

Newsletter to Parents July 2020

Edited by Mrs Sahi / Mr Smeath



Herschel *Grammar School*



Parents and all visitors to the school should enter the building through the main reception area at the front of the school. Please do not use the pupils' entrance. Safeguarding our pupils on the school site is a priority.

Highlights

Lockdown Photography Challenge
Winner - **Maissa Djouadi** - Abstract



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As we draw another academic year to a close, I have to say that this is possibly the most unusual year of my 28 years in teaching, but I am so very proud of the whole school. Despite being physically distant, we have pulled together and found ways to be the warm, caring and supportive community we have always been.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly thank all the staff of the school. They have not hesitated to respond positively to the situation, to adapt their working practices, to embrace all things technological and to ensure they continued to support our pupils whatever their role in the school. They have all been absolute heroes throughout.

I have been immensely heartened by lots of the extra-curricular activities which our pupils have been involved in. Much baking seems to have taken place. We have walked, run and cycled to New Zealand. There have been sporting and photography and reading and science and engineering and many more challenges. We have been encouraged to watch theatre and get involved in quizzes. Apparently, Year 9 have talent, too. Thank you for everything you have got involved in and thank you for all your positivity.

Whilst the pandemic has been a very challenging and uncomfortable experience I sincerely hope that some of the global positives become permanent changes. I was reading an interview with Naomi Klein, the writer and social activist this week. She said that the pandemic has introduced a softness into our culture. When you slow down, you can feel things whereas when you're in that constant rat race, it doesn't leave much time for empathy. Maybe one of the reasons for the multiracial support for the Black Lives Matter campaign has been as a result of people having the time and space to empathise. I hope the ability and desire to put ourselves into other people's shoes stays with us always.

Finally, I am very much looking forward to us all returning in September. Do look out for emails and parentmails over the Summer, as I am sure there will be much to communicate with you. Remember to follow the Covid-19 advice so that you and your families stay safe and well.

Wishing you a lovely Summer break.

By Ms Rockall, Headteacher

Year 10 Returning to school

After the seemingly never-ending lockdown, going back to school was a much anticipated and appreciated experience to enjoy. My entire outlook upon school has vastly changed as I appreciated the sheer sense of community encompassed within its walls. Never again will I take this feeling of belonging to this community for granted. The immense joy of seeing my friends and even teachers is unmatched as we are once again reunited within the classroom. This short time back at school has not only been an educationally beneficial experience, but it has also helped my sense of well-being as it has provided an escape from the monotony of being stuck indoors.

By Samir Akram 10S

Before I entered the school, I knew that everything would be different but when I entered the school I realised how many precautions the school and my subject teachers had actually made. It was nice to see everyone, both teachers and my other classmates. In fact, I realised as I was learning, how much I took school for granted and now, as I enter Year 11, I am looking to make the most of all my classroom time, whenever that may be.

By Isa Faisal 10H

Returning to school for the first time after a long time may have seemed to be an anxiety-inducing event, especially with all the precautionary measures put in place and the fact that we couldn't embrace our friends who we hadn't seen in such a long time. Yet the experience was definitely meaningful; much better than sitting at home and staring at my computer all day long. I enjoyed being able to talk to my friends again and interact with my teachers face-to-face; it was honestly really helpful to consolidate what we had learnt at home. Despite the weirdness of having to walk into school, stand on crosses 2 metres apart and keep a distance from our friends, all in all it was definitely a beneficial experience...though I can't wait for normality!

By Eshal Nadeem Akhtar

Lockdown has been a monotonous yet enriching experience. I have spent more time with my family and I have had more time for myself. It has been a difficult time, but the teachers have helped by giving us excellent support for our online learning. Of course, I miss my friends very much. I can't wait to go back to school in September. Although it is going to feel different and weird for sure, we are lucky to have the Herschel community to support our return back!

