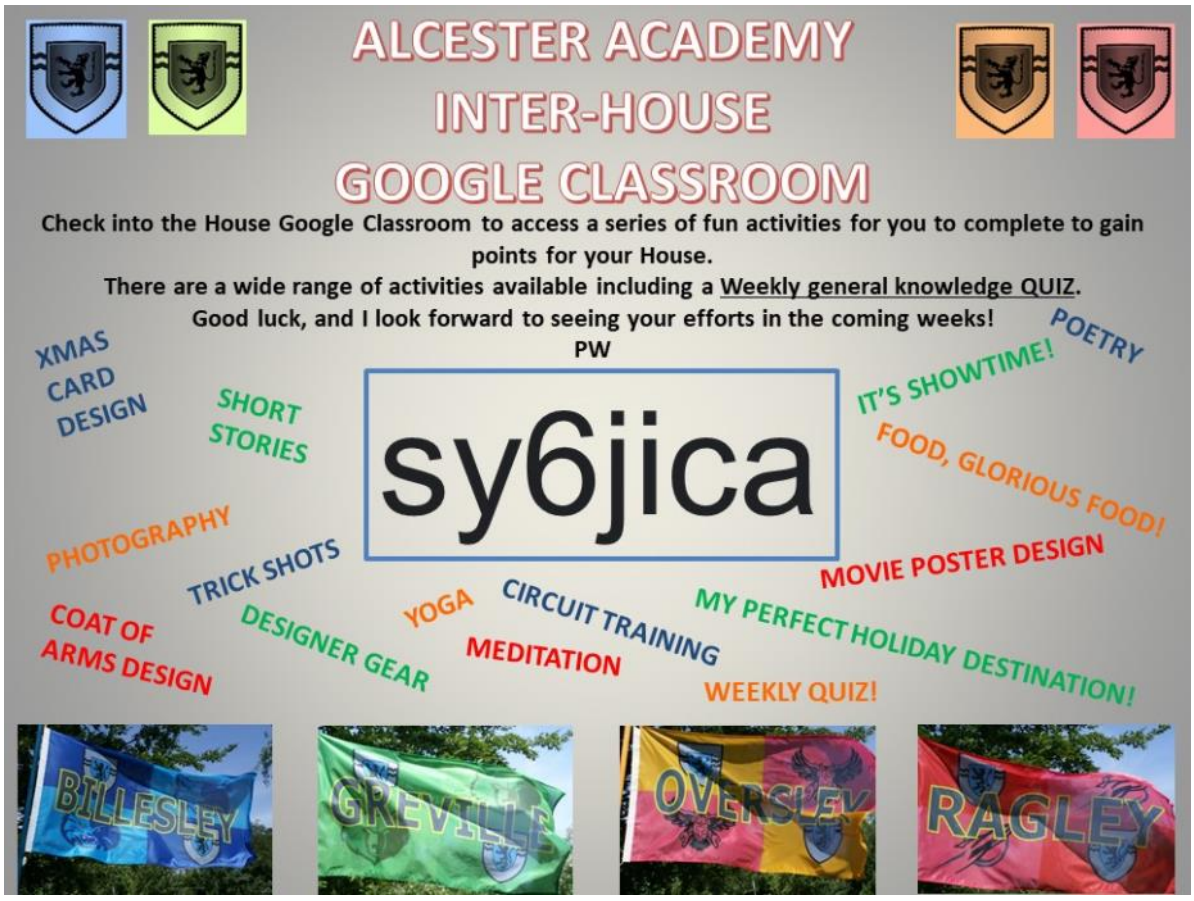
gov.uk/coronavirus

If you have any coronavirus symptoms:

A high temperature • A new, continuous cough
A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

Get a test and stay at home

For more information and detailed guidance visit:
gov.uk/coronavirus

HANDS FACE SPACE

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