



The Blue Coat School

Parent newsletter – December 2019

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Acting Headteacher

I am very pleased to be contributing to this newsletter in my capacity as Acting Headteacher. We have now reached the end of a very busy and productive term. Staff and students have worked very hard and students should be pleased with the overall progress they have made. Parents will have recently received progress grades or a full report that inform you of your child's individual levels and grades and we are sure they will build on these in the Spring Term. It is a credit to our students that in the last few weeks they have engaged in a range of extra-curricular events leading up to our Christmas holidays in order to raise money for charity during this season of giving. These include a Christmas market run by Year 10 students, 6th form led fund raising for Christmas Jumper day, a Year 7 form running several events supported by their form tutor and finally, as you will see below, the hugely successful Food Bank Project led by two staff and the 6th form which gathered well over 3000 items to give to those who need it this Christmas time. We are immensely proud of our students and their generosity of spirit and strong passion to support others. I acknowledge that recent events have created some challenges and concerns for us all and I look forward to working together with the whole Blue Coat community as we move into 2020 and we strive together to provide excellent provision for our students. Finally, I would like to thank you for the many ways you support the school and wish you all a very peaceful and restful Christmas and best wishes for the new year.

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Acting Headteacher



Governing Body Update

During December Governors have continued to support the school in exploring timescale and financing of the exciting ICT strategy that will improve student provision immensely in addition to supporting the work of staff. We are delighted that the new refurbished organ will soon be fully installed and look forward to the evening to celebrate this in late January.

The Governing Body would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

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Key events: Spring term 2020 – first half term

Monday 6 January:

Wednesday 8 January:

w/c Monday 13 January:

Wednesday 15 January:

Thursday 16 January:

w/c Monday 20 January:

Wednesday 22 January:

Thursday 23 January:

Wednesday 29 January:

Thursday 30 January:

Tuesday 4 February:

Wednesday 5 February:

Monday 10 – Thursday 13 February:

Spring term starts – all students return

A Level Prize-giving

Y11 internal exam week

UCAS external deadline for all applicants

Y8 Options' evening

Y13 internal exam week

Sixth Form external information evening

Admission process for Y12 2020 opens

Blue Coat for All Celebratory Concert

Y8 Parents' evening

Y13 UCAS and Finance advice evening

Y7 Parents' evening

School show



office@bluecoatschool.org.uk



www.bluecoatschoolliverpool.org.uk



twitter.com/liverpoolbcs

Year 13 Enrichment

This term highlighted a year's work of effort rewarded during the completion of the EPQ. The entire Year 13 cohort handed in either their 5000 word project or artefact after the half term break. Projects range from the review of the non-pharmacologic methods of treatment that hold a potential future in treating phantom limb pain for amputees to how do we derive the equations of motion of fluids. It is clear that our students have worked extremely hard to complete a research project that they enjoy. The benefits of the EPQ are second to none. Some Universities have already begun to give students lower entry requirements with the completion of a good EPQ grade while others are drawing upon the EPQ questions during interviews. A good EPQ rewards 28 UCAS points and gives our students the edge against other successful A level students across the country. What a brilliant way to set up our students for their first University assignment or job.

Alongside this, the Year 13s have also begun their UCAS applications. October saw the entry of early applicants while all other students are currently focussing on their personal statements. During CIAG lessons, students are beginning to hone in on their interview techniques and life skills in preparation for life after Blue Coat.

Eco-Committee: exciting news!

Great progress is being made as a result of the work carried out by the School's Eco-Committee on their pathway to gaining the Green Flag Award. We have met three times this term. All members, from Y7 to Y13, have many creative ideas and enjoy working together. It was helpful to speak to Mr Burke, Facilities and Services, who attended our last meeting and talked to us about what the school is doing already to enhance the environment. He listened with interest to thoughts on what else could be done. A highlight so far has been the planting of 400 trees near the school playing fields. This was done by members of the Eco-Committee, Miss Nock, Head of PD and Mr Settle, Estates Team. Thanks go to them for their energy and enthusiasm on a really cold day! The environmental review has been completed and we are putting together an action plan to make a difference to our environment. The main focus will be on recycling, sustainability and enhancing the School grounds by creating a garden. The Eco-Leaders are developing a newsletter to share more details about our current ideas. This will be sent out in the Spring term.

Year 11 and their future plans

As part of the School's Career programme, Year 11 students have had a variety of experiences this term. They have been researching their post-16 options and enjoyed advisory meetings with Karen Meagher, the School's independent careers advisor. These are helping students to explore their choices and make good decisions when choosing their post-16 path. The interviews, which took place in November with visitors to the school from a range of professions, put them through their paces. Student received helpful feedback on the quality of their CVs, which they had prepared in PD lessons, and were given useful advice about how to improve their interview technique. Overall, Y11 made an excellent impression and this bodes well for their future plans. The Careers Fair on 5 March 2020 will enable them to meet University ambassadors and a large number of employers so they can learn even more about the world of work.

