



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

UOB SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

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CONTENTS

Message from the Principal	1
Virtues in Art	3
Character Education	4
National Day of Reflection	5
Top Tips to Reduce Stress	7
UoBS on the Move	9
UoBS in Antarctica	9
Prefect Leadership	9
The Book Nook	10
Attendance Matters	10
RACE – A Poem	11
In Other News...	12
Term Dates	13

MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents, Carers, and Friends of the School,

I write with the spring 2021 term now behind us, to introduce the University School's spring newsletter.

As has been the case across the last twelve months, members of the School community needed to respond to changing coronavirus-related circumstances since January 2021; as indeed we have all had to in our lives more widely. At the start of January, the announcement of a further period of national lockdown saw learning and support revert to home and remote provision for almost nine weeks. Our children, and the School's staff, are to be commended on their determination to establish continuity of the highest possible standard – including teaching, pastoral support, and access to technology where needed.

From the 08 March we began the process of welcoming children and staff back onsite in a phased manner. I thank our families for their support of the School, including a commitment to re-establishing onsite attendance, and working with us to emphasise the importance of routine safety measures ongoing – a shared responsibility to a Covid-secure working and learning environment for all. I remain in awe of the work of many colleagues here at the School who put in place efficient arrangements for coronavirus lateral flow testing as a part of our plans for the March return – supporting children to undertake around 2700 tests across an eleven day period.



Lateral Flow Test Team

It was joyful to note the in-person interactions between pupils, students, and staff, as they were once again able to meet and greet friends and peers. As we re-establish onsite learning, reconnect with people, and where needed recover from sustained periods away from the daily routines and experiences which we cherish, we recognise in particular the virtues of gratitude, kindness, and resilience – fostering these as we strengthen and move forward.

We look ahead to the summer term from Monday 19 April – and indeed preparations for the new school year 2021/22. We now know the details of the children and families who will be joining the University School from September 2021 into year 7, and our minds are already focused on induction plans to ease anxieties that can understandably arise from transition from primary to secondary schooling. I extend a warm welcome to our new families as we look ahead. For our pupils in year 11 and students in year 13, teachers and leaders at the School will continue to put in place fair processes for the awarding of GCSE and A level grades – and staff will work with resolve to guide successful progression to next steps post-16 and post-18 for each young person.

I wish to announce some staff news at this time. I offer congratulations to Mr Robin Haslam upon his promotion to School Business Leader here at the University School and joining the senior team. Robin started at the School at its inception in 2015 as Business Manager, possessing valuable insight to our operational and important professional services functions. We also welcome Miss Kelly Poulton to the staff as our SEND Co-ordinator (SENDCo) – heading up the inclusion and support team for our children with additional needs. I wish both colleagues every satisfaction and happiness from their respective posts.

Whilst we all enjoy a short time over this holiday period to rest and breathe, we find ourselves also at holy periods. I therefore wish you a peaceful Easter, and Ramadhan Mubarak.

With kindest regards,

Colin Townsend, Principal

“

As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.

”

*John Fitzgerald Kennedy (1917-1963)
35th President of the United States of America*

VIRTUES IN ART

As a huge fan of the work of Damien Hirst, I was thrilled to learn of his new series of paintings entitled *The Virtues*. The eight prints are each titled after one of The Eight Virtues of Bushidō according to Nitobe Inazō – justice, courage, mercy, politeness, honesty, honour, loyalty, and control.

I was intrigued to find out more and upon further research, realised their potential use in the classroom to support our work on Character Education and our work on virtues.

Damien Hirst said *“Cherry Blossoms are about beauty and life and death. Blossoms are optimistic and bright yet fragile, just like we are and I hope that The Virtues can remind us to always try and get the most from life.”* (Source Heni).

The first stage of the class project involved us exploring the paintings and determining which of the eight virtues matched each painting. This led to some fascinating discussion and interpretation from our pupils and it was interesting to compare our thoughts, ideas and reflections when the actual title of each painting was revealed.



The next stage involved the pupils discussing each of the virtues and creating their own definitions and personal reflections on what each virtue meant to them. They were also discussed in relation to our School's Virtues and whether they were Intellectual, Moral, Performance or Civic Virtues. The pupils' reflections were then shared and placed on display with the paintings.

This small project was a joy to be involved with and led to some superb discussion and insight into character and virtues and their vital importance in helping individuals and society to flourish.

