

June 08, 2020

Lockdown Roundup 2



Dear all,

This is not really a full newsletter! Just a brief letter to catch you up on a few important & exciting developments. A newsletter will follow before the end of the academic year proper.

There is nothing we would like more than to have our girls back! Classrooms, labs, gyms, dining halls, climbing walls, bike trails....all normally buzzing with the sounds of learning, of laughter, of life, are all silenced. Time stands still. Our corridors are empty. Without our girls, our staff, our FSG family we are not a school; just a collection of empty buildings - without purpose.

As I write we are busily preparing the school for an increase in numbers as some students in years 10 and 12 return to school on 15th June for 'face-to-face' time with teaching staff. We are still not yet aware what school will look like in September - whether or not all students will return and if they do, how that will happen and what it will look like.

Our new building!

In the meantime though, we have been busy.

Our new building, Sherlock, is finished.

The building is named after **Dame Sheila Sherlock, a former student of The Folkestone School For Girls.**

Dame Sheila was a true medical pioneer and innovator. Her talent, dedication and leadership were the driving force behind countless medical advances. A truly inspirational figure for current students; she was, after all, one of them once.

She noted of her time at the school that great importance was attached to ‘character development, social and personal responsibility, leadership’ and those are the values that we still hold dear today.

Six brand new classrooms, a new drama/dance studio and a Learning Resource Centre – which will provide a silent study space for Sixth Form in lesson time and house our library for all students at lunchtime.

Now all we need is the girls!



International Outlook

Many parents may be aware that we are currently working towards achieving international school status and have recently submitted our application and paperwork for this accolade.

We think this work is vital to a world leading and world changing curriculum. As the author R.J Palacio says “we cant teach empathy, but we can inspire it’ and the direct contact between our girls and their counterparts overseas gives them a personal insight into life elsewhere and brings aspects of our curriculum into a real world context. Our work in this area this year, and our success, has only made us hungry to do even more. We have reflected upon and refocused our views that curriculum should not just interest and inspire the girls, not just reflect and respond and be relevant to the world we live in but that we need to be much more ambitious; that the curriculum we teach should give our girls the knowledge, the skills, the drive, the courage, the wisdom and the values to change the world for the better; to realise that we are always ‘better together’ and provide a chance to discover that **‘there is more that unites us than divides us’**.

A second consideration is that this is a sustainable way to ensure that the vast majority of our students get some direct experience of a childhood lived elsewhere, of a global perspective – given that overseas trips are costly for students and costly in time and organisation for the staff who lead them. They are of course also for the few and not the many. That said this is a way to provide heavily subsidised trips overseas to students who would never otherwise have had the opportunity to go. This last year alone, bar COVID 19 interrupting plans, 23 students would have visited Madrid and we had begun to plan a trip for 20 students to visit Nepal next February on potentially life changing trips – all either free of charge or virtually free of charge.

However, **all** students can benefit from bringing life overseas directly into our classrooms through video conferencing technology and/or penpal exchanges and the like. Presently, too, with the current situation with COVID 19 and the likely impact for some years to come on overseas trips we feel this to be especially vital.

An international outlook is not offering lots of trips (though we do). It is a much more fundamental attempt to focus our curriculum on global issues and challenges, to provide opportunities for our girls to work with students overseas to better understand these challenges, (and each other) and to work collaboratively with teachers and educators overseas to share best practice.

If you have not had the opportunity, you can access more information on our extensive work in this field via the school website;

<http://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php/curriculum/international-outlook>

I would also direct parents to revisit our home page – values and ethos;

<http://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php>

and our curriculum section;

<http://www.folkestonegirls.kent.sch.uk/index.php/curriculum/curriculum-overview>

We continue to work with girls online and continue to be impressed with their workrate and attitude to their studies. We are looking to see how we can further improve our offer and provide more ‘live’ video lessons for the girls to see and interact with their teachers, their peers and their friends.

In the meantime I send best wishes to all in our FSG community.

Mr Mark Lester