



Head's Weekly Newsletter

Issue 16, 8 January 2021



Mrs Ania Hildrey, Headteacher, headteacher@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Dear Students, Families, Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the New Year, Term 3, and this issue of the Head's Weekly Newsletter.

Despite the challenges around us, I wish to take a moment to wish you all a very healthy New Year – may it bring all that you dream of your way!

We are starting this year and the term under most challenging of circumstances. Earlier this week, the Prime Minister confirmed that the new variant of Covid-19 is spreading rapidly and that it is between 50 and 70% more transmissible than the previous strand.

Schools were described as “vectors for transmission”, causing the virus to spread between households. As a direct result of this, all mainstream primary and secondary schools, as well as further education colleges were ordered to close effective immediately, with all teaching taking place remotely.

Special schools, however, represent 100% of students with EHCPs and as such, we were expected to do the impossible – stay open for all students, whilst not having all of our staff.

I apologise to all of you for the “messy” start to this week and the fact that we had to close on Tuesday to review our plans for the Term 3 operation. I realise just how disruptive this must have been for you with hardly any notice at all.

It has proven essential for us to take the time and be realistic in our offer to you. Whilst it pains me not to be able to open to all, it would be worse to do so on day 1, only to keep closing classes due to Covid-related reasons almost each day after...

For a school with 271 students, age 3-19, we have currently prioritised the following groups for our onsite provision:

- Children of essential key workers, as defined by the central government
- Children currently on Child Protection Plans (CP, section 47)
- Children currently classed as Child in Need (CiN, section 17)
- Children who are Looked After (LAC)
- Children currently subject to Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT)
- Children eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
- Students in our Early Years and Key Stage 1 (the youngest of our learners)
- Students in our Nurture Provision (most complex special educational needs requiring therapeutic support)
- Students completing internal Supported Internships (students whose employability support is essential at this point in time for them to secure best future)

All other students receive twice daily direct live interactive teaching via Zoom and will also have access to a wide range of non-interactive learning via our platforms.

If your child/family meet the above criteria, and you have not yet taken up a place but wish to do so, please contact your child's Leader in Charge via olt@abbotsleaschool.co.uk - we will do all that we can to create a space for them as soon as possible.

If you need technical support, please email: jennie.shipleigh@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

For any transport enquiries, please contact your Local Authority transport provider. For Liverpool residents, email: SEN.transport@liverpool.gov.uk

All students, families and staff continue to have access to our Multidisciplinary Team support, including direct therapy, advice and guidance. If you require this support, please contact: alison.twomey@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Additionally, we support our staff and their families with Employee Assistance Programme which offers 24/7 advice, support, guidance and discreet therapy. This service is free of charge on the point of access for our team and their loved ones and offers wide-ranging services, including financial advice. Please contact hr@abbotsleaschool.co.uk for details.

Lastly, if you are concerned about a child, at any time, please email: safeguarding@abbotsleaschool.co.uk - we are here to help. If you think the child is at immediate risk of harm, do please call the Police.

These are difficult and challenging times - we are here to help, so please do contact us, as needed, including direct emails to me via: headteacher@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

We know neither how long this lockdown will be, nor how long schools will operate in such a turbulent way. What we do know is that we did it once and we will do it again.

Despite this hope, I sadly also need to ask you to please alert us to any risk of, or positive result of Covid-19, via covid@abbotsleaschool.co.uk

Please stay at home where possible, keep to the rules of the lockdown at all times, get tested whenever possible and stay as safe as you can be in whatever you do.

On that note, I want to finish this foreword by thanking my entire team for being here for the students, their families and for each other. THANK YOU!

I  my ALS Dream Team!

Kindest regards and best wishes for the weekend,

Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher

Noticeboard

Dear Families

As we approach the mid-year point in this unusual academic year, we would like to meet with you remotely to share with you the way in which we teach, assess students' progress and share it with you.

The following sessions will be exactly the same but just at different times to suit families, so you only need to attend once. Please contact my PA, Mrs K Adair to confirm the date and time you wish to attend, by either emailing kim.adair@abbotsleaschool.co.uk or calling the school (0151) 428 1161 no later than Monday 11 January by 12 noon.