Reflect then look forward

At the end of this first term, it is essential that all students take the opportunity to reflect and consider what they feel went well, and indeed, what they feel could have been improved upon. Each student will have received individual progress data for both their attainment and Good Student Habits. It is this information that should act as a means of helping them to focus on their reflections. Unless we learn from the past it is always difficult to make the appropriate adjustments to the future. It is important that each student has a plan going forward so that they don't feel they have to be constantly looking over their shoulder. I hope that you will be able to encourage them to do this over the holiday period, as it will enable them to commence 2020 with a renewed clarity and enthusiasm.

KS3 – Use of Social Media

The Key Stage 3 team will be working with students to build on their awareness of social media and cyber communications. This is part of the wider school philosophy to ensure that all students conduct themselves in a polite, kind, supportive and respectful manner towards others at all times, both inside and outside of school and in the physical and digital realms.

External experts, Key Stage Leaders, tutors and student ambassadors will be seeking to broaden the awareness of digital communications throughout December 2019 and January 2020, exploring the impact that decisions and statements made online and on messaging services can have.



Languages

In Languages, we are pleased to announce that the highly popular Bordeaux exchange will be taking place again next year. This is an exciting opportunity for students in Key Stage 3 and 4 to practice their French in an authentic environment and experience French culture within a host family. The trips that we run in Languages could not happen without our passionate and dedicated team of linguists, who love to see our pupils thrive using their Language skills and experience the rewards this brings for themselves. We want to offer our pupils exciting extra-curricular opportunities wherever possible, whilst striving to always provide tailored support academically. As mock exams draw closer, it is very pleasing to see many pupils make the most of our support sessions, which run throughout the week. These include KS4 French on Monday lunch times, KS4 Spanish on Tuesday lunch times and KS5 French and Spanish on Wednesday lunch times. At these sessions, students have the opportunity to 'drop-in' and ask for help with particular activities they've struggled with, to access higher-level phrases to include in their writing and speaking, or to talk through any other queries they may have. Students who are attending these sessions are seeing significant progress in their work, thanks to their own commitment alongside the commitment of our staff. We look forward to seeing our students continue to show gritty determination and drive right up until the Christmas period!

UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge

During November, Blue Coat Computer Science Students took part in the UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge. Students performed well achieving certificates in each of the three age categories entered as follows:

Junior (Y7) – 49 Distinctions and 44 Merits

Intermediate (Y8/9) – 61 Distinctions and 63 Merits

Senior (Y10/11) – 23 Distinctions and 22 Merits

Particular congratulations go to a student in in 7 Tod, who has qualified for the final round of Bebras in Oxford on Saturday 25 January. Additionally, the top 10% of students nationally will be invited to enter a follow-on competition, the TCS Oxford Computing Competition in March 2020. This will involve an impressive 161 Blue Coat Computer Scientists.

Maths Olympiad for Girls

On Tuesday 8 October 11 girls participated in the MOG, a 2½ hour competition consisting of five challenging problems aimed at girls and young women across the UK.

This was the first time we entered this competition in numbers and are pleased that four girls (Year 12 and Year 13) all achieved Distinctions. Additionally, another four girls were within a couple of marks and the Distinction boundary.

Well done to all students who participated.

Senior Maths Team Challenge

On Wednesday 14 November four Blue Coat students (Year 12 and 13) represented The School at the Regional Final of the STMC. It was a competitive event and the team beat off strong competition to secure the win. They will now go to London to represent The Blue Coat School at the National Final on Tuesday 4 February 2020. Congratulations to all students.

Senior Maths Challenge

The Senior Maths Challenge for Years 11, 12 and 13 took place on Thursday 7 November and Blue Coat students gave an excellent performance achieving 21 Gold, 50 Silver and 43 Bronze certificates. In addition, 21 students qualified for the follow-on rounds. Particularly impressive is that 5 students qualified for the British Maths Olympiad Round 1; a record number of students in recent years. This is a 3 ½ hour competition consisting of 6 problems requiring full written solutions.

Congratulations to the students from Year 11 – Year 13, for their qualification and to the other 16 students who qualified for the Senior Kangaroo, a one-hour competition consisting of 20 problems.

Student Opportunities

We were pleased to be able to facilitate the University Admission tests during the October half term for 38 of our Year 13 students, who are looking at the possibility of accessing courses at either medical schools or the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, where these admission tests are required to be taken as part of the admission process.



Blue Coat Students climb great heights for the third consecutive year!

The A-Level Performance System (ALPs) is a National benchmark of comparison for all schools and colleges in the UK at Key Stage 5, and is one that we regularly use to compare our attainment to those around us both locally and nationally. It is therefore with great pleasure that I can confirm that, our student's performance has placed The Blue Coat School in the top 25% of all schools and colleges nationally for the third consecutive year. Clearly we are so proud of our students' achievements to have been awarded this in the first place, but also we are so proud of our talented staff because without their hard work and dedication, this truly would not have been made possible. Well done to everyone!