By Diya Thamaraiselvan (Didn't go to school but still wrote about how she felt)

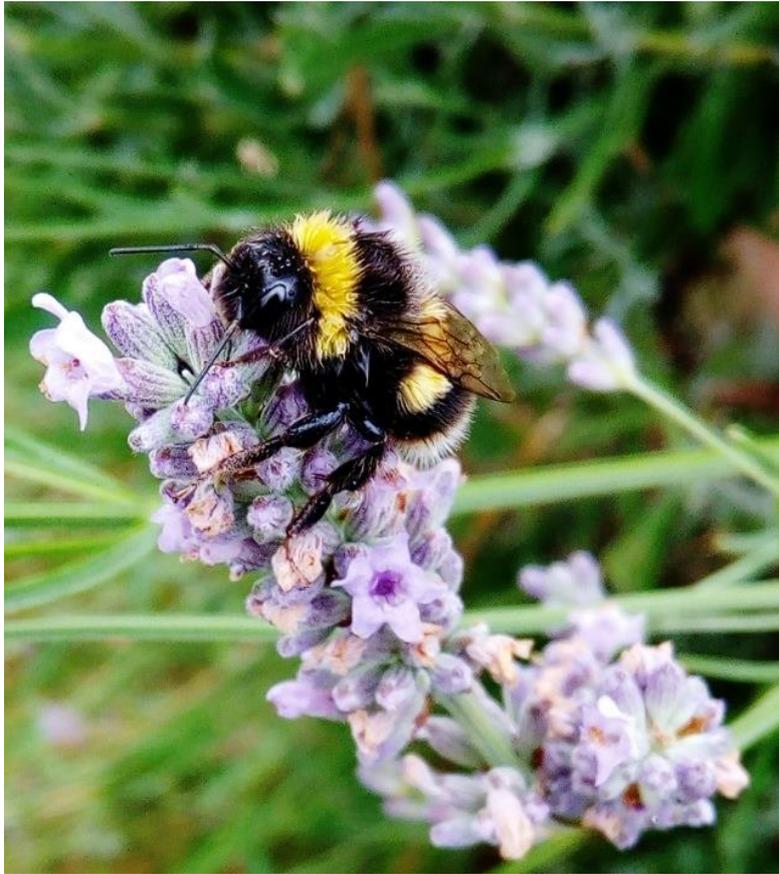
'On finding out that Year 10 would be returning to school, I was not quite sure how I felt. On one hand, I was glad to finally be returning to some sense of normality. However, I was also very anxious because I was aware that it was not going to be at all like the school environment that we left behind in March.

For example, when arriving, we could not just casually burst into the school building like we normally did; we had to line up outside the sports centre and wait for a member of staff to let us enter. We then had to wait in the playground, standing on crosses, with each pupil two metres apart from the other. Before entering the classroom, a great big dollop of antibacterial gel was squeezed into our hands. Only after all these safety measures had taken place, were we allowed to proceed with the actual learning!

Despite it being totally different, after months of staring at my laptop screen, having some face-to-face education – albeit only a couple of hours each day – felt refreshing and gave me the boost I very much needed. It was great to be back in the classroom with my peers and to have the interaction in class that is simply not possible with online learning.

By Harman

Lockdown Photography Challenge
Winner - **Noble Sam** – Wildlife



Reflections by Head Boy and Head Girl on their time at Herschel

Hello, my name is Oliver and I am the resident head boy here at Herschel Grammar School. I have attended Herschel from Year 7 and am going to take you through a brief history of my time as a student here at our school.

My journey began as a much shorter and egg-like boy who was both fearful and excited about walking into this brand new environment, full of a bunch of other children who were both bigger and more intelligent than I was.

Year 7 to Year 9 seem like one big blur of doing every subject under the sun and basing which subject you prefer primarily on if your friends were in that class with you. As I moved through to Year 10, I had decided what I wanted to take forward and study for my GCSEs. During Year 10 your GCSE exams seem like a distant fantasy, that a future version of yourself who is well informed and has revised for months on end will take. By the time Year 11 had come around, I had realised that it was in fact me who was going to have to sit those exams and the long process of revision began. Before I knew it, I was waiting on the benches outside the hall trying to cram any knowledge I could into my brain as I awaited my first exam.

