

## WHOLE SCHOOL

**Letter from Mr Williams**

Dear parents and carers

As we reach the end of the first half-term, I want to thank you all once again for your support at this challenging time. Particular thanks to those of you whose children we have had to ask to self-isolate as a result of being in close contact with a positive case in school – and even more so in those cases where it has already happened more than once. We don't underestimate the impact all this has on families. My wife and I are on tenterhooks every time our phones go at that moment, worried it will be the dreaded call from our children's school telling us that they will need to self-isolate, and I know many of you feel the same.

However, many times I have said this over the past six months, my thanks to you all are very sincere and I think the way we have stuck together as a community has been exceptional. I've no doubt this will continue – and we will need it to because there are very few signs of the situation easing any time soon.

Similarly, I must say again how incredible the students have been this term and how well they have responded to the extra things we have asked of them. To give one small example, they have adjusted to the new rules on mobile phones remarkably quickly and with the absolute minimum of fuss. We have another newsletter due out shortly after the break and you will see from that just how many exciting and commendable things students have been getting up to. In so many respects, school is continuing as normal; we have even re-started a number of extra-curricular activities recently and hope to be able to open up even more after the break.

In terms of the Covid situation, since my last update a couple of weeks ago we have definitely seen an increase in cases and this is obviously of some concern. On the other hand, the number of cases is still very much in line with infection rates in the community more generally and is low overall (we have ten 'live' cases out of 1950 students at the time of writing and two members of staff). Equally important, we still haven't seen much evidence that the virus is actually being transmitted within school – in most of the positive cases we have had since September, we are pretty confident that the virus was caught from a friend or family member outside the school setting. That said, as I keep saying, these things can change very quickly and we remain on high alert!

As regards processes for asking students to self-isolate, you will have gathered that our approach has been evolving since September. We started the year expecting to be given detailed advice from the DfE or Public Health England in the event of any positive cases, but this never materialised. For the first 2–3 cases, we therefore adopted a fairly cautious approach while waiting for advice (though still less cautious than many schools who are still sending whole year group bubbles home when there is one positive case). Since then, in the absence of direction from central government, a more localised approach has been taken and we are instead working with Warrington Borough Council whenever we do need support. As Chair of the Warrington secondary headteachers association (WASCL), I sit on a small planning group with senior leaders from WBC and we meet twice a week to review everything relating to Covid and Warrington schools. I must say that I have found the support from WBC to have been excellent throughout this period; they are working very hard and, in my view, have been consistently willing to apply common sense in making decisions.

In general terms, our approach has now evolved such that we are focusing on trying hard to avoid sending students home unless we are very confident they have been in close contact with a positive case for a decent length of time, especially if that contact has been indoors. At the same time, we are watching very

carefully for evidence that it is spreading beyond these close contacts and remain ready to send larger groups of students home as a precaution if necessary. This process is obviously very far from perfect, but so far it seems to be working and we are managing to find a good balance between keeping people safe and keeping things as normal as possible.

I realise that most of this letter has been about one topic again and I cannot wait for the time when I don't need to write to you about Covid but, in the meantime, thank you all again and have a lovely half-term.

Kind regards

Gwyn Williams

### **Covid rules**

Please, please make sure that you and your family follow the rules around self-isolation in the event that someone in your household has Covid symptoms or if you are asked to self-isolate. Sadly, we are aware of a few instances of people ignoring these rules; for example, allowing their children out to play with others when they should be isolating, or sending children into school while someone else in the household is still waiting for the result of a Covid test. In at least one case, other people's children have had to self-isolate because one family had not followed these self-isolation rules. We shall leave you to draw your own conclusions about the nature of these actions and instead simply ask you to consider what a difficult position this puts us in as a school when we are told about them.

To be clear, these cases are a small minority. In general, we cannot speak highly enough of the patience and understanding being shown by parents and students when people do need to self-isolate.

### **Year 11 and 13 Progress Reports**

These are due to be sent home to parents between 2nd and 6th November. Please ensure you can access the School Gateway app and that all your contact information is up to date, especially your child's 1st priority contact (mobile number and email address). If you don't have an email address, please let us know. All communication in relation to contact details to receive progress reports should be via [MIS@lymmhigh.org.uk](mailto:MIS@lymmhigh.org.uk).

### **GCSE English Literature results**

The last newsletter contained news of those Year 11 and 13 students who performed exceptionally well in their GCSEs and A' levels. However, there was of course another group of students who received GCSE results: those in Year 10 last year who received grades in GCSE English Literature. We want to record our official congratulations to these students too – even though they did not get to sit the exams, they had done all the work in preparation and fully deserve the grades they were given in the summer.

In particular, the following students deserve huge credit for gaining a grade 9 in the subject, which is a fabulous achievement: Rachel Beattie, Mai Beetham, Lauren Bradshaw, Steph Burnett, Alisha Bushnell, Arianna Good, Anya Grieve, Joby Hassett, Anna Hodgkinson and Anna McDonald. Well done to everyone in this year group. They have also made an excellent start to Year 11 and we have very high hopes for their results next summer!

### **DofE Certificates of Achievement**

Well done to the 68 students who've completed their DofE Certificate of Achievement, completing their Physical, Skill and Volunteering sections, despite not being able to finish their award by undertaking their Expedition section. Certificates are now printed and we have contacted all these parents to ask for special

photo consent to be able to celebrate their achievement properly. If your child is one of these students, please ask them to keep an eye out on the Student Bulletin in the week after half-term when they will be invited to collect their certificate from Reception and have their photo taken for a special feature of these 68 students.

