



## A welcome from the Principal

I'm delighted to be writing my very first Principal's Welcome for the Dame Allan's Digest. Not only as a milestone for myself as the new Principal, but also as it marks another small step towards our pre-COVID 'normality'.

As expected, the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year looks a little different to usual and this 'new normal' is not without its challenges. We were unable to host our Speech Day in September, which we believe is the first time that has happened in living memory. I look forward to its return in 2021.

But of course the last few weeks have also had a feeling of familiarity. At the Senior Schools, the Harvest Festival was once again in aid of the West End Food Bank - a cause very dear to our hearts. At the Junior School, it has been lovely to see That History Bloke back in school to teach the children, albeit from a safe two-metre distance. Once again, sports has played a big part in the return to school at both sites, something shown on our social media and in the following pages of the Digest. Pleasingly our Outdoor Education provision has resumed which - come rain or shine - is a tonic to the recent weeks of screentime.

September saw two very successful Virtual Open Mornings and I thank all staff and pupils who were involved in the creation of the videos. After half term, our need for virtual communications will continue with our annual Life in the Sixth Form event taking place online on Wednesday 4 November followed by the Year 12 Parents' Evenings later that week.

If you haven't already had the chance to watch it, you can see my latest 'Message from the Principal' here: [bit.ly/PrincipalMessageOct2020](https://bit.ly/PrincipalMessageOct2020)

I wish you a safe and restful half-term break.

# Virtual Futures Fair

**This term we should have held our biennial Futures Fair at the Senior Schools. A staple event in our school calendar, the event is a fantastic opportunity for students to meet representatives from businesses and higher education institutions from across the UK and beyond. Ordinarily the school is a hive of activity on this day with exhibitors, talks and presentations, networking events and more.**

Unfortunately, the ongoing social distancing measures keeping us safe this year meant we couldn't invite all the universities and companies into the Senior School site as usual. Instead our innovative careers team went the extra mile to ensure students could benefit from this valuable resource by bringing the Futures Fair experience to life virtually.

This huge project saw Dame Allan's collaborate with over 40 institutions and is the first of its kind held by a school in the North East. The website aims to inspire pupils with advice on careers in everything from medicine to the armed forces, fashion and beyond. As well as pupils from across Dame Allan's, pupils from local partnership schools were invited to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity.

On the day of the event, goodie bags full of careers advice were delivered to each form class along with activity packs to help them make the most of the site.

**The Virtual Futures Fair will be available until 8 November. Find it at [bit.ly/DASfuturesfair](https://bit.ly/DASfuturesfair)**



## Important reminder

We politely remind all parents to be considerate of our neighbours when dropping off and collecting your child. Unfortunately, one of the residents of Fowberry Crescent has brought to our attention that cars can sometimes block driveways or junctions, creating difficulty for residents to navigate the surrounding streets.

# DASPA

**DASPA has already had a few meetings this term and we have some exciting events planned.**

The Junior School Willow Waters Pond, which was renovated using DASPA funds, is being used extensively by Junior School students and we're sure the hand bells recently refurbished from DASPA funds, the weather station and air pollution detector that have also been funded will be put to similarly good use.

As raising funds (over £600) for the School's COVID-19 Bursary Appeal through uniform sales attests, DASPA are keen to help parents at this time. We have set up a networking opportunity with

a DASPA LinkedIn page which we would like to invite any parents to join (<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13917199/>).

We are also organising a free directory of parents' businesses, which we hope will help parents to support each other. The steps needed to join this directory will be communicated in an email and the directory will be available on the Schools' website. As we have a store on-site, uniform sales are continuing at the Junior School, and DASPA is investigating lots of different

ways to start selling uniform items at the Senior Schools.

At the Junior School (with the endless support from Junior School staff), DASPA has organised some fun activities over the next academic year. The first event was an Autumn Fancy Dress day with sweet prizes, a virtual storyteller and craft activities.

At the beginning of next half term, DASPA have organised a bookmark competition with some of the bookmarks being gifted to residents in local care homes. We are hoping to plan similar activities for the Senior Schools.