Thankfully, my GCSE exams went well enough for me to be able to get into Sixth Form at Herschel to study my A-levels. The next year consisted of trying to figure out what on earth you are meant to write in a personal statement and deciding what universities I wanted to apply to, all while

studying my chosen subjects in far greater depth than ever before. Then my final year of secondary education began. I finished learning all the content and skills needed in order to complete a set of exams, which were a summation of everything I had been working towards for the past seven years of life. As we all know, for better or for worse, the current pandemic has prevented me and thousands of other students from taking our A-level exams. However, for as much as COVID-19 has taken from us, it has also given us an opportunity to reconnect with our families and has brought a new wave of technological learning that may shape the education system forever. So, stay safe, keep learning and make the most of what we have got.

By Oliver Coombe

What a year it has been! Let me start off by saying I hope you are all well and have had an opportunity to reset during quarantine. It almost feels like yesterday when I first entered the front gates of Herschel. The morning of my first day, I remember the butterflies in my stomach from the excitement of moving into secondary school and the fear of the unknown. In the end, it was not as scary as I thought it would be. Life at school became easier as I came to meet new people and finally get to know my way around the green and blue stairs and of course the one-way system. Before I knew it, I'd finished the first lesson and then the next four. The days become weeks, the weeks become months and the months eventually led to seven years at Herschel.

Then suddenly with only a day's warning, the day all of Year 13 had been anticipating, the last day of school was suddenly brought forward by 2 months, with many mixed emotions and confused faces as we were all unsure of how we were going to complete our A-Levels. It was not the way we wanted to end 15 years of education. However, lockdown has given me the opportunity to learn new skills and catch up on some much-needed sleep.

Growing up, I would hear adults tell me that "My secondary years were some of the best years of my life." I know what you are thinking, I was in the same position, just wanting to rush onto the next stage in my life: to get into university, get a degree, get my dream job... At the time I did not realise I was living some of my best years but looking back at the memories and adventures I have been on I would not change a moment. If you want to make your time at Herschel some of the best years of your life you need to do the things you enjoy, and you need to push yourself out of your comfort zone.

Some of my highlights in my school life have been being part of the school sports teams and competing against other schools. The feeling of doing something that not only I enjoyed but the school spirit that came along with the team effort, I will never forget. Another highlight was completing my Bronze, Silver and Gold DofE, along with the many school trips. Students, whatever it is you want to do, join a club whether it's choir, rounders, diversity club or mock trials, and if there isn't a club you like, see if you can make one!

There is this quote I live by: "*Do one thing every day that scares you.*" Being given the opportunity to become Head Girl was a major personal achievement. If you were to tell my Year 7 self that I would be standing in the hall delivering assemblies to the whole school, I would have run away in fear. Although, I may still not be that great at public speaking I am glad I have overcome this fear and now I can confidently say I enjoy speaking to you all. There have been challenging times

during school where I would count down the days until the next school holiday but now I am counting down the days until University. When times get rough remind yourself what you are doing all of this for, write down your goals and take a moment to be thankful for what you have already achieved.

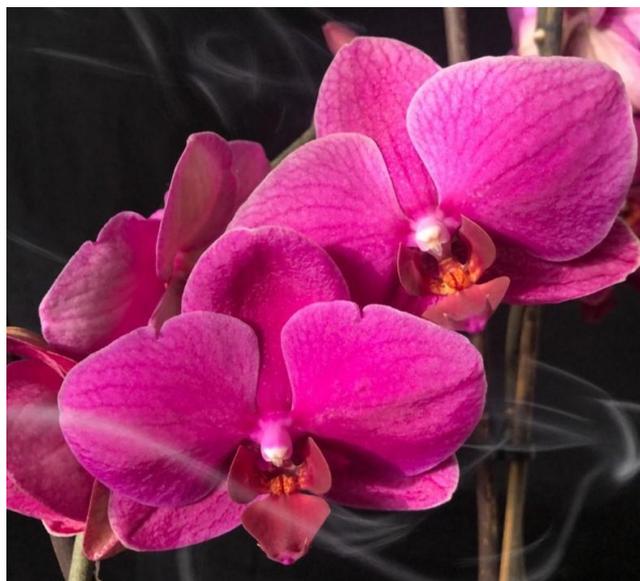
Something else that secondary school has taught me is that the peers you surround yourself with have a tremendous influence on your beliefs and actions. I'm proud to say the friends I have made throughout school have taught me a lot, have supported me and given me some lifetime memories. I am so thankful to have each of them in my life.

