



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

UOB SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Spring Edition 2020 | Issue 01



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Welcome to University of Birmingham School's spring term 2020 newsletter. Collectively, we reflect on many of the term's highlights and achievements. The tail end of the term in question also marked the start of exceptional circumstances affecting, not only our School, but our families, communities, nation, and world. On March 20th, with ten weeks of a twelve week term of more familiar learning behind us, I declared UoB School closed in line with national guidelines for all but a small number of children and families. Since then, and in truly uncharted waters, we have all needed to adapt our lives in different ways – including caring for each other and continuing to learn, with lockdown restrictions in place.



My colleagues here continue to develop and embed new processes for keeping in touch; new structures for setting school work and supporting remote learning; and rationales for the submission of fair and evidenced GCSE and A'level grades for our year 11 pupils and year 13 students – the last of these in the context of the cancelled summer examinations series, nationally. We shall do all within our means to ensure appropriate and successful progression for our children post-16 and post-18, so that importantly they may embark on the next steps in their development and life journeys.

I guide you to the ten weeks of the term where our lives were not so universally turbulent, as I invite you to engage with the wide range of activities and accolades reported from across the School. In so doing, we also look forward, to a time when the School community will once again be back together, physically. Such a time will arrive – and until that point I reassure you that planning for the summer term in whatever guise it shall fully take, and for September, continues. This includes preparations to welcome new pupils, students, and families into year 7 and year 12, not presently a part of our School.

It is perfectly understandable to be feeling varying degrees of strain from our present circumstances, and this extends of course to our children. In his time, the noble statesman Nelson Mandela offered many wise sentiments. One of these referenced the value of picking oneself up if at all possible, in difficult times. Whilst sometimes far from easy, I suggest that now is one time where mustering our resilience will serve us especially well as individuals and as a School – as we look to regain our footing and retain our strengths.

With best wishes to everyone,

Colin Townsend, Principal

“

Do not judge me by my successes, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.

Nelson Mandela

”

MUSEUMS & WELLBEING PROJECT

There has been a growing understanding of the impact museums can have on health and wellbeing.



Research has shown that participating in museums and the arts can promote mental wellbeing and increase confidence, assertiveness and self-esteem. *Lapworth Museum*.

Pupils from UoB School were tasked to design and produce a temporary exhibition in a five week wellbeing project. The exhibition was created to support the theme of 'Museums and Wellbeing' and aims to increase pupil awareness on how museums can help to improve mental health, whilst improving and gaining knowledge through taking part in exciting and object-led workshops.

The workshops gave pupils the chance to:

- Explore the museum and take a look 'behind the scenes' of a museum.
- Find out about geology, exploring dinosaurs, fossils, rocks and minerals.
- See the involvement of art and science in the museum, explored through poetry.
- Showcase their exhibition in a special launch evening for family, friends and staff.

The Lapworth Museum of Geology at the University of Birmingham is a fantastic space available to our pupils to learn about a range of topics such as dinosaurs, evolution, plate tectonics, rocks and minerals.

PRIME MINISTER'S RECOGNITION AWARD FOR UOBS PUPIL

Waleed is an #iwill ambassador and a survivor of the Peshawar school attack in 2014 who spent two years in hospital in Birmingham recovering from injuries.

Waleed is now a leading advocate on the importance of education and the dangers of radicalisation, speaking to over 1,500 young people in schools and universities across England. He is also a representative for the UK Youth Parliament, where he has spoken on issues including criminal gangs and knife crime, and is a member of the Birmingham Aspiring Youth Foundation.

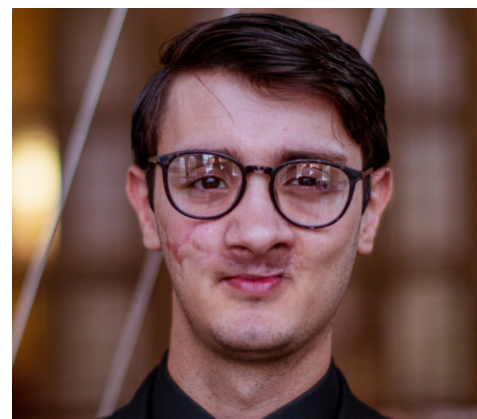
In a personal letter to Waleed, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

"I know you do this with no thought of praise or reward, but allow me to offer my own recognition of your exceptional bravery in overcoming the horrific injuries you suffered from the Peshawar attack to share your experiences with young people across the country and advocate the importance of education in counteracting radicalisation."

