



Principal's Weekly Update

Friday 5th March 2021

We Are Ready...

On my first day as Principal, I spoke to the staff about the concept of the 'search for a timid trapeze artist.' They are hard to find because there aren't any. Trapeze artists have to commit. They must make a conscious decision before leaping and trust that their partner is there to catch them.

Likewise, the entire John Wallis community has embraced the return to school in such a positive manner. This week over a thousand students have come to the Academy to be tested prior to school re-opening next week. We have collectively committed to make this work for our children and young people and we will do so!

It is always easier to commit if you have confidence in your 'trapeze partner.' The staff at this Academy have worked tirelessly throughout lockdown and put the same level of focus and attention to detail into re-opening again.

We have reworked our systems and procedures so that the Senior Leaders, the Heads of Year and Pastoral staff will be consistently in corridors and around the Academy providing 'classroom door' support for students.

Re-establishing routine and expectations will be essential for a successful return. Pupils and students will be supported at every step of the way.

Teachers have been busy planning lessons that will provide the opportunity for pupils and students to talk, discuss, listen, re-engage with others. The academic learning has not stopped throughout lockdown and will continue to be a focus but also a focus on social skills and turn taking.

The sheer number of students who have come to the Academy for their tests has shown a 'leap of faith' from our students and the entire community. Therefore, the message from us is simple...

We are ready and we cannot wait to see you all again!

Damian McBeath,
Principal



Anxiety and Worry

If your child is feeling anxious or worried about returning to school, this is perfectly normal. These emotions are not something from which we should ignore or hide.

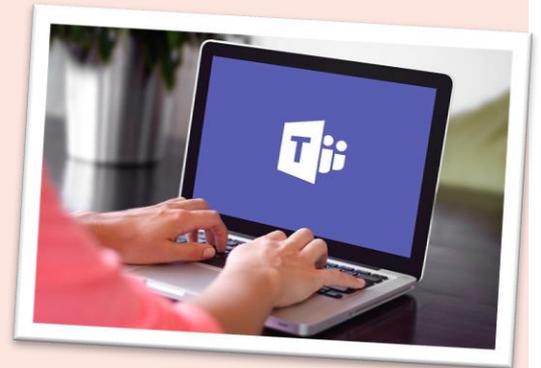
The advice from NHS is that listening is important. Let your child talk to you about their worries.

The NHS also state that building routines will also help. Which is why, when pupils and students return our focus will be on supporting them back into routine as quickly as possible.

Farewell Teams!

Not quite! In the last few months, we have made significant strides in the use of technology within the Academy. We will be reviewing the 'lessons learned' and how we can use these to enhance and improve our offer. For example, lots of parents have stated they have preferred meeting teachers via Teams and in future we may be able to offer a choice of Live or Virtual.

For now, though, I am sure students (and teachers) will be quite happy to close their laptops and say a fond farewell to Teams for as long as possible.



The Academy laptops that have been distributed throughout the community will remain with pupils and students for the upcoming term to ensure access to learning, should the need arise.

We will review this at the start of the Summer term.

A Message from The Chaplain

This weekend marks one year since I last attended a football match. Those who know me well know that I love to watch West Ham, both home and away so this has been really hard. In fact, my wife had a mental health wellbeing check at her workplace recently and when her interviewer said it would be good for me to get back to football, my wife commented that it would be good for everyone in the family for me to get back to football. Good mental well-being includes having the belief that we have strengths we can draw on in times of challenge. Having self-belief and recognising our strengths can help situations feel less stressful, and more manageable. Recently lots of things may have felt out of our control. At such times, it is important to remember the things that we can control, and the strengths and the skills we can draw on to make a difference. Henry Ford, the car manufacturer, once said, "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't - you're right."

Mr I Rich, Academy Chaplain (Irich@thejohnwallisacademy.org)

TJWA Student Cook Book



GCSEs/A-Levels and Vocational Exams

Last week, the Department for Education and Ofqual confirmed plans for replacing GCSE/A-Level and Vocational Examinations with Teacher Assessed Grades.

We will be meeting with and writing to all students in the exam Year Groups early next week to explain the process and how teachers will do this.



Local Update COVID-19

Ashford

39 cases per 100,000 people in the week
22nd Feb –28th Feb 2021.

The average area in England had 74

(source Department of Health and Social Care, via BBC.co.uk)