



DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS
building the future

Weekly Update

Friday 22 May 2020

Key information

Mental Health Awareness Week

An initiative founded by the Mental Health Foundation, this year the theme was kindness:

"Kindness is an antidote to isolation and creates a sense of belonging. It helps reduce stress, brings a fresh perspective and deepens friendships. Kindness to ourselves can prevent shame from corroding our sense of identity and help boost our self-esteem. Kindness can even improve feelings of confidence and optimism."

We're passionate advocates of good mental wellbeing for children across the Schools, but also for parents, guardians and family members. We're embracing technology to ensure we can provide the same high-quality pastoral support during this period of distance learning.

Our school counsellors are still working to support pupils and their families and staff via telephone or video calls. Counselling will also be provided over the summer holidays for those currently receiving it and for anyone who requires it. If you would like more information about this, please email our School Nurse Mrs Procter on la.procter@dameallans.co.uk

Mrs Procter and our Assistant Head of Sixth Form Mrs Downie have also been arranging virtual 'coffee and a catch up' sessions with older pupils and peer mentoring between our Sixth Form students and younger pupils has been successfully moved to an online setting.

You'll find some resources on our designated [coronavirus](#) page of our school website, some of which specifically focus on supporting mental health during lockdown and social isolation. A [Junior Wellbeing Google Site](#) has also been set up to provide information and tips to help you during this time.

If you have any need of further support with your mental wellbeing during this time, we encourage you to reach out to us. Along with the members of staff already mentioned, Mrs Farren at the Junior School is a trained Mental Health First Aider and our chaplain Rev'd James is also available to contact for support.

NSPCC support for parents and guardians

A recent funding boost of £1.6m from the government has enabled the NSPCC to expand its helpline service to protect more young people and it now includes vital advice and mental health support for parents. Please click the link below to access the NSPCC website.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice and support for parents and carers](#)



Dame Allan's Schools



@DameAllans

Dame Allan's @ Home

Geography

One of the most wonderful things to come out of distance learning has to be the increasingly creative ways our teachers have found to teach their subjects. The latest to impress us is the Year 6 geography challenge to climb England's tallest mountain, Scafell Pike.

Currently studying 'mountains', the children had to work out how many flights of stairs 6,180 steps would be in each participant's house and how many flights they would have to do each day over a two week period if they were to replicate the steps needed to reach the summit of Scafell Pike. We're sure you'll agree, this is a truly amazing achievement for all of the pupils - particularly those who got to the top. Well done, Year 6!



John Muir Day

Sometimes it is difficult to remember life before lockdown and social distancing rules, so thank you to Lewis and Haylie for this fantastic report of their trip to Holy Island for John Muir Day in March.

[Read the report here](#)

Nursery

Children in the Nursery have been learning about 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle. They have been busy making story maps to remember the events in the story and completing lots of activities linked to this story.

Isabella enjoyed the challenge of creating a caterpillar out of fruits and vegetables and Evan has been busy creating a caterpillar using his cars.



Sports

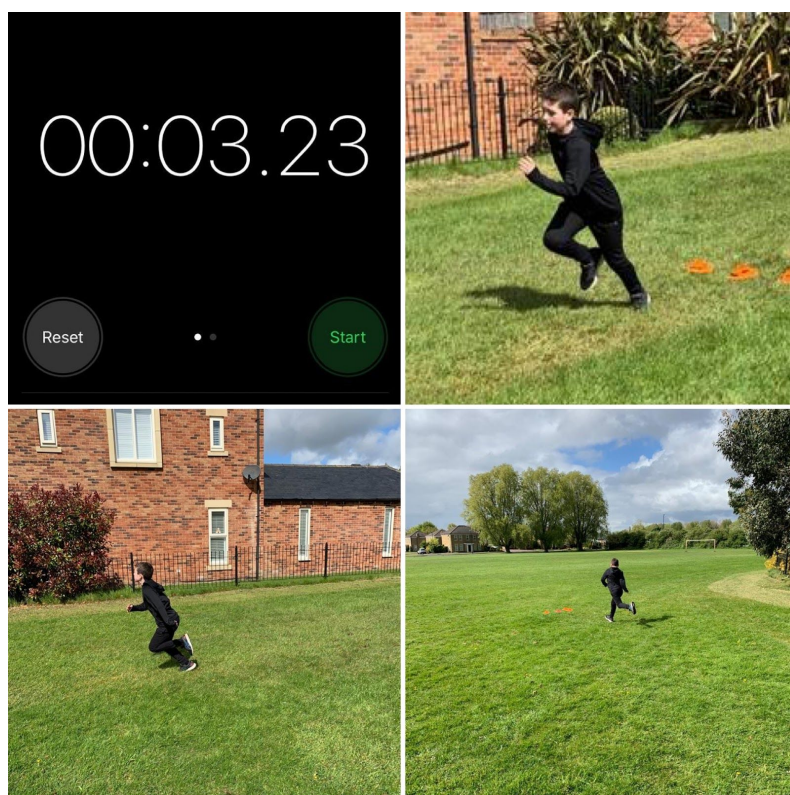
Our fantastic sports department has been posting fitness challenges, skill challenges and other useful tips and tricks on their Sports site. There are lots of things to do to keep you active - perfect for the half-term holidays!