ZOOM details will be sent out to you, nearer the time, to enable you to join the session you selected and confirmed with Mrs Adair.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Family Remote Sessions	Date	Timings
Please choose one session	Thursday 14 January	10:00 to 10:45
		13:00 to 13:45
	Tuesday 19 January	17:30 to 18:15

Yours sincerely



Mrs A Hildrey
Headteacher



Mrs E Tobin
Deputy Headteacher

2020-21 Term dates

Term 3:

Term ends: 12 February 2021

February break: Monday 15 February 2021 to Friday 19 February 2021

Term 4:

Students return: 22 February 2021

Term ends: Friday 26 March 2021 at 1:00pm

Easter break: Monday 29 March 2021 to Friday 9 April 2021

Term 5:

Students return: 12 April 2021

May Day: Monday 3 May 2021

Term ends - 28 May 2021

May break: Monday 31 May to Friday 4 June 2021

Term 6:

Starts: 7 June 2021 – students return

25 June 2021 – Leavers' Day (for Y11, 12, 13, 14) and end of KS5 programme

9 July 2021 – Transition INSET Day

12 – 16 July 2021 - Transition Week

Ends: 16 July 2021 at 1:00pm

19-20 July 2021 – INSET Days (worked as staff' extended twilight days throughout the year)

School holidays: Monday 16 July to Tuesday, 31 August 2021

Deputy Headteacher

Mrs Emily Tobin, Deputy Headteacher

E: deputy@abbotsleaschool.co.uk



Dear Families,

What a week. Therefore,, let's be positive. My assembly this week features on random acts of kindness. I know many of you engaged with the assembly at home, but if you did not it is on our website. You may like to watch it with your child and discuss it with them. Alternatively, you may like your child to watch the assembly independently.

The presentation features a true story about Mahatma Gandhi. One day he was stepping aboard a train one day, when one of his shoes slipped off and landed on the track. Gandhi took off his other shoe and threw it back along the track to land close to the first shoe.

Later a fellow passenger asked him, 'Why did you do that?'

Gandhi replied, 'The poor man who finds the shoe lying on the track will now have a pair he can use.'

In 2014, this story inspired the Egyptian short film, 'The Other Pair', by the 20-year-old Sara Rozik. It won an award at the Luxor festival.

The film is very touching and can be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGh0iduZOJQ>

Please encourage your children to think about one random act of kindness they could achieve this week, as many people struggle with our third national Lockdown.

I vow to sit down this evening and message 4 people I have not spoken to for a while and ask how they are.

Warmest wishes for the coming week

Emily Tobin

Head of Autism Research & Development

Miss Sara Muršić, Head of Autism Research & Development
E: sara.mursic@abbotsleaschool.co.uk



Dear Families, Partners and Friends of Abbot's Lea School

The start of this term was not easy for our staff or our families, but I am proud of the quick and thorough organisation we did as a team, which allows us to focus on education and support in the coming period. I am even more proud of the whole staff team, who managed to set aside all COVID-related issues for a day and engage with our online INSET event on Monday.

We had discussions about every aspect of our School Development Plan and invited everyone's comments and ideas for future. Until we analyse all comments and create a joint picture of our school development priorities, I would like to remind you of the research method I briefly introduced in my 5-minute talk.

Action research is a great way of helping you to make your practice more effective and more principled, but also, it is a great way of driving your own professional development. Action research can be defined as **“a reflection and action upon the world, in order to transform it”**. It translates into 3 key questions:

1. **WHAT:** What do we want to change?
2. **HOW:** How are we going to change it?
3. **EVIDENCE:** How are we going to see that change?

Amateur and experienced researchers differ in their awareness of limitations. We cannot change the whole world with our small-scale action research projects, but we can change our immediate environment, which is a big part of our students' worlds. For that reason, it is important that we keep in mind our strategic scope. That is:

- **Our school** – our projects take place within our school site and community
- **Our vision** – our projects help us become the best specialist school
- **Our methods** – our projects are in line with positive behaviour support, restorative practice, SCERTS and other methods established in our practice

Our research projects and innovations should benefit our students. That can be accomplished very directly by improving our teaching and support, or in a more indirect way by making our processes more efficient, therefore ensuring more time or resources for direct student benefit.

We are also focusing the potential of these projects to be shared with other schools and organisations externally. We are proud of our practice and we want you to know that the school is behind you for making a visible impact.

I am still collecting your research ideas, so feel free to contact me with your vision of innovation. If you need more information, you can ask me or check out one of many online resources about action research:

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2019/09/22/research-project/>

Take care, stay safe!