Clubs and Societies

We encourage our students to take advantage of the rich and diverse opportunities available at Blue Coat. Students can benefit significantly from taking part in activities outside of the classroom not only to support their academic progress but also to encourage their all-round development. We have recently updated the details of our extra-curricular programme that we offer both at lunchtime and after school. These activities cater for a range of different age groups and abilities and the full list can be found [here](#).

If you have any queries regarding our extra-curricular provision, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Barends at n.barends@bluecoatschool.org.uk.

Evacuation Short Story Competition

To coincide with Remembrance fortnight, the library ran a short story competition, on the theme of evacuation, with the English department. The theme was extended to cover any sort of evacuation: from war, an environmental or climate disaster, or total global catastrophe, so that the stories could be written in differing styles and genres.

We had over 200 entries. The two winners each received a £10 Amazon gift voucher. Four runner-up prizes of stationery were also awarded.

Foodbank

A big thank you to all students and forms for the generosity this year for the foodbank appeal. We have officially beaten last year's total, which is a fantastic achievement.

Prizes have been awarded to the forms in 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each key stage.

Save the Date - Blue Coat For All Celebratory Concert, Wednesday 29 January 2020

We look forward to unveiling our restored Father Willis in Shirley Hall in January at our Celebratory Concert, with a fantastic programme of organ music performed by Old Blues and students, as well as Professor Ian Tracey, organist to the City of Liverpool. Our Blue Coat For All Community Choir made up of Parents, Old Blues, friends of the School and the local community will also take to the stage, led by Dr Chris McElroy, Director of Music at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and Old Blue from the Class of 1996. This concert, hosted by BBC Radio Merseyside's Roger Phillips, will be taking place exactly a year on from our Blue Coat For All launch concert at Liverpool Cathedral in January 2018, and we look forward to sharing the successes of our Blue Coat For All project with the whole School community.

Coming soon: The Hub Collective

We will soon be launching 'The Hub Collective', the next exciting stage of our Bright Minds Bright Futures campaign which will bring us one step closer to creating a new Learning Resource Centre for our students. Through The Hub we will work with 30 individuals, families, companies and charitable trusts who are passionate about driving social mobility in Liverpool, collectively raising £300,000 for the campaign. To find out more please contact Cat Gransden at c.gransden@bluecoatschool.org.uk



Jonathan Allday - GCSE Prizegiving

This term we celebrated the fantastic achievements of our Year 12 students at GCSE Prizegiving. We were delighted to welcome back Old Blue Dr Jonathan Allday (Class of 1979), as our guest speaker. An expert in Elementary Partial Physics, Jonathan has taught at prestigious schools across the country. No longer found in the lab, Jonathan now advises schools on digital matters. As well as sharing his memories of student life in the 1970s, Jonathan's speech was both humorous and poignant. Having congratulated students on their hard work and dedication in the years running up to their GCSE exams, Jonathan then asked what has Blue Coat done for you. He argued it gave much confidence to students to assist them in later life, whether studying to gain a university degree or in their careers to reach great heights.

Scouse Scientist

Holly Ellis from the Class of 2011, also known as 'The Scouse Scientist', is our latest Old Blue to step into the spotlight. A Clinical Scientist in Genetics, Holly has taken to social media to inspire young people from all backgrounds, to pursue a career in science. Providing a first-hand insight into the fascinating world of Genetics, Holly discusses challenging topics such as Huntington Disease and Down's Syndrome, and takes viewers into a laboratory to find out more about the variety of genetic tests available to patients. To look at Holly's inspiring YouTube channel and to find out more about Genetics please click [here](#).

Blue Coat For All - Science Ceilidh

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Thank you to everyone who was able to join us for our special one-off Science Ceilidh event prior to the half term break. If you were unable to join us but you are still intrigued to find out more about this unusual concept of blending Scottish country dancing with scientific concepts, please click [here](#) to view our short Science Ceilidh film.

Parents' Association

The Parents' Association would like to offer a huge "thank you" to everyone who has supported this year's Christmas Raffle, which has raised over £2,100 to help buy the "extras" for our students. The student-only draw for a £500 Liverpool ONE voucher was won by a very surprised Year 10 student and the main prize draw winners have been informed.

This month, the PA has donated just over £235 to the P.E. department to aid the purchase of additional netball dresses and badging for football kit; nearly £200 to support a Maths & Computing department enterprise to buy 12 Arduino starter kits, and £175 to help the KS3 Chemistry Club. All 3 initiatives were co-funded with the Development Office.

The PA has also recently donated over £1,600 to the Music department to facilitate the purchase of new music folders for the school choir, orchestra and band.

The next PA meeting is at 7pm on Monday 6 January 2020; new members are always very welcome. The PA can be contacted at parentsassociation@bluecoatschool.org.uk and on Twitter [@BluecoatPA](https://twitter.com/BluecoatPA)