It is a shame we were unable to celebrate presentation afternoon this year, as there are so many students that deserve to be celebrated for their efforts. However, this year I think you all deserve to be celebrated for constantly persevering under unprecedented circumstances. Being able to develop the self-resilience to wake up on time to complete your schoolwork, doing tests online, not being able to see your friends and becoming independent learners! All these skills you have gained will take you all far in life and I can't imagine how challenging it must have been to stay motivated. Well done!

But completing my A-Levels and GCSEs is not an end goal itself; instead it is the stepping stone into the next chapter of my life. Wherever your futures take you, let it take you there. Your failures and successes are just part of the journey. Lastly, I would like to thank all the students and teachers for constantly pushing me to be my personal best. Without both the students and teachers, there would be no Herschel spirit so I can only thank you again for some of the best years of my life. I hope that each of you continue to dream big, strive for your best and make memories so when you look back at your secondary years you can smile at the good times.

By Anthea Cheung

Lockdown Photography Challenge
Winner - **Jasleen Kaur** – Macro



Art Project

Usually Year 7 would have just completed their summer project in class. The project based on monsters was designed to encourage creativity and imagination. So, with a few tweaks to the project here and there, Year 7 were tasked with having to create their own 3D sculpture using recyclable or discarded items at home instead!



There were some fantastic pieces of work and a well done to all of you that put the time and effort in. I was particularly impressed with Kabir Goyale's take on the theme. The craftsmanship and effort that Kabir put in was exemplary. However, it was Kabir's decision to draw upon something that is dominating our lives, that made it that bit more special. Can you guess what it is?

By Miss Shafique, Head of Art

Well-being for students

As we go into the 6-week summer holiday and having experienced these unusual and challenging times, mental health and well-being is the top priority for all students. I want you to enjoy this summer holiday to its full potential, and never feel alone or feel like you are unable to speak to someone if you are experiencing any issues.

I have listed a few suggestions below, which are ways to boost your well-being and stay positive throughout the summer holidays:

- Socialising with friends through texts, calls, FaceTime, etc,
- Playing games online as that may be your way to interact with your friends,
- Doing some sort of sport, such as going for a run, playing football with friends, going for a walk,

- Going out with family,
- Meeting with friends, whilst respecting the certain conditions,
- Pursuing your hobbies or creating new hobbies,
- Watching the films and series you have been waiting to watch.

Take a break from your school work for a few weeks and allow yourself to relax and reset. Also, during the summer holidays, if you haven't heard from someone in a while, check up on them, and ask how they are, and if they need anything. If we all help each other that is the best way to spread positivity and keep each other well, within the Herschel Community.

Always feel free to email me about any issues or concerns or if you just need someone to speak to.

Email: 213868@herschel.slough.sch.uk

***Your Deputy Head Boy and Wellbeing Senior Prefect
Anish Pankhania***

#Coping – Family life during the lockdown

[Click here](#) to find a useful document compiled by the East Berkshire Clinical Commissioning Group and available on their website.

Looking for Talent

We would love to hear about our students' achievements in the wider world. Please send a brief description of any such outstanding successes to talented@herschel.slough.sch.uk, stating the students' name and form.

We will celebrate them in forthcoming newsletters.

Mrs Smith, HPP Co-Ordinator



Lockdown Photography Challenge
Winner - **Rohan Bhatti** – Open

