



Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Parents,

I am very conscious of the varied impact of the crisis on the extended LRGS community. I hope that LRGS continues to be a very positive source of structure and belonging for every single pupil.

Well done to everyone who tried our **Easter challenges**. Thank you to families who shared photos and video clips, which were much enjoyed!

Thank you to everyone who completed our **remote learning survey**. The huge number of constructive comments was very encouraging, and your feedback is important. I have attached a summary of some responses.

### Extra-curricular life

It is good to see **extra-curricular** opportunities re-emerging in this new era, with some details attached to this mailing. More projects are on their way! Well done to students who took part in excellent **Parallel Histories** inter-school debates this week, and to **Sixth Formers** who participated in a video forum about the pandemic hosted by a Danish school.

### Short film competition

Entries are open for our first video competition of the term, looking for creative responses (max. 50 seconds) themed around social distancing. Prizes for best entries supported by the Friends. Details on Teams!

### Careers profile and guidance

Mrs Carol Hope ([chope@lrgs.org.uk](mailto:chope@lrgs.org.uk)), our independent careers advisor, has sent information to pupils across the school to log onto the online platform **Start Careers Profile**, with further information and areas to explore. Please get in touch if you have questions or want some advice.

The Sixth Form team have also started briefing Lower Sixth students on the UCAS process for university applications.

### Academic priorities for the term

Teachers are likely to set some key assessments or assignments later in the term for Lower Sixth and Year 10 students. Success and achievement in school work should support our pupils' well-being, and we do not seek to add inappropriate stress. There may be some type of assessments in some subjects for other year groups in due course.

### Lockdown reading

Congratulations to Ben Unsworth (10T) who has published his first book of short stories, co-authored with his father: **Uneasy Beginnings**. Released next week, it is described as "a pocket-size sample from the best in modern horror"! £4.99 paperback or 99p e-book <https://blackshuckbooks.co.uk/shadows-21/>

With thanks for your support and all best wishes ~ Dr C.J. Pyle

 @LRGSLancaster #LRGStogether



Virtual fieldtrip – FC Cologne!



In different times - Two years ago today!



Sixth Formers working as NHS and care home volunteers

## Remote learning survey

We had over 800 responses from pupils and parents after the first ten days of remote teaching. Thank you for all your support. We are grateful for feedback as we find sustainable processes for the long-haul!



### Some key themes

#### 1. Teachers are approachable

Almost all pupils said that they know how to seek help if they need it. There were a huge number of appreciative comments, such the Year 7 pupil who wrote: "I think that my teachers have coped with this situation brilliantly. Keep up the good work!"

#### 2. The school has communicated well

Almost all parents thought that communication about the changes had been good (86%) or satisfactory (12%). Some parents identified guidance on how to support their children with remote learning as an area where they would like more information, and we are following this up.

#### 3. Technical issues

We have dealt with some technical issues raised, e.g. muting microphones. We have asked teachers to schedule 'live' lessons in the calendar. An area still causing concern is that homework and deadlines are difficult to keep track of. We are using Assignments in Teams as the main area where teachers post homework. At the moment we are not asking teachers to replicate that work on Show My Homework, because of the extra time that this involves. We are reviewing this and trialling how best to do this in Teams, but it is work in progress.

#### 4. Misdemeanours

We have now asked teachers not to give misdemeanours for missed work. We realise that technical or other difficulties have sometimes meant that blameless pupils have been stressed about this. Sorry!

#### 5. Most pupils are doing well, although distraction is a challenge

Over 90% of pupils said that they were always or sometimes in contact with friends and family, eating well and taking exercise, had a good daily routine, and had time to relax as well as working. This is good news! Distraction is a challenge for quite a lot of students.

#### 6. Some pupils have felt a bit overwhelmed at times

The daily structure has been very positive for most pupils. There were differing opinions, but pupils and parents were more likely to say that school is setting *too much* rather than *too little* work. "What I could do in 1 period at school takes me an hour" (Year 9). "Teachers think we can do all the work in a lesson. But if we are unable to finish before the next period, it begins to pile up and we are forced to slave away after school." (Year 9)

#### 7. We need to get the balance right between online and off-line work

Screen time is a concern, now that so much of life has gone online. Our rule of thumb is that most teachers are "present" for about 50% of lessons overall, although this varies according to subject and individual circumstance. We have asked teachers to end lessons a few minutes early so that pupils aren't continually at their screens. We will be promoting activities for "Head, heart and hand" during the term. We have asked all students to complete a well-being survey today – we will be doing this regularly.

Other areas that we are working on include developing our extra-curricular opportunities, more form activities and assemblies, formalising attendance monitoring, and planning some whole school events.

Pupils' physical and mental well-being is our absolute priority. We hope that academic progress will be a really positive part of this, giving opportunities for learning, engagement and success. Everyone is on a steep learning curve at the moment, so please keep in touch with comments or concerns.