



St. Richard's Catholic College



A National Teaching School, a National Support School and a High Performing Specialist Science College



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29th June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you and your family had a lovely weekend and I really do hope that pupils took time on Friday to switch off their phones and computers to do something restful, rewarding and refreshing. Lockdown drags on but, at the heart of it, is keeping everyone safe so do keep reminding your son/daughter to socially distance and engage in regular hand hygiene. Having made such progress, it would be a terrible shame if we suddenly found ourselves in complete lockdown again, particularly as we approach the long-awaited summer holidays.

I am delighted to begin this letter by thanking you for participating in Sophie's Secret Postcard Auction which took place on Saturday. It was an inspiring day seeing famous and not-so famous artists competing for a strong bid for their piece of art work designed in memory of Sophie Maria Taylor who loved to draw and paint. One thousand, one hundred postcards took a long time to catalogue but it was done with grace, panache and enthusiasm by our Art teacher, Ms Pennington, who really enjoyed opening up the postcards as they poured in daily, describing it as "just like Christmas!" She expressed astonishment not only at the quantity but the quality and the numbers of postcards that came from far afield. Once again, this was a fundraising event that surpassed all expectations in terms of engagement and money raised. I am really proud and pleased to tell you that the total money raised currently stands at over £31,000! An astonishing figure in these difficult times. I know the Royal Marsden Cancer Trust will be absolutely delighted to receive this sum and they will certainly put it to great use.

On behalf of everyone in the community, I would like to thank Ms Pennington for organising this wonderful auction for such a great cause. As you can imagine, it has taken hours of her personal time and there is still plenty to do with 1,100 postcards needing to be posted to all the lucky bidders. Can I thank you and your child/children for any art work donated, which to me were works of love in thanksgiving for Sophie's life and the work of the Royal Marsden Cancer Trust. Thank you as well to all those who bought postcards or a copy of the Art Book created with all the postcards included (these are still available to order at <https://www.sophiespostcard.com/catalogue/catalogue-2020>). Thank you very much indeed: the response has been both over-whelming and moving, and is a wonderful way to mark Sophie's memory.

'Live' teaching / Remote learning / Google Meets

On a different note, live teaching began today for pupils in Years 7-9 and in option subjects for Year 9. Please see letter [here](#) in case you have forgotten to give permission for your son/daughter to participate. Please be aware that pupils should continue to use Edulink and Google Classroom to access school work which will continue to be sent remotely, alongside 'live' teaching. Pupils also need to sign up for their Google Meets this week with Form Tutors and their new Pastoral Leaders, so that any concerns can be addressed. Year 10 pupils continue to attend in great numbers; this



week's focus being Geography, History and option subjects. Parents/Carers are reminded that the pupils are able to stay on after 2.15pm to continue with remote education or to receive face-to-face support from staff who are in school on that day. Performing Arts/Music pupils are making the most of the opportunity, well done to them.

British Dyslexia Association

Trying to choose the right technology to support your child's education can be challenging. To offer some support and guidance, the British Dyslexia Association has teamed up with Myles Pilling to host a FREE webinar for parents. This session aims to take you through some of the options for assistive technology and demonstrate ways to motivate dyslexic children when learning at home. Please click [here](#) to book your free place.

Summer Food Fund

I am really pleased to report that the Government are now providing eligible pupils with a £90 voucher to cover the 6-week holiday period. The Guidance states that 'any child currently in receipt of benefits-related free school meals or who becomes eligible during the summer term is eligible for the Covid Summer Food Fund which means that Year 11 pupils who meet the criteria will receive the funding too'. Further details to follow.

Well-Being

The School Health Service continue to develop its service to pupils and parents. Please see [here](#). Additionally, you are reminded of the Pupil Support booklet re-distributed in May which signposts you and your child/children to a range of resources and services, if needed. Well-Being is often raised as a topic by Pastoral Leaders in their weekly assemblies and, of course, you all have access to the Action Your Potential webinars. Below is a series of videos from Andrew at Action Your Potential, produced for pupils and parents, talking through the science of how our brains will be responding to all the changes and what we can do about it:

[Video 1: Neuro Ninja In the Upside Down \(1\): How Are You Feeling?](#)

[Video 2: Neuro-Ninja In the Upside Down \(2\): So Much Change](#)

[Video 3: Neuro-Ninja In the Upside Down \(3\): Prediction Fail!!!](#)

[Video 4: Neuro-Ninja In the Upside Down \(4\): Cognitive Distortions and Cake](#)

[Video 5: Neuro-Ninja In The Upside Down \(5\): Cake Every Day!](#)

Black Lives Matter Movement

Two weeks ago, I shared with you the Catholic Bishops of England's statement on the importance of respect and love for all our fellow human beings. Today, I would like to share, with you [here](#) a document called 'A Parent's Guide to Black Lives Matter' so that you can engage in positive and open discussions about race and racism with your child/children. I do hope you find the document useful and that it supports our pupils to see that racial inequalities do exist but they must play their part in ensuring they do not exist in **our** school, homes or wider community. We all need to celebrate cultural differences and speak out against racism/injustice if the world is going to be a happier, safer and richer place for all races, including your children, to enjoy in the future.

Two former pupils recently visited St Richard's to talk about their experiences belonging to minority ethnic groups. Whilst they loved school, sadly their experience, at times, by a minority of pupils affected their self-esteem deeply. Sharing their experiences openly and honestly will ensure that the staff and I can work to 'stamp out' subtle name-calling and innuendo, in particular, and additionally review some school policies. I have to say that I was shocked and saddened by some of the name-calling in a school community where respect for other people is central and where the daily message is 'One Race: the Human Race'. However, we can never be complacent and think that 'it

does not happen here'; we must continually be working to create a just and equal society in our school, homes and neighbourhoods.

Virtual Sports Week

Plans are underway for our virtual sports week which takes place from Saturday, 4th July to Sunday, 12th July. Further details will follow soon. Please encourage your son/daughter to get involved so that their House is well represented and in with a chance of winning the House Cup for this academic year. Good luck to all participants. Please also encourage your son/daughter to continue to participate in the Spec Savers Sussex Games – as a school we are doing well but it would be good to be in the top three regularly and to be the overall winners!

Finally, can I wish you and your child/children a really positive week. Pupils are reminded to organise their time to include reading, school work and leisure activities (including the Passion Projects). The second pupil profile will be emailed home tomorrow, hopefully highlighting more ambers and greens for the majority of pupils.

My very best wishes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Cronin'.

Miss D Cronin
Principal