Mr Cobane, UoB School Subject Teacher.

CHARACTER EDUCATION

This term we have welcomed a new cohort of student trainee teachers from University of Birmingham into our school. As a group, it has been inspiring to observe their grit and determination to learn everything about our School and pupils, remotely in the first instance, as they prepared to start leading learning in our classrooms. As part of their ITE (Initial Teacher Education) experience at UoB School, we offer the trainees complementary seminars that enable them to be exposed to and reflective of successful classroom strategies and pedagogies to ensure both their success as a teacher and of course, of our pupils. I would like to share one blog with you, written by a trainee teacher in their first face to face week with us this term on the topic of Character Education. *Mrs Hayley Stemp, Subject Leader of Physical Education; ITE and Research Mentor.*

The emphasis on character development in every aspect of education and enrichment activities within the University of Birmingham School is unlike any other. The care and support provided by all members of staff within the school to develop every pupil's character helps them beyond the classroom. Character is weaved into all teaching aspects within the school, showing pupils the ways in which their school years will shape and develop them beyond the walls of UoBS. The community of the school is extremely inclusive, and it can be suggested this is due to the emphasis placed on character development. Whilst every school will have challenging classroom environments to interact with, the positivity shown by all pupils is through the understanding of why virtues such as perseverance, respect and pride should be valued by everyone.



"Taught, caught and sought"

Taught, caught and sought are ways pupils develop their character within the classroom. The positive reinforcement of intellectual and moral virtues teaches young people the positive effect of their actions. Interactions with pastoral mentors and embedded into the ethos of the school, character is caught between pupil conversations both inside and outside the classroom, whilst pupils can often be seen to seek character, engaging in enrichment activities that encourage their development or looking further into the resources provided by the school that encourage their growth.

Pupil Progression

When asked in form time, pupils have expressed their understanding for the importance and their enjoyment of the ways intellectual virtues are reinforced within their form time. Engaging with the news daily and reading books on important societal topics were valued by those asked and the engagement of the whole form every morning and afternoon shows their progression as learners and individuals is already so positive, even in the lower school years.

My implementation

To continue with character education in the style of UoBS within my lessons. Use positive phrases to remind pupils of the virtues they should consider, making sure the way they are greeted into the lesson, spoken to throughout the lesson and the way I say goodbye to them all encourages their respect and kindness towards peers, their next teachers or those outside the school. Encouraging individuality is also important to make sure all pupil character is being developed whilst protecting their individual personality, always trying to make sure all learners enjoy a positive learning experience.

NATIONAL DAY OF REFLECTION

On Tuesday 23 March, UoB School observed a one minute silence at midday to mark the National Day of Reflection of the one year UK lockdown anniversary.

Some of our pupils tied yellow ribbons of hope (yellow chosen as the colour of hope) and thought about what they were all grateful for or tied it in memory of someone important to them. Pupils also wrote poems of hope and gratitude, and others planted flowers in memory of those we have lost. Collectively, we all spent time thinking about the challenges we may have faced and how hope and gratitude can help us see a positive way forward.

What does it mean to reflect?

Reflection helps us to hold a mirror up to ourselves and our world. Taking a minute or two to stop and reflect can help us connect with how we feel.

Sometimes it's easy to bottle things up and not really think about how we are feeling. This is a good tactic for getting through things, but every now and again you'll need to find a way of 'un-bottling' so you don't pop. This can be as simple as recognising how you are feeling or talking to someone about it.



Grief and Loss

There is no right or wrong way to feel grief or loss. It can come in stages and feel like different waves of emotion. You can feel fine, angry, sad, guilty, fearful, lonely or numb – or all of these or none of these. That's normal.

Coping with grief isn't about getting rid of these emotions and it is not about learning to forget, or to not feel anything. It's about living with grief in a way that is manageable.

Being well together...

All of us can feel overwhelmed at times, and looking after ourselves physically can not only benefit our bodies and make us healthier, it can also have a great impact upon our mental wellbeing. We've created a Health and Wellbeing page where you'll find information to turn to when you need it www.uobschool.org.uk/health-wellbeing-at-uob-school.



What can you do to help yourself or someone else if you're grieving?