Dr Rania Marandos, CEO of 'Step Up To Serve', which coordinates the #iwill campaign, said:

"At the #iwill campaign we know that young people have the energy, ideas and drive to create positive change in their communities and to tackle many of society's tougher challenges. We are so pleased to see the Prime Minister recognising Waleed's remarkable achievements. Following profound personal loss, not only has he adapted to an entirely new country and is flourishing, but is committed to reaching out to other young people and amplifying their voices. Waleed's powerful story should remind organisations across sectors of the courage and determination young people show when taking action on issues they care about, and inspire them to work with young people as leaders of change."

Waleed said: "I am truly humbled and honoured to receive the Points of Light Award and thank the #iwill campaign for nominating me. I will continue to work for the empowerment of youth. Today, youth in the UK and around the world, are making strides to change the world around them. From powerful social media movements, to political organising and protesting on the ground, the voice and passion of young people have convinced society to take us seriously. I am really grateful and glad that the Prime Minister is recognising the contribution of young people to society. Recognitions like these not only encourage thousands of young people like me to continue our effort, but also increases their self-esteem and self-efficacy." *Source: Points of Light.*



STAYING AT HOME

A few helpful ideas and activities to help you stay productive at home over the next few weeks...



KEEP IN TOUCH

Stay connected with family and friends. You may not be able to see each other in person, but you can make phone calls, video calls, and send messages to each other.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

It's normal to feel anxious or worried about the current situation. You have a lot of people around you who you can talk to and share your thoughts with. We're all in this together and can help each other. There are also loads of sites online with useful information you can read such as Young Minds.



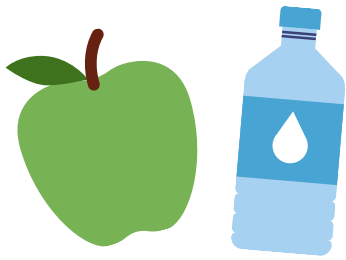
STUDYING AT HOME

Try not to panic about falling behind with work, we're here to support. Engage with the work your teachers have sent and shared with you on Class Charts. You can even use YouTube or read books on different subjects to help you learn and revise.

STAY ACTIVE

It's important to look after our physical health as well as our mental health. Your physical health can affect how you feel and your mood. Try to stay active to keep physically healthy as well as mentally. It can also help reduce levels of stress and anxiety.



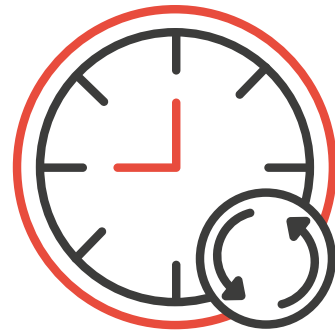


DRINK & EAT WELL

Eat healthy food to give you the nutrition you need to focus. For example, bananas release energy slowly and so give you a gradual source of nutrition. Avoid high fat, sugar and caffeine food and drink. Drink plenty of water to keep hydrated. Healthy eating will also help boost your energy and reduce stress.

STICK TO A ROUTINE

Try and stick to a normal daily routine, even if you're not physically going to school. Wake up at the same time, get washed and dressed, have breakfast and get settled for a day of work. Have break and lunch scheduled also. This will also help you maintain your normal sleep routine. Perhaps you could create your own timetable at home?



GET YOUR ZZZZ

Have a regular sleep routine and sleep at a similar time each night. For example, you may eat your meal, read a book, or have a bath at the same time every night to help your body adjust to a routine.

ENRICHMENT AT HOME...

Take the opportunity to explore new hobbies or interests, or develop your existing ones! It's important to keep your mind active and it's a great time to learn new things. It can be quite relaxing too. See it as enrichment at home - Ms Lundy would be proud!



Remember, your teachers at UoB School are here to help with work. Refer to the information sent home to you and on Class Charts.

CULTIVATING A LOVE OF READING – WORLD BOOK DAY

'I have a passion for teaching kids to become readers, to become comfortable with a book, not daunted. Books should be funny, exciting and wonderful; and learning to be a reader gives a terrific advantage.'
Roald Dahl.

