

SCGSG



JULY 2020

**Masks, bubbles,
hand sanitiser
and 2-metre rules**

We reflect on the
events of a term
unlike any other

**Not for our own
advantage...**

Students and staff
continue with amazing
charity work



A message from the

Headteacher

Dr. Barbara Minards

We weren't sure if we were going to be able to put a newsletter together this term but we wanted to celebrate all that students have achieved whilst learning at home and to recognise this significant time in the school's history.

The start of the academic year seems almost from a completely different time period. Thinking back to September when we celebrated the 90th anniversary of the opening of the school with a whole school photo. The end of term assembly where we all gathered together in the sports hall and performed jingle bells using British Sign Language. Wellbeing week in January, and all the rehearsals including the final dress rehearsal for 'Sister Act'. We never expected to be in a situation where we were told that all schools would be closed for the foreseeable future and that GCSE and A-levels would be cancelled.

The two days between the announcement being made and when we closed at the end of the day on Friday 20th March were some of the emotional times I have ever experienced in school. Holding assemblies for each year group to explain what was going to happen when there was so much uncertainty was incredibly difficult, especially when we didn't have the answers to most of the students' questions. We are used to plans, routines, and structures yet suddenly everything was changing; seeing Year 13 and Year 11 students process that they were not going to sit the exams they had worked so hard for was heart breaking.

As ever the Sutton Girls community continued to support each other; staff were there to help students and answer as many questions as they could, reassuring students that we would still be here for them, even if it was going to be remotely for a while. The students also showed fantastic

spirit, not only looking out for their peers and helping younger students, but also taking time to ask staff how they were doing. One of our Senior Student Ambassadors organised a collection for a local foodbank and the generosity shown in the midst of panic buying and food (and toilet roll) shortages was inspiring. The Year 13s organised a 'not prom' within 24 hours and we were happy to support their final event in school as they had had so much taken away from them.

Although initially the school was open for the children of key workers, given the increased 'stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives' government guidance, the school fully closed on Tuesday 24th March. This is the first time that the school has been closed to students throughout its 90-year history and not something any of us thought we would experience. We then all moved into 'lockdown', which felt like a whole new world. Teachers set work on ShowMyHomework for students to complete at home and email became our main form of communication. Some enjoyed the changes; the lack of routines, not getting up early and having the journey to school, spending more time with family. Others found the changes challenging, missing the structure and daily interactions with lots of different people.

We became used to using previously unheard of terms: PPE, social distancing, the r-number, zoom calls 'you're on mute!'. We worked on staying connected, improving communication and feedback between students and teachers. We recognised the importance of wellbeing and being positive; sharing the achievements of Captain Tom, clapping for the NHS every Thursday evening and showing support for key workers by drawing rainbows. We created virtual whole school assemblies and shared our newly found hobbies including baking,

cycling and reading.

The school re-opened on 1st June for key worker children with a rota of staff in to supervise the small number of students. From 15th June we were able to have up to a quarter of Year 10 and 12 students in school at any one time, so we planned a very different timetable to have small groups in each day taught in classrooms set out with the desks two metres apart. Whilst it was fantastic to see students back, school still felt very empty and quiet, only having up to 12 students in a room, frequently using hand sanitiser and keeping 2m apart from students and colleagues felt very strange. In the penultimate week of term we held face to face tutor meetings for students, with Year 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13 invited in at a specific time each day. We were really impressed with the levels of attendance, particularly with the 168 Year 11s who came in to see their tutors and collect their yearbooks and hoodies.

This term, students have continued with their home learning and we are really impressed with how well they have engaged with their online work and the resilience and independence they have continued to demonstrate. We have held an online evening of song, a virtual Year 7 open evening, new Year 7 induction day and hosted live Microsoft Teams events for our Sixth Form induction. We held the literacy festival at home with the usual door decorating and cake making competition.

As we plan for the full opening of the school in September, it is clear that there are lots of things to celebrate this term and even though it wasn't the end of the academic year that any of us planned, there is much to look forward to in the future.

Take care.

Dr Minards

Charity efforts leading up to Lockdown



By Pippa
SSA for Charity

The Covid-19 lockdown has been an unusual and worrying time for many, meaning it has been crucial to focus on our own wellbeing as we adapt to a new way of life at home.

Many have enjoyed going for walks and trying new mindful practices at home to practice the self-care

we need at the moment. It has also been important to consider the wellbeing of others at this confusing time; by staying in touch on video calls and emails. Other ways of supporting others have included some of the socially distanced charity challenges such as the 2.6 challenge that charity organisations have set up to increase donations from home.

In the final days of 'normal' term time, we put together a last-minute collection for the local food bank; collecting enough items to fill 2 cars which shows the amazing feats of compassion our students can show at such short notice when people

are suffering. I was glad to be able to arrange a final charity collection in my role as Ambassador at a time where many felt uncertain about the coming weeks.

Thank you everyone for your donations, they were gratefully accepted at the foodbank and went on to support many in this period of uncertainty.



Year 13 organise 'Not-Prom' celebration



By Madeline, Year 13

On the night the government announced that schools would close the Year 13 WhatsApp group chat was going rather wild. Everyone was very scared and confused and people started to get very sentimental about our time at Sutton Girls being over so abruptly. Not being one for sending sappy messages in group chats, I thought the perfect way to end our time together was by holding a (very impromptu) prom.

On Thursday morning, I ran around trying to sort things out, I practically flew into Dr Minards' office with the goal of getting her to buy enough

pizza to feed the whole year group. She didn't bat an eyelid before saying yes. From then on, the team and I were frantically trying to get everything together.

We blew up what felt like a thousand balloons and used anything we could find in school to make the hall look more like a venue. The site staff helped us put the chairs and tables in the right places, the drama department let us use their black bedsheets to cover up doorways, we used masses from physics to hold up light curtains, and the laser cutter down in DT to make some 'PROM' letters. The lighting and sound setup from Sister Act were put to use for

our dance floor and the instruments were used for our splendid musical performance. We were ready.

We all arrived in our dresses and suits, taking pictures with our friends of the last 7 years, laughing, dancing, crying and singing in the same hall where our school lives first began, divided into form groups, making awkward small talk about what our favourite colour was dressed in primary school uniforms and wondering what lay ahead.

Though it wasn't the prom we expected, it was perhaps the greatest testament to how great Sutton Girls truly is.

Senior Student Ambassadors and Senior Prefects 2020/21



Mahreen
Character Development



Tia
Houses



Molly
Wellbeing



Esha