- Talk to other people and be there for each other.
- Share happy memories you experienced with those you may have lost.
- If it's hard to talk to your family or friends, find your PPM or use one of the helplines listed below.
- Look after yourself. Eat properly and try to rest. Give yourself time and permission to grieve.
- Ask your friends and family if they are ok and genuinely mean it. Ask twice or three times and listen to them.
- Show empathy.

Gratitude and Hope

Practising an attitude for gratitude is a really positive way of coping when things feel difficult. It enables us to think more positively about things. It can take time to form habits, but try each day to think of three good things to be grateful for.

A poem by Form Group 7T – Reflection

Remember the days we had to stay at home,
Embrace the consequences,
Face them,
Let yourself feel,
Encourage others to share feelings,
Coronavirus will soon be gone,
Time for hope,
Inspiration,
Optimism,
Never give up, never stop hoping.



Bereavement Support

Cruse Bereavement Care
0808 808 1677
www.cruse.org.uk

Edward's Trust
0121 454 1705
www.edwardstrust.org.uk

Marie Curie
0800 090 2309
www.mariecurie.org.uk/support

Hope Again
0808 808 1677
www.hopeagain.org.uk

Childline
0800 111
www.childline.org.uk

Compassionate Friends
0345 123 2304
www.tcf.org.uk



TOP TIPS TO REDUCE STRESS PREPARING FOR ASSESSMENTS

The time leading up to assessments can be very stressful, so we've compiled some 'go to' information for pupils and students and their parents/carers to help deal with this period more effectively.

WHAT IS STRESS?

It is common to feel stressed during the assessment period. Stress is a natural reaction to added pressure and excessive demands you may come across in life. Feeling this way can make you feel overwhelmed or run down. It is therefore important that you do as much as you can to reduce your stress levels.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP REDUCE LEVELS OF STRESS?

There are a few simple steps you can implement to help reduce any stress related anxiety or nervousness.



- Eat and drink well. Healthy food will give you the nutrition you need to boost your energy levels and reduce stress. For example, bananas release energy slowly and so give you a constant source of nutrition. Fish, nuts, oatmeal, leafy vegetables, chicken and even dark chocolate (in moderation!) can all help alongside a balanced diet. Avoid high fat, sugar and caffeine food and drink.
- Get plenty of sleep. Ensure you sleep and wake up on time to make the most of your day, especially when it comes to school work. If you're alert and ready for school, then you'll be more productive at school!
- Exercise and walk. Exercise can help boost your energy levels and relieve any anxiety. It can help clear the mind and help you think more clearly. Fresh air can work wonders!
- Talk to someone. Your friends, family and staff at school are all here if you need to talk about anything you are unsure of or need help with.
- Keep your space tidy! A tidy room/desk/space means a tidy mind. Keep your personal areas as tidy as possible - it will help you stay motivated and organised, especially when you're working and completing homework.
- Avoid distractions and online pressures. Minimise your use of technology and social media, it can be a huge distraction and can make studying more difficult! Try it. You may be pleasantly surprised.
- Take regular breaks. Schedule in breaks within your timetable - it's important to take time away from studying so you don't burn out.

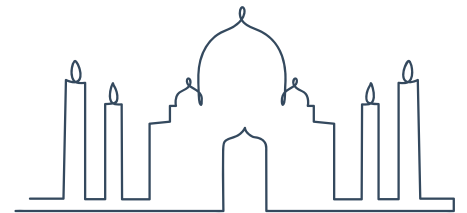
WHAT CAN I DO AS A PARENT TO HELP MY CHILD DURING REVISION/ASSESSMENT PERIOD?

- Help your child by making sure their home learning environment is as calm and comfortable as it can be for revision.
- Have a copy of any revision or timetables your child may have so you can help support the process.
- You can also help ensure your child takes scheduled breaks in between revising so they don't overwhelm themselves.
- Ensure healthy snacks and drinks are available.
- Offer your help and support when revising, i.e. perhaps you could ask questions on a particular subject in a 'quick fire round' or help time practice papers.

If you would like to discuss any concerns you may have about the assessments, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mr Stow, Vice Principal.

RAMADHAN & STUDYING

Ramadan is a month in the Islamic calendar when many Muslims observe fasting between sunrise and sunset. This year it is expected to begin on Monday 12 April and can last up to 30 days. Many of our pupils and students will be observing the fasting month during the assessment period.



Below we have compiled some advice which may help with studying whilst fasting, in addition to the advice listed previously.