It's twenty five past one in the afternoon and the pupils are sat rapt as the teacher reads aloud from Malorie Blackman's Noughts and Crosses. They are tired from working hard for four periods but the teacher's passion for reading has taken them on a journey deep into another world and the pupils are hanging on every word. As the tension builds the atmosphere in the room intensifies and there is an audible groan when the bell goes for lunch and the class are left on tenterhooks desperate to know what happens next. As they exit the room the conversation is buzzing with questions which will be answered on another day. This is the magical power of reading being shared and valued by skilled teachers.



This is not a one off event though. No pupil is too old or too young to enjoy listening to carefully chosen fiction and non-fiction texts and so for half an hour every day all pupils and students, from Year 7 right through to Year 13, have a reading aloud session. The benefits are immense and we firmly believe that reading to the pupils is a vital part of their education.

The benefits of reading aloud:

- It creates a sense of community by building a shared 'reading history' but also develops pupils' awareness of sophisticated language, vocabulary and literary themes that they might not otherwise encounter.

- It helps model fluent reading by pausing at commas and other punctuation marks and varying your tone of voice when reading exclamations and questions.
- It is a captivating experience develops a sense of wonder and thoughtful reflection.
- It exposes pupils to new authors and genres that they might not naturally select for themselves. It also encourages pupils to read sequels and other books in the series.
- Through carefully chosen texts that address relevant social issues pupils are able to develop a sense of empathy, compassion and understanding that enhances their knowledge and understanding of the world and humanity.
- Our students come from a diverse range of backgrounds. Whilst for some of them being read to by their parents or carers is a cherished ritual we are conscious that for others this could be the only time in their childhood that someone has read aloud to them.
- By creating time for reading aloud and making it a habit we are helping all of our pupils develop a lifelong love of reading by giving them memorable experiences with books.

In an ever expanding curriculum with competing demands and pressures many teachers feel that they simply cannot afford the time to read aloud to pupils. We believe the opposite and make a conscious effort to plan reading aloud sessions for all our pupils. Yes, it can be a big challenge that requires time, commitment, a budget and passion but we firmly believe that reading aloud to pupils of all ages, including teenagers, is an integral part of childhood and any successful reading programme. In the words of Dr Seuss:

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The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.

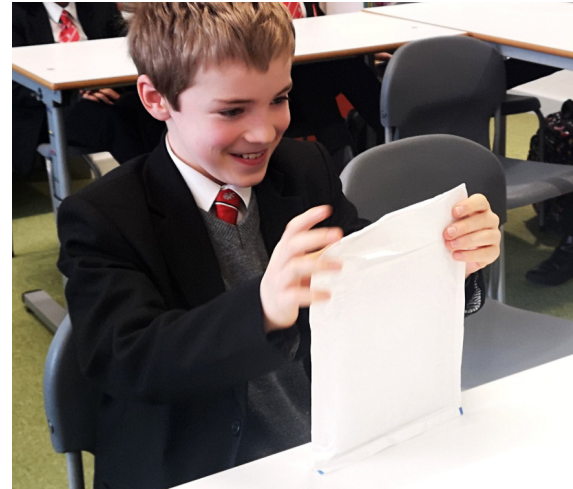
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Mrs Exton & Mr Cobane.



Congratulations to George who won a signed copy of Kate Milner's 'Duncan versus the Googleys' - Mr Cobane nominated pupils for their excellent team effort and work shown in lessons and George was our lucky winner! A great treat for World Book Day.

We were delighted to have Rap Poet Karl Nova join us for a day full of workshops and presentations to help celebrate World Book Day. Pupils had a chance to read and hear poems from Karl's new book 'Rhythm & Poetry'.



BMW PLANT VISIT

Year 11 pupils visited the BMW plant at Hams Hall as part of inspiring aspirations for life after school. Pupils had the chance to take a tour of the plant, listen to employees at BMW talk about career paths and progression within the industry, and network with apprentices and managers.

The visit also gave pupils the chance to see some of the theory they had learnt in class in practice in a working environment.

"Pupils represented themselves and the school impeccably. Engaging with the staff with an incredible amount of maturity, enthusiasm and professionalism. They have definitely left a lasting, positive impression of themselves and our school." Mr Herbert, Teacher of Design Technology.