### Technology Survey

A massive thank you to all parents for completing the technology survey. We are extremely grateful that so many of you have been able to do this; it provides us with a really accurate picture of the access to technology your child has at home and this helps us tailor our provision and provide support to those who require it. We really need to achieve a 100% response rate to this survey, and will therefore be phoning any parents who've not yet responded. Of course, phone calls take quite a bit of time, so if you haven't responded yet, we'd be extremely grateful if you could complete the survey via [this link](#) before the end of the day. We can then just contact those parents who are having technical difficulties with completing the form.

### Virtual China Camp (February half term)

The travel company delivering our trip to China are offering a Virtual China Camp (online) that gives you the chance to visit Beijing or Chengdu (via Zoom) using live, interactive and pre-recorded footage. Students will explore the sights in the area and also meet students in China over Zoom. You can choose between Beijing, the capital city, or Chengdu where the pandas are. Taking place during Chinese New Year, students can experience first-hand how their friends in China will celebrate Spring Festival. Depending on your preference, there are 3-, 5- and 7-day itinerary options available, all with a variety of cultural experiences and interaction with peers. The camp will run from 15–21 February 2021 and prices start from £149. Sign up via [this link](#) (or see Miss Dixon).

### Warrington Foodbank

Lymm High is organising a large collection for our local community and Warrington foodbank. The foodbank is most in need of tinned spaghetti, cream crackers, tinned carrots, soap & shower gel, sugar, dried pasta, washing up liquid, shampoo, disposable razors, shaving foam and washing powder. Students can hand any donations in at the staff room.

### School shop

Please note that the school shop is closed throughout the half-term holiday. It will reopen at 8 am on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

### Pumpkin challenge

The news is bleak, it's getting chilly and the evenings are getting short.... it mightn't feel like there's much to enjoy at the moment. But instead of getting despondent, Lymm High PTA has decided to set a challenge and invite you all to be in with a chance to win a hamper of goodies. During this half-term week, we're encouraging you to get creative with carving and send us pictures of your pumpkin artwork from home. The more ingenious the better! We'll be having several categories including:

- Best individual carving
- Best pumpkin display
- Best overall tableau (extra points for children/pets/other halves/self in fancy dress) to make it a real family affair!

Submit photos of your creations for a chance to win a Halloween Hamper of tricky treats!

To enter, simply email your pics to [Pumpkin@lymmhigh.org.uk](mailto:Pumpkin@lymmhigh.org.uk) together with a £3 donation to the PTA on ParentPay. All entries will be posted on the Lymm High Facebook page during the first week of November. The winner will be announced on 6th November. Good luck!

### Fundraising made easy

easyfundraising® is the UK's biggest charity shopping fundraising site. As more and more of us are shopping online these days, you can help us raise much needed funds for our PTA by simply clicking on this [link](#) before you make your online purchases. It is simple to use and won't cost you a penny. Simply search for Lymm High School PTA, start your shopping and raise funds whenever you shop. Thank you!

### Cashless Catering

We politely remind all parents/carers to top up your child's cashless catering accounts via Parent Pay each week to ensure your child is able to purchase food during their lunchtimes.

### LHS Lottery

Congratulations to **Mrs O'Connor** who was this week's school lottery winner! You could be a winner too!

If you have not signed up for our lottery yet, please head to our dedicated lottery website [here](#). Tickets are only £1 each week. If you sign up this half term, you could win a family ticket for four to the Harry Potter Studio Tour. Your support would be hugely appreciated.

## LOWER SCHOOL

### Year 7 surgery

The Year 7 Information, Advice & Guidance evening will be replaced by three surgeries with Mrs Worrall over the course of this year. The first surgery will take place during the 2nd week of November. Please [click here](#) to complete a short survey to tell us what questions you would like answered in this general forum.

### Year 7 Parents' Evening

The Year 7 Parents' Evening will take place on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. More details about this will be forwarded soon.

## UPPER SCHOOL

### Virtual fair

The UK University & Apprenticeship Search Virtual Fair is coming up on Wednesday 11th November from 12–6pm. The fair has been designed to feel exactly like a Careers Fair, just on your laptop. You'll be able to visit a virtual Exhibition Hall full of over 90 universities, colleges and apprenticeship providers and scroll through their colourful and informative stands and chat directly to representatives. There will also be a virtual Auditorium where webinars will be taking place throughout the day.

The event is completely free of charge, and open to students in Year 11, 12 and 13. Russell Group, red brick, modern and specialist universities will be attending, including Newcastle, Edinburgh, Cumbria, Lancaster, Aberdeen, Birmingham, UCLAN and Teesside. You can read more information [here](#).

Live webinars will be led by university representatives and apprenticeship providers and packed with advice. You can view the full timetable [here](#).

### Sixth Form Open Evening

The Sixth Form 'Virtual' Open Evening will take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November. Please [click here](#) to register your interest.

### Year 13 Parents' Evening

Year 13 Parents' Evening will take place on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November.

### Calling all Oxbridge graduates

We are looking for volunteers! Would any Oxford or Cambridge graduates be willing to help support our Year 13 students with Oxbridge interview preparation? This would likely involve mock interviews via Zoom in November to test their subject knowledge. We are particularly keen for specialists in mathematics, computer science, physics, languages, architecture or biology. You do not need experience of conducting this type of interview and we can help find appropriate questions for you to use. Anyone who is willing to help, please contact Dr Dodds ([fdodds@lymmhigh.org.uk](mailto:fdodds@lymmhigh.org.uk)).