- It is important to look after your health and so make sure the food you eat before sunrise (suhur) and at sunset (iftar) is nutritious. Foods rich in complex carbohydrates, protein, fruit and vegetables to ensure your body and mind receives the correct nutrition. Food that is slow digesting and releases energy throughout the day is best.
- Drink plenty of water when you can to stay hydrated and help with concentration levels. Avoid caffeine heavy drinks as these can dehydrate you further.
- If you do go outside for your daily walk/exercise, try to avoid going out when the day is at its hottest or stay in the shade. Reduce your physical activity levels during the fasting hours to save energy.
- Get plenty of rest and plan your day! You may want to adjust your current home-school timetable so studying is more manageable in smaller chunks with regular breaks.
- Support your friends and family during the month. It can be a great time to connect with each other, even if it is virtually! Maybe you can plan iftar with each other using video calls and FaceTime.

To all in our community observing Ramadan, we wish you a peaceful and prosperous month.

UOBS ON THE MOVE

Because we know everyone can do with a little more kindness in their lives...

Members of our staff went out into the community during February to hand out resources, essentials, and wellbeing packs to our families as part of the 'Birmingham with Love' initiative. We reached out to families in each of our four nodes. Birmingham with Love was set up with a number of organisations to help make life a little bit easier during lockdown. Services included Birmingham City Council, NHS Foundation Trust, West Midlands Police, Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust + many more.

"It was incredible to see so many children and families today from across our four nodes...families were most excited about receiving their reading books!" Ms Ellis-Bryant, Subject Leader for RS.

UOBS IN ANTARCTICA!

Earlier in the academic year, Year 7 Geography pupils entered a competition to design an inspirational flag with the theme 'in the interests of all mankind' for Antarctica run by the UKPN Antarctic Flags Team. Kairon in 7M won and his flag has officially made its way to Antarctica and has been photographed by BAS Marine Biologist Nadia Frontier on Lagoon Island!

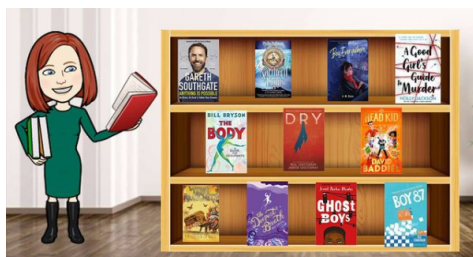


PREFECT LEADERSHIP

Year 10 pupils have now been notified of our Prefect Leadership opportunity. A great chance for pupils to get involved with the leadership aspect of the School and become role models for younger pupils. The position of prefect allows you to develop your team building, communication, time management, and public speaking skills and become ambassadors for the School.

THE BOOK NOOK

Updates from our School Library...



UOB SCHOOL VIRTUAL LIBRARY

Discover our new Virtual Library. First launched on World Book Day, we're now keeping it live due to its popularity. Over 200 e-books were borrowed over two months! Head over to our Library webpage and explore book readings, reviews and recommendations to meet all your bookish needs. Visit uobschool.org.uk/library.

WORLD BOOK DAY

We celebrated World Book Day online this year and loved how many of you got involved with all the activities that took place.

- AM Dassu, author of 'Boy, Everywhere' joined us for a live Q&A with pupils. Having read the book during the weeks prior, pupils were brimming with excitement and had many questions about how the plot was created, what inspired AM Dassu to start writing and if there were any new books on the horizon!
- Staff ran book quizzes throughout the week, including 'The Masked Reader' where pupils had to guess which member of staff was behind the disguise reading a paragraph from their favourite book. We had over 350 entries and all our winners received a range of books, including some exclusive signed copies!
- Have you received your World Book Day £1 book token? Ms Middleton has been handing them out, please ask if you didn't receive yours.

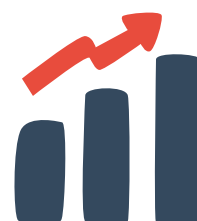


ATTENDANCE MATTERS

As we welcomed back our pupils and students at the beginning of March, we knew the transition back to a normal school routine would be difficult, however our pupils and students have re-learnt our routines again so quickly. We spoke to many families over the phone during lockdown and many of you couldn't wait to start school again! We are particularly proud of our excellent school attendance so far (see figures below). Well done and keep up the good work everyone! Mx Bloomfield, Attendance Officer.

