

16 October 2020



NEWSLETTER

The latest news and updates from Rockport School



Headmaster's Headlines

Business as Usual: Well, not quite. Moving to online learning next week as we approach half-term is something we could have done without, but it is, I think, better for our pupils to be occupied than for us to take the (much easier) option of taking an extended holiday. Those in our GCSE and A Level classes in particular have lots to do to next week if they are to remain on track but it will also be beneficial for all to continue to have some structure and routine to their day. A full programme of remote learning will be in place, therefore from 0840 on Monday until 1200 (Noon) on Friday, at which point we will break for half term. Teachers have already been busy already dusting off those webcams and laptops in anticipation of this eventuality and their professionalism and sense of duty is evident once again. I thank them in advance for going that extra mile for our children and young people.

Boarding on the Ridiculous: If you think next week is a challenge, spare a thought for all those students who live here 24/7 and who, next week, will enter a parallel universe in which they stay in school but are taught remotely by their teachers who will mainly be working from home. And it doesn't end there: to avoid the dreaded two-week quarantine, many of our overseas students will remain here throughout half-term (I don't want to even think about what will happen over the Christmas holiday yet - but I am definitely ordering the bigger turkey). Sincere thanks to all those staff who are stepping up to supervise and provide for our residential students throughout the next two weeks and beyond.

The Parent Trap: Finally, I know that it is far from ideal to have the children stuck at home with you at this time especially when many of you are also trying to work from home. And as good as the online experience is, it is definitely not school and can still be a challenge for many children, especially for those little ones in Early Years. So, my thanks to you also for your support and cooperation in helping us to maintain some kind of continuity and normality next week.

George Vance
Headmaster

General News

Online Learning

Remote teaching will resume for all students from 0840 on Monday morning. Students are reminded to follow their timetables and ensure that they are present for each class, as attendance records will be taken. Mr Vance has agreed to finishing online learning at lunchtime on Friday, as a lead in to the half term week!

New English Teacher

Today we say goodbye to Mrs Hobson who is going off on maternity leave and wish her all the very best for the upcoming birth. We welcome her replacement, Miss Bridges, who will take over Mrs Hobson's timetable from Monday morning, albeit on our virtual classroom!

(Anti-social) Media and Mobile Phones

May I please ask all parents to keep an eye on what their sons/daughters are doing online? I have recently been dealing with a spate of unkind messages between children on social media (all of which occurred outside school and really cannot be policed by school). The impact of what children say or do online/on facetime/on social media quite often has a huge impact on their relationships within school. Irresponsible use of social media and messaging forums is often at the heart of any unkind behaviour. Time which is spent dealing with mobile phone incidents is time which should be spent on something much more worthwhile!

Staying Safe

A reminder to all of our students to stay safe and respect local government guidelines in terms of social interactions; while the temptation will be to socialise, remember that we all play our part in ensuring that this is only a temporary measure in the country!

Covid-protocol

Just a reminder that, if you, your child or a member of your household is being tested for Covid-19, you should inform the school office immediately and also let us know the outcome of the test. Also, if anyone in your household has been identified as a close contact to someone with the virus, please also let us know. By working together, we can protect ourselves and the wider Rockport community. With many thanks for all the sterling work which has been done so far by everyone.

We received this lovely letter from Marie Curie thanking us for our recent donation and we wanted to share their kind words.

Mrs Rhonda D. Palmer
Deputy Head



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9 October 2020

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www.mariecurie.org.uk

Supporter Ref: 7125477

Dear Emma,

I am writing today to say a huge thank you to Rockport School for supporting Marie Curie and for your very kind donation of £908.31; which was received in memory of the late Mrs Julia Smith. In addition to the fundraising by Brenda and Brian Montgomery you have helped raise an incredible £4065.31.

The wonderful amount of money will have a huge impact locally and will ensure that people living with a terminal illness in Northern Ireland get the care and support which they need.

Our work simply wouldn't be possible without supporters like you. Thank you so much for supporting Marie Curie.

Yours sincerely,


Gavin McGucken
Community Fundraiser

Sixth Form

Remote Learning

Our sixth form pupils have all been given the information required for remote learning and should be able to access all classes, following their normal timetables each day. Both groups have been added to a daily sixth form register using Google Meet where they should sign in with Mrs Thompson and Mrs McBride each morning. We realise we are facing uncertain times for all of our students and they can contact us if they have any questions, worries or need someone to talk to, either via email or Whatsapp.

UCAS Classes

UCAS classes for R14 will continue on Monday period 6 and over lunch time for Sport students using Meet. I encourage all students to continue to work on their applications and to attend any virtual open days that are relevant for their university choices next year.

We wish everyone well and keep safe over this time.

Heather McBride

Head of Sixth Form

Upper Juniors enjoying their Spooky Halloween Hunt!



Golf

It was great to see our Elite golfers back out onto the course, doing what they love! What a lovely morning it was too at Hollywood Golf Club.



Early Years

The Early Year's teachers wanted to say 'Thank You' to all of you in advance of next week! Online learning for our youngest children requires your support and we really appreciate your help in ensuring your children continue to learn at home. Hopefully you are on now all connected with your child's 'virtual' classroom. If you are experiencing any difficulties, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Lynn Athanasiou

Head of Early Years