Ms Sara Mursic

Care and Safeguarding

Ms Alison Twomey, Head of Care and Safeguarding

E: Alison.twomey@abbotsleaschool.co.uk



Happy New Year to all our families

It is such a shame that educational has been disrupted again but we must carry on and make the best of the situation for as long as it continues. There will be some changes to the nature of activities we can safely provide at this time (no offsite trips for example) but I am certain that all students will continue to benefit from the range of learning opportunities we now offer.

The welfare of our students remains our top priority and class teams will continue to have high levels of contact with families. Any student who normally receives psychotherapy will be offered sessions online and our MDT are continuing to work and available to support families and students if this is requested.

Home visits will continue where needed and families are welcome to request this additional support. Visits to check on students may also be undertaken when we have been unable to make contact with families for a period of time. I am aware that a lockdown during the cold winter months may put a huge strain on families, particularly financially, but we are standing by to help and encourage families to get in touch if they need support.

For now, we must crack on with the year and keep our fingers crossed that the vaccination programme helps us to turn a corner with this terrible illness. I wish all families a safe and relaxing weekend.

School Business Support

Mrs Michelle Griffiths, Head of HR

E: michelle.griffiths@abbotsleaschool.co.uk



Welcome back and Happy New Year to all our students and staff. What a week it has been! After planning for many different scenarios, we are now up and running and open to some students. Thanks to all of our staff for their hard work and patience this week.

We started the week (even though it seems like months ago now) with a training day which enabled our teams to input into our School Development Plan for the coming years, through identifying their priority areas for projects and development. There were some great ideas coming through for us to explore.

This week we have also received our COVID Lateral Flow testing kits from DfE and set up and trialled our testing room and process. Thanks to all of those who have completed their training and commenced testing with our staff. We will be expanding our operation next week to include more staff who wish to be tested and will be shortly reviewing testing for secondary students. Further information to follow.

Hope everyone has a relaxing weekend.

School Business Support

Mr Andrew Cocklin, Head of Finance and Operations

E: andrew.cocklin@abbotsleaschool.co.uk



What a start to a new term we have had, from planning to have everyone back, to suddenly being hit with a National lockdown at 8pm on a Tuesday night and having to completely rewrite our plans! It certainly has been a challenge. However, it has been helped, hugely by the supportive and positive attitude of all our staff to ensure that we stayed open for as many students as possible.

For those students attending, I fully appreciate there have been a few issues with transport, however we are working closely with the SEN Transport team to ensure that all students are back to their normal transport plan, and as of Thursday afternoon it looks as if we are there. Any students who will be coming back next week who have not attended this week their details have been forwarded, to the SEN transport team to ensure travel support is in place. However, if you do need to contact them directly for clarification, their number is **0151 233 6511**.

No final decision has been made by Government, as to the Free School Meal system that will be put into place for those students unable to attend school. As such, we will be issuing vouchers to all eligible families whose children are not able to currently attend school, as we fully appreciate that it is a difficult time, and we will always try our best to help families where we can. This will come via email and are scheduled to be issued at some point on Friday.

We have also distributed more laptops home to students to enable them to continue to learn from home. Thank you to the staff who helped support this by delivering these personally.

Happy Birthday



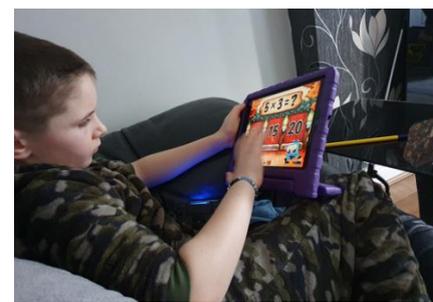
Primary Department:
Gerard for 08 January
Kaiden for 09 January
Ted for 13 January

Secondary Department:
Justin for 08 January
Jacob for 09 January
James for 13 January

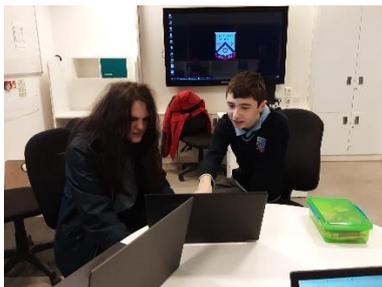
We wish you all a **Wonderful Birthday** and have fun!



Week 16 Photos



Spain Class Life Skills Challenge today was to make your own bed. Well done Josh for sending in your evidence!



**SLOW
DOWN
FOR BOBBY**



STOP, LOOK, LISTEN & THINK



**Always use the
crossing.**