SPORTS NEWS



Congratulations to our Under 13's Boys Indoor Cricket Team who narrowly beat Ark St Alban's Academy by one wicket in a 98 run-chase thriller!

Shout-out to Usman for his 3-13 of 3 overs and an unbeaten 32 not out!

We went behind the scenes at Arena Cross UK – meeting competitors and finding out more about the sport and how it links in with science, maths, engineering and technology.



Say hello to our DofE Regional & Form Ambassadors representing and supporting our school DofE journey.

"They are the unsung heroes and deserve a lot of credit", Mr Bennett.



Great news for pupils winning second place at the South Birmingham Sports Hall Athletics Competition. Well done!



HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE

To mark the 75th anniversary of the Holocaust, a special guest was arranged to visit pupils at school – Paul Sved, the last generation of Holocaust survivors, addressed our pupils – sharing his story during the War.

Mr Sved spoke of the fascinating and harrowing experiences he and his family encountered. We heard about the courageous people he met along his journey and the sorrow and loss he and others faced.

Pupils learnt many details about the history of the holocaust and were left feeling inspired by Mr Sved's personal accounts. An invaluable experience, creating powerful memories for us all.

We would like to thank Mr Sved once again for his time and for sharing his story with us.



NDCS UK ROADSHOW

The National Deaf Children's Society Roadshow joined us this term to engage pupils in conversations and activities about deaf awareness, inclusion, deaf identity and how we can better support our deaf friends and family when communicating with them.

Pupils learnt a little BSL and discussed how they could use their new found awareness to engage others within our community.

Thank you to Mrs Campbell and the NDCS UK staff for arranging this opportunity for us.



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www.uobschool.org.uk

IN OTHER NEWS...



UoB School alumnus Louisa visited our sixth form and took some time out from her busy schedule to share her experiences with our students about studying Environmental Science at the University of Birmingham. Always great to see our alumni back at UoBS! Also, a huge congratulations on your exciting placement abroad next year Louisa and fingers crossed plans still progress smoothly!



Fantastic outreach work with students from University of Birmingham's Space Society, who joined us for our physics enrichment - creating and launching our very own rocket. The perfect enrichment for pupils who are eager to explore space and learn more about the science behind it all!



We would like to thank all pupils, students, staff, parents and carers who donated towards our Foodbank collection towards the end of the Autumn Term. The Student Council did a brilliant job collating it all and helped deliver it to the local Foodbank.



Perfecting our French vowel sounds! Year 7 pupils engaged with and gave feedback on an exciting new app being developed by the University of Birmingham's Languages Department.

TERM DATES 2020/21

Autumn Term 2020

*Staff Professional Development Day: Tuesday 1 September 2020

Term Starts: Wednesday 2 September 2020 at 08.30 for Year 7 & 12 ONLY

Thursday 3 September 2020 at 08.30 return for ALL Year Groups

*Staff Professional Development Day: Wednesday 14 October 2020

Half Term: Monday 26 October to Friday 30 October 2020

*Staff Research Day: Thursday 3 December 2020

School closed: Friday 4 December 2020

Term ends: Friday 18 December 2020 – at 12.50

***no pupils or students to attend.**

Spring Term 2021

Term Starts: Monday 4 January 2021 at 08.30

*Staff Professional Development Day: Thursday 11 February 2021

*Staff Research Day: Friday 12 February 2021

Half Term: Monday 15 February to Friday 19 February 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Monday 15 March 2021

Term ends: Thursday 1 April 2021 – at 13.25

***no pupils or students to attend.**

Summer Term 2021

Term Starts: Monday 19 April 2021 at 08.30

BANK HOLIDAY: Monday 3 May 2021

Half Term: Monday 31 May to Friday 4 June 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Thursday 24 June 2021

*Staff Research Day: Friday 25 June 2021

*Staff Professional Development Day: Friday 9 July 2021

Term ends: Wednesday 21 July 2021 – at 13.25

***no pupils or students to attend.**



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL

University of Birmingham School
12 Weoley Park Road
Selly Oak
Birmingham
B29 6QU

t: 0121 796 5000
e: reception@uobschool.org.uk
w: uobschool.org.uk

Keep in touch



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