Year 7	97.3%
Year 8	96.2%
Year 9	95.5%
Year 10	95.6%
Year 11	96.1%
Year 12	97.1%
Year 13	94.2%

Attendance = Progress



TOGETHER WE'RE MUCH STRONGER, NOT AS 'I' BUT 'WE'

RACE a poem by Maryam J, Year 8 Pupil

Society fights about the colour of skin,
whether you're black, white or brown, it isn't a sin.
What colour you are causes so much disturbance,
but we are human, we are the same. So why does it hurt us?

What is on the outside shouldn't really matter,
whether you're black, white or brown, there's no room for rude chatter.
It's what's inside us as people that defines us to all of society.
Nobody deserves the feeling of anxiety.

What do the haters want, the people who don't like race?
Do they want no race at all? How can they imagine such a place?
Imagine no culture or ethnicity at all.
Life would be lame if we were all the same.

Black, white or brown, these aren't just races,
you can't judge people by the colour of their faces.
As the human race is all we should see,
together we're much stronger, not as 'I' but 'WE'.



IN OTHER NEWS...



During lockdown, Year 12 students took part in a film project with the Art department. The themes covered included nature, time, and emotions. We're looking to enter their films into 'The Young Artists' Summer Show' by the Royal Academy. The Summer Show is an opportunity for young artists to exhibit their work online and on-site at the Royal Academy. Best of luck to you all!



So far, sixty pupils across Years 7 to 10 have benefited by taking part in the National Tutoring Programme. The programme provides additional support to pupils for literacy and numeracy. Pupils have 15 hours worth of support with a specialist tutor in very small groups. The aim is to provide personalised academic support as well as boost self-esteem levels and confidence.



We have been very proud of the engagement of those who have been involved, some of whom have turned up an hour before school whilst others have been logging on to remote sessions during school holidays. We look forward to continuing our work with the tutoring programme and offering this support to even more pupils.

A number of our Year 11 pupils have also been actively engaged in our subject drop-in sessions before and after the school day. These sessions have been offered by our subject teachers to support pupils at such a crucial stage.

In addition to the National Tutoring Programme, the School has also employed an academic mentor in Mathematics. She is currently working with pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11. In fact, Year 10 pupils are coming in before school! In total, 62 pupils are receiving additional support in Mathematics through this academic mentoring programme.



Well done!

Pupil with the most green stamps this term:

Yeshin Kim in Year 8 with 546 stamps

Form Group with the most green stamps this term:

7A with 2723 stamps

Pupils with most green stamps in each year group:

Year 7 Daniele Petrosillo with 545 stamps

Year 8 Yeshin Kim with 546 stamps

Year 9 Hannah Washbourne with 510 stamps

Year 10 Kalkidan Abreham with 364 stamps

Year 11 Casey-Mae Shuter-Hart with 184 stamps

TERM DATES

Summer Term 2021

Term Starts: Monday 19 April 2021

BANK HOLIDAY: Monday 03 May 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Friday 21 May 2021

Half Term: Monday 31 May to Friday 04 June 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Thursday 08 July 2021

*Staff Research Day: Friday 09 July 2021

Term ends: Wednesday 21 July at 13.10

*no pupils or students to attend.

Autumn Term 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Thursday 02 September 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Friday 03 September 2021

Induction Day: Monday 06 September 2021 for Year 7 & 12 ONLY

Term Starts: Tuesday 07 September 2021 return for ALL Year Groups

*Staff Professional Development Day: Wednesday 13 October 2021

Half Term: Monday 25 October to Friday 29 October 2021

*Staff Research Day: Thursday 02 December 2021

School closed: Friday 03 December 2021

Term ends: Friday 17 December 2021

*no pupils or students to attend.

Spring Term 2022

*Staff Professional Development Day: Tuesday 04 January 2022

Term Starts: Wednesday 05 January 2022

*Staff Research Day: Friday 18 February 2022

Half Term: Monday 21 February to Friday 25 February 2022

*Professional Development Day: Monday 21 March 2022

Term ends: Friday 08 April 2022

*no pupils or students to attend.

Summer Term 2022

Term Starts: Monday 25 April 2022

BANK HOLIDAY: Monday 02 May 2022

Half Term: Monday 30 May to Friday 03 June 2022

*Staff Professional Development Day: Thursday 30 June 2022

*Staff Research Day: Friday 01 July 2022

Term ends: Friday 22 July 2022

*no pupils or students to attend.



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