In terms of fundraising, most of our events have been cancelled this year, unfortunately including our Summer Ball which will now be held in 2022. We are planning some smaller fundraising events which will be announced in the Digest, social media and by email. We are pleased to announce that

Kingswalk Law in Gosforth have offered to arrange a 'DASPA Will Month'. The firm will donate their time to make wills in exchange for a donation to DASPA. In January, parents and carers will be invited to make wills with this firm, and we ask that DASPA receives a donation of at least £100 for each will.

DASPA Junior AGM will take place on 3rd November and the DASPA AGM at the end of November. If you would like to attend, please email DASPA and if you would like to support DASPA or you have some ideas please email [daspa@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:daspa@dameallans.co.uk). You could also support us through nominating us as your chosen charity on [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com).

Many thanks to all parents and carers, and special thanks to the parents and staff who are enabling DASPA to operate at this time. Stay safe.

## Exploring the outdoors

A key purchase by DASPA last year came to fruition during lockdown with the renovation of the Junior School's Willow Woods pond area. Children from across the school are already making the most of this fantastic outdoor education provision.

Year 4 classes have enjoyed lessons which involved the pupils using recycled materials (cleaned) and scrap paper from school to build boats and sail them on the pond. They peer-evaluated their boats on the design, use of materials, buoyancy and manoeuvrability.



## The Allanian Society



The Allanian Society is enthusiastic about the future. We recognise that innovation will be required, but we share a history of innovation. When, in 1895, Allanians organised their inaugural reunion ball, it was the first such event of its kind in the North East. The current restrictions require even greater creativity to transform our practice but we are rising to the challenge.

It is great to see Allanians supporting the virtual Futures Fair, and we have already managed a successful online AGM, with Yunus Ali, Louise Little, Dr Rishi Srivastava and Jenny Wilkes being elected to the Board. We look forward to working


with our Sixth Form representatives Emily, Amelia, Oliver, Megan and Anna, with the Schools and with DASPA to keep the wider Dame Allan's family connected. We have much to celebrate and I hope to meet many of you at events this year.

Stephen Davies, *Chairman of the Allanian Society*

### Contact us

If you are interested in joining the board and helping to shape the future of the Allanian Society, please contact the Development Office: 0191 275 1500

e: [alumnirelations@dameallans.co.uk](mailto:alumnirelations@dameallans.co.uk)

We are also on Facebook, find us  The Allanian Society

# Inter House Sport

After the loss of a huge number of fixtures last year due to COVID-19, it was a delight to welcome back our students to sport this term. Part of the activity so far has been our Big Weekends of Sport. These house fixtures ran through September and October with pupils taking part in rugby, football, hockey and netball, representing their houses with great pride. The attitude, skills and passion on display was commendable and those pupils who represented their houses should be incredibly proud of their efforts in some difficult weather conditions.



The winners are:

	Netball	Hockey
Year 7	Aidan	Aidan
Year 8	Cuthbert	Bede
Year 9	Cuthbert	Bede
Year 10	Cuthbert	Cuthbert
	Rugby	Football
Year 7	Ridley	Brewer
Year 8	Plummers	Ridley
Year 9	Brewer	Brewer
Year 10	Hedley/Plummers	



Please keep an eye out for more information on all sports, extra-curricular clubs, and Saturday events that we have planned for the next half term.



## Tell us a little bit about yourself and your team.

I oversee the catering department for Dame Allan's. My team spans both the Junior School and Senior Schools sites, catering for children from age 3 to 18.

I'm from a mainly hospitality background and have worked all over the world, such as Australia and South America, working at several locations within the Malmasion and Holiday Inn brands as well as Operations at the Alnwick Gardens.

I chose to work in education when I did my degree at Leeds Met University where nutrition and food standards for education became of great interest to me. I went on to be recognised by the BBC for my catering that was based on using local suppliers and farms - this is still something I am

## In conversation with... Mrs Anderson, Catering Manager

very passionate about and would like to do more of this with the amazing team we have at Dame Allan's Schools.

My team comes from a wealth of backgrounds; some of them come from the best North East independent restaurants and high-end chains, and bring valuable experiences such as patisserie and front of house, and some have been here at Dame Allan's for over 20 years so are fine-tuned to how life at Dame Allan's works. Both aspects are equally as valuable in running a successful catering department.

**Some of the ways we run Dame Allan's has changed since the outbreak of COVID-19. What's been the biggest challenge to your department?**

Reducing the offer has been harder than you'd think as trying to gauge what pupils will go for on a day to day basis is a bit like picking the lottery numbers! Many suppliers completely shut down during the lockdown period so getting supplies isn't quite as straightforward as it

has been and we have often had to change ingredients and menu items to accommodate these issues.