[Click here](#) to take a look.

Children at the Junior School have been doing some virtual sports fixtures with the RGS. So far they have completed three challenges: a standing long jump, a 25m sprint and a throwing challenge.

In each competition, the challenge has been set via a video, which Junior School parents can find on Dojo. Once the pupils have completed the challenge and submitted their scores to Miss Dobbin and Mr Twentyman, the scores are then compared with RGS to work out the winners. This has been a super popular activity with lots of pupils getting involved.

More fixtures will be set after half term, including a possible cricket fixture and some more athletics challenges.



A message from our Chaplain...

Treading where others have trod

The Feast of the Ascension - May 2020

This week's Update heralds the start of half term after perhaps the most unusual half term that Dame Allan's has seen in living memory as there has been something missing - people.

On the 21st May, the Christian community marked the Feast of the Ascension, when according to Christian tradition Jesus ascended to heaven some forty days after the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. This is an often-overlooked festival. It shouldn't be so, for this is the preface, the introduction to Pentecost and the 'birth of the Church' as those early followers of Jesus are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

But Pentecost is to come.

The Ascension, as is often testified to in art, is an occasion that concludes with an absence and an empty space - almost. From the early Orthodox Icons, to medieval wood cuts, renaissance masterpieces, Victorian stained glass and even modern (and post-modern) surrealism; images of the Ascension notably often show the figure of Jesus being 'beamed up', but importantly they also often show footprints. Darker areas in the sand or on the crushed grass flattened by real human weight. A deliberate detail to reinforce the absence of the physical being as those who are left are given the opportunity to find some independence as they wait for that moment of confirmation at Pentecost.

By the time Pentecost comes, half term will be over and some of our community may well be about to regroup for those final weeks of this academic year. The absence of the real physical presence of those who we live and work with in the community is a real challenge, and it will continue to be a real challenge; for these weeks of being apart cannot be replaced. As with the moment of Ascension, so too with our relationships; the absence might just make our hearts grow fonder. Our season of being apart could be the thing which reframes our future relationships when we regroup, for we might realise that although we will have changed, when we are united, we are stronger, more creative and fuller of greater love and compassion.

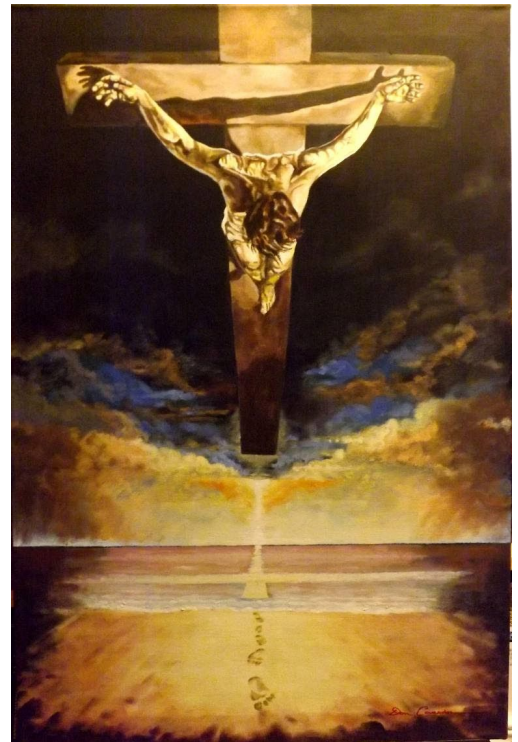
We look toward a time of being physically together once more. In all that has been over this past season, the freedom, the creativity, the sadness and anxiety we may well emerge as a different community; perhaps in large ways, perhaps only in the detail. As the disciples waited for that unifying empowering gift of the Holy Spirit, we too watch for the things that will unify our community and empower us for what lies ahead, and as we enter half term for a much needed break, let us look ahead with hope for what is to come.

Rev'd James

chaplain@dameallans.co.uk

PICTURED: 'Jesus Christ - After the Ascension - Parousia' by Don Cameron

Inspired by the surrealist painting 'St John on the Cross' by Salvador Dali. Cameron's work can be found in the Kelvingrove Gallery, Glasgow.



Get in touch!

If you have any stories or photos of your children getting creative with their remote learning, email us at news@dameallans.co.uk



Dame Allan's Schools



@DameAllans