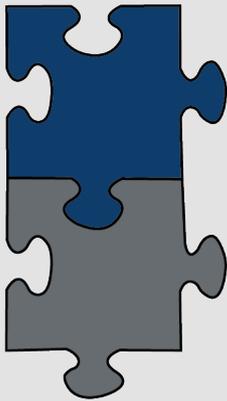


One Trust : One Team

The Newsletter of the Aquinas Church of England Education Trust

Special Edition

Staying Connected



I am delighted to welcome you to the first edition of the Aquinas newsletter. If ever there was a time when we needed to communicate and be close to one another, even when we can't be physically close, it is now. So the theme for this special edition, *Staying Connected*, is a highly appropriate one.

There are so many exciting things going on across the Trust that we wanted to share them with you. This will be the first of many One Trust : One Team newsletters to come that shares the work of the Trust and keeps you updated on important events and information. Amidst all the difficulties that we may be facing currently there is also joy and there is a strength in knowing no one is ever alone at Aquinas. Just reading what each of our schools is doing to communicate with each other and their communities proves this.

It was Winston Churchill who said "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give". I am immensely grateful for everything that you give every day to help the children, young people and families in our Trust.

Stay safe, stay well and enjoy the read.

Kathy Griffiths

Chief Executive



Spotlight on...

In this special edition we wanted to give you a taste of what each school is doing to support its school and wider community.

Bishop Justus:

The continuation of daily worship as a community. Shared with students and staff (including the Aquinas central team) - This is sent out to all staff each morning at the same time via email and to students and parents via the ShowMyHomework (SMHW) system which is used by the school to set daily work. Feedback has been particularly positive. Worship often feeds into our twitter feed, a prime example being our #StephenLawrenceDay work which we carry out each year, this time being done remotely during worship and lesson 1 on Wednesday 22nd April.

Even more regular Newsletters. We have continued to publish a regular newsletter to parents and students via the website, email and via SMHW. These have increased in their frequency during this lockdown time. Each edition can be found on our website under 'Newsletter Archive'. Each newsletter contains some useful suggestions for coping with lockdown, surveys for parents to complete, news, challenges and online safety tips amongst other things. Alongside this has been a series of Headteacher/ SLT letters to parents, staff and separately to students. Many are aimed at our key Year 11 and 13 groups as we pledged to keep them fully updated on the latest information about examinations, with others aimed at the whole community.

The School Contact Pledge. Staff at the school made a pledge very early on during lockdown to keep in regular contact with all students. Much of this happened immediately with SEND staff, Year Coordinators, the Safeguarding team and Learning Directors playing a crucial role in telephoning a range of students and their parents.

Our new Term 5 initiative means every single student will have been called by a member of staff (usually their form tutor) by the time we get half way through the term.

Cudham:

Reverend Musson is being a terrific support to the whole school community, joining in with our fun and games and ensuring staff/families are supported.

Being a small school community, we are regularly in contact with our families and staff. Teachers are in at least weekly contact with the children and we have all made cards for them which were very well received. Our parent reps have been invaluable in ensuring messages are spread. We are a very close knit team, supporting each other and celebrating daily events that make us happy or offering prayerful support when needed.



We have been colouring our beautiful entrance arch. As children come past on their walks they can colour another brick in. We are also displaying a rainbow coloured child for each family remembering them in our prayers for a safe and healthy return to school in the not too distant future.

Our weekly song videos are going down a treat; unfortunately (or fortunately) none of us has been spotted yet so we haven't been zoomed off to Hollywood!

You've Got A Friend In Me: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aS_WSVyetcY

Bare Necessities: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8u_HaPi4nH4

The following is the link to the Cudham sing song to support the FeedNHS work. Matt Lucas has already replied to the tweet and called us Cudham Potatoes! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDD3Lbjme2w>

We have also started presenting a breakfast time news (well we've done it once!) which has been very well received by the parents. It has top tips for them on how not to worry about the education of the children at this present time, and to put health and wellbeing at the heart of whatever they choose to do. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-SPrRRnNyI>

Keston:

We held our Easter competitions remotely, with parents sending in photos for judging. Prizes are waiting in school for our return, as long as no-one eats them first! Our 'What's App' groups are working well for chatting and school information. We've also been taking the opportunity to do some of the jobs around the school which we don't always have time to get round to doing normally, like going through old paperwork and tidying the staffroom!



Parish:

We email our weekly update newsletter to all stakeholders which includes: news, advice and tips, signposting to resources, a weekly challenge, and a chance to share positive things. We are also uploading video clips to the website weekly to keep the children motivated.

Staff have a weekly update and round up of what's happening to keep everyone informed and we are phoning to check in with them. We are also planning a virtual coffee morning.

Keeping in touch with parents and pupils:

We have mailboxes for parent/staff correspondence where parents ask about home learning and share their children's work. This is really strengthening our parent/pupil/staff relationships.

Key pupils and parents are phoned weekly by the SLT, SENCO and family worker. All pupils are phoned every 3 weeks by their class teacher. The boost this has given to parents, pupils and staff has been fantastic.

Rye College:

We conducted a remote study parental survey prior to Easter to measure responses to the work being set. This allowed us to: refine our approach with amount of work and resources provided, respond to individual needs around access, and set up an ICT loan scheme.

We regularly issue focused letters that are underpinned by clear, factual and unambiguous information. Also, we are trying to avoid over-loading families with too many links/resources/statements and a staff quiz is being planned via zoom.

Rye Community Primary:

All of our school and nursery families are being called regularly by teachers and the inclusion team, with the majority of parents being called weekly. We are providing fair share boxes to some of our families and delivering them to their doorsteps. We are also issuing food bank vouchers and are a drop off point for donations.

Families are interacting through our online class learning platforms (DoJo and Purple Mash), and we are being sent in videos, photos and work. One of our year 6 teachers has a YouTube channel where he explains maths concepts and our Early Years Team are pre-recording stories and sharing them on the learning platforms so that the children can still have a story read to them daily.

St George's:

We are keeping in touch via emails, Zoom, Microsoft Team, plenty of phone calls, Houseparty, WhatsApp and precious times in the Hub when you get the opportunity to have those face to face meetings with the staff. The wellbeing section of the BBC bitesize has some very good ideas and the support, comradeship and contact with all the HTs has been an absolute bonus.

St John's:

St John's is jogging along as usual. Most of the staff are at home writing reports or making resources. We've been trying to contact all of our families to check on their wellbeing, but most don't answer immediately - they really have to go further afield these days to just get the basics and so have to be out of the house for longer. We're planning to hold a 'World Champion Games' to make up for the Olympic Games being cancelled. The church food bank delivers every Wednesday and we're doing a thriving business with families coming to collect... they really value having someone else other than the family (or the cashiers at Lidl) to talk to.

St Mark's:

Our main contact has been through our new Google Classrooms where work is set and remotely handed in; this is working really well. We regularly Zoom as an SLT as it's so much easier than creating email chains. Our Key Workers book in through SchoolComms which all SLT can access. This is a simple booking system via the phone app.

St Nicholas:

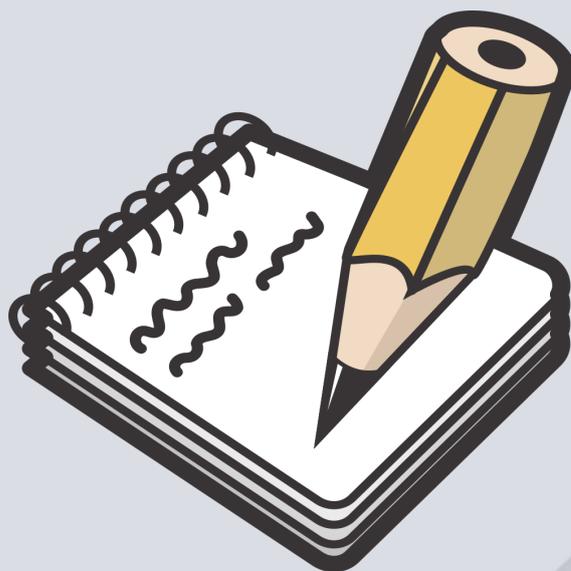
Communication has never been such a priority for our school community. Like all the other schools in the Trust, we are maintaining regular communications with our families, but what we have loved the most is receiving work from our children through Purple Mash. Lockdown is affecting our families emotionally, and to cheer them up, we are about to launch our own YouTube channel. We are busy collecting vlogs and art work to share with our school community. Our vicars are also getting on board too and are preparing their collective worship videos! On Monday we will be holding our first ever staff meeting quiz to bring us all together for fun. Staff meetings will never be the same again after lock down!

Trinity:

We've just sent this video out to children and families of Trinity:

<https://youtu.be/oa0jrTW15Js>

We keep in touch with all staff via a weekly 'Not the Weekly Diary' communication, and via a fortnightly update on home learning to parents. Teachers are working with key workers' children where ideas for activities are shared with each other via WhatsApp. Our Inclusion team is in regular contact with our vulnerable families. Work for the children is set on Purple Mash which also offers the facility for email contact.



Important Notice

Remember to read the new safeguarding policy on BlueSky

Keep worshipping and carry on

The lockdown has not stopped our daily worship at Bishop Justus. Just as each school day normally begins with a 20-minute collective worship in tutor groups or year groups, each student and member of staff now receives a PowerPoint before 8:30 containing the morning's worship. We also include our colleagues from the Aquinas Central Team as part of the 'Bishop Justus parish.' The daily PowerPoints include Bible readings, reflective thoughts and images, YouTube music clips and of course prayers. The response from students, their families and staff has been wonderful, with people really valuing starting the day in this way, as well as it being a daily reminder we are still connected as a worshipping school family.

In his Easter Day sermon, the Archbishop of Canterbury said: "After so much suffering, so much heroism from the key workers and the NHS ... once this epidemic is conquered here and elsewhere, we cannot be content to go back to what was before as if it was normal, something that links to the old, but is different and more beautiful. We must dream it, build it, make it, grasp it, because it is the gift of God and the call of God ... We hope, because of the resurrection. Amen.'

Here is a prayer from last week's worship.

Lord God,
We thank you for giving us Your son.
May we live our lives true to the promise of hope, given to us through the resurrection of Jesus.
May we be a source of hope to those around us.
Amen

Lee Kings - Director of Chaplaincy

HR update

The Appraisal Cycle: confirming arrangements for completion of the cycle for this year

- As a Trust, we do not believe we will be in a position to assess performance during the Summer term and do not want staff to be disadvantaged.
- Everybody should now be in a position to have completed their half yearly review to the end of February 2020 and be able to upload evidence, self-evaluation and documentation to their BlueSky account.
- If you haven't already done so, please use these next few weeks to update your account as it will be used to inform any performance related pay awards (effective 1st September 2020) .
- To be completely transparent, we will also give consideration to previous performance.

NQTs:

- Current arrangements state that ad-hoc absences totalling 30 days or more automatically extends induction by the aggregate number of days absent.
- However, the Government is intending to amend the regulations to ensure that any absence related to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, including school closures, including sickness and self-isolation, will not count towards this limit.
- This means that NQTs who are currently undertaking statutory induction can complete their induction this academic year as expected, provided they meet the Teachers' Standards.
- Bromley Schools' Collegiate is sending out advice to individuals and is liaising with senior mentors directly.

Recruitment:

- The Trust is still actively recruiting for vacancies.
- We are using new methods such as Zoom interviews to ensure we do not delay in securing the best candidates for our schools.

If you have any questions on this or any other HR issue, please do not hesitate to contact Janet Vick, HR Director at: janet.vick@aquinatrust.org

Websites for free online training:

<https://www.stem.org.uk/online-cpd>

A useful resource for both primary teachers and secondary teachers of STEM subjects. This website links to courses with a range of providers for online and remote learning. There are also banks of teaching resources.

<https://www.open.edu/openlearn> (The Open University)

This site has an extensive range of free online learning suited to a range of job roles and interests. Some of the education courses may also be relevant to support A Level teaching.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/>

This website contains both their own courses for those involved with education and links to the programmes of other organisations, including universities. Their own courses are really easy to use and allow you to network with an online community of global learners. Future Learn also provides links to 'micro credentials' to earn points towards degree programmes.