Often making more of one item is pretty restrictive as we simply don't have the space to facilitate cooking that amount, such as our roasts or fresh fish, in one day. Catering for over 1000 children with such a broad spectrum of tastes, dietary requirements and personal choice is really difficult to reduce down!

**And what are you most proud of over the last six months?**

I'm most proud of how my teams at both sites have pulled together and risen to the challenges we face in these forever changing situations, and even more so how our pupils have adapted to the situation - I feel they are the ones facing the biggest changes and have seemed to cope extremely well.

**How does this differ from what you had planned for the 2020-21 academic year?**

This year was supposed to be about changing the menus with

the seasons and using more local suppliers and produce. Historically the menus stay the same through the whole year, but I'd like to see the menu naturally change along the way throughout the year. We also had a great backbone of ideas from both the Junior and Senior Schools pupils which we very much wished to implement, but with the forever changing situations that arise from the COVID-19 outbreak we have just had to simplify the offer - not only down to resources but also from a practical sense.

**It looks like we'll be living with these socially-restricted circumstances for a little while longer. What are you putting in place for the future?**

I'd like to think that we will be able to once again offer the full options that our pupils have become used to as the pupils get used to the new way of lunch in their 'bubbles'. Hopefully, as supplies resume to a more normal level, we can then go back to our initial plans that we had for the beginning of the year - to follow the seasons to get the produce at its best.

# OLED

A huge congratulations to the 26 students from Year 13 who, at last, got out to enjoy two training days for their Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. Walking part of the St Oswald's Way, the four teams impressed the staff with their navigation and superb team work skills. They arrived at every checkpoint on time and in great humour.

It was fantastic to have our young people back outdoors on what we hope will be the first of many expeditions this academic year. We hope the students enjoyed the autumn colour and a bit of time outdoors to refresh the soul and clear the mind!



## SquadKit goes Limitless

Our uniform provider, Schoolblazer, have changed the name of their sportswear brand. Previously known as Squadkit, it is now called Limitless. The ellipse icon will continue to be used.

There will be a transition period, during which you may still receive sportswear with Squadkit internal labels. However, the design of the kit does not change and you shouldn't see a change in the garments. Parcels will also include a note to explain this to you and to inform you of the name change.

## Online Parents' Evenings

As you will appreciate, we are unable to hold parents' evenings in school this term. We have therefore arranged to hold these meetings via video conferences through a system called SchoolCloud, where you can book a five minute slot with each of your son/daughter's subject teachers.

As Year 12 is up first, full details have been sent to Year 12 parents and staff appointments are in the process of being made. Correspondence will be made with parents of other year groups in due course.

## Exams delay

The Department of Education has announced their plans for summer 2021 examinations.

**Examination series: 7 June - 2 July**

**A Level Results Day: Tuesday 24 August**

**GCSE Results Day: Friday 27 August**

Following on from the government's announcement, a letter has been sent out to parents of pupils in Years 11 and 13, further information will be provided in due course. However, please note that a Contingency Day has not yet been published so we strongly advise not booking holidays for early July to ensure there are no clashes with the potential back-up dates.

The senior management team and Heads of Departments are all in agreement that pupils are in a strong position going into this examination year. Thanks to our online provision during lockdown and distance learning, pupils were already on track to complete the course so this additional three weeks will allow for further revision. All departments are providing additional sessions over lunchtime should students feel they need extra support or guidance.

## Safeguarding at Dame Allan's

As it is likely that pupils will be restricted in their ability to socialise with their peers over the coming weeks, their activity online is likely to be of increased importance. There are a number of helpful websites (access via the Parent Portal) to help protect your child from harmful influences. Another helpful organisation is CEOP and they have dedicated sections on age appropriate help on their

website. We found this article, 'What your child needs to know about harmful content online', particularly useful. Read it here: <http://bit.ly/OnlineSafetyOctDigest>

As ever, please contact the Schools' Designated Safeguarding Leads if there is anything that you are concerned about - Mrs Fiddaman, Mrs Farren, Mr Wildsmith, Mrs Ferguson and Mrs Downie.



**DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS**  
building the future

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