<https://www.ihasco.co.uk/eLearning/>

As we work from home it's a good time to catch up on compliance training. Courses needing completion can be accessed by logging into the site using your academy email address.

<https://www.virtual-college.co.uk/resources/free-courses>

The free training on this site is relevant to health and safety related to the Covid-19 crisis. There's also some useful guidance here:

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources>

And just in case you want to learn something completely different...

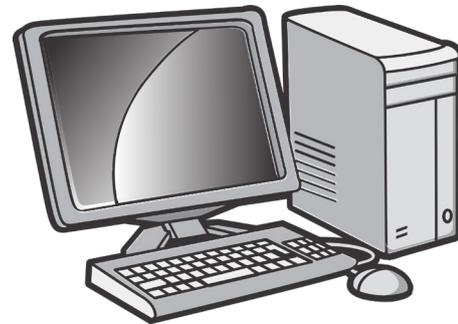
<https://www.skillshare.com/classes/free>

Learn to make chocolate, paint in water colours, perform new dance moves, chop like a chef – the possibilities are endless!

The Skills Toolkit: These are courses available through the government's new online platform, the Skills Toolkit. This platform signposts to free,

high-quality digital and numeracy courses to help people build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects and confidence whilst at home. <https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

Laura Pearson - Trust Improvement Partner



Resources & Useful Links

White Rose for maths:

They use videos to teach rather than just going over the things the children already know: <https://whiterosemaths.com/homelearning/>

<https://www.3dgeography.co.uk>

<https://radioblogging.net>

<https://www.thephilosophyman.com/brainsqueezers>

Ted Ed:

All sorts of engaging educational videos: <https://ed.ted.com>

The Kids Should See This:

Wide range of educational videos: <https://thekid-shouldseethis.com>

Science Challenges: <https://www.jamesdyson-foundation.com/content/dam/pdf/US%20challenge%20cards%20with%20cover.pdf?>

A super 'Kindness Calendar' can be accessed here: <https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/teaching-resources/kindness-calendar##>

[Bbc.co.uk/bitesize](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

Home learning resources from the DfE:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

And Finally... Your Wellbeing Matters!

Taking care of yourself is even more important at times where we are less connected. Please take a look at the ways you can support your own wellbeing (below) and if needed seek support through your schools; we're all committed to supporting you. **Don't forget, we also have Health Assured to call on 0844 891 0356 if needed.**

Stay connected with others - Maintaining healthy relationships with people you trust is important for your mental wellbeing. Think about how you can stay in touch with friends and family while you are all staying at home – by phone, messaging, video calls or social media – whether it's people you usually see often, or connecting with old friends.

Look after your body - Our physical health has a big impact on how we feel. At times like these, it can be easy to fall into unhealthy patterns of behaviour that end up making you feel worse.

Talk about your worries - It's normal to feel a bit worried or scared about the current situation. Remember: it's OK to share your concerns with others you trust – and it may help them too.

Stay on top of difficult feelings - Try to focus on the things you can control, such as how you act, who you speak to and where you get information from.

Do not stay glued to the news - Try to limit the time you spend watching, reading or listening to coverage of the outbreak, including on social media, and think about turning off breaking-news alerts on your phone.

Carry on doing things you enjoy or try something new - Make an effort to focus on your favourite hobby if it is something you can still do at home. If not, picking something new to learn at home might help.

Take time to relax - This can help with difficult emotions or worries.

Think about your new daily routine - Life is changing for a while and you are likely to see some disruption to your normal routine. Think about how you can adapt and create positive new routines and set yourself goals. You might find it helpful to write a plan for your day or your week. If you are working from home, try to get up and get ready in the same way as normal, keep to the same hours you would normally work and stick to the same sleeping schedule.

Look after your sleep - Good-quality sleep makes a big difference to how we feel, so it's important to get enough. Try to maintain your regular sleeping pattern and stick to good sleep practice.

Jenni Richards – Trust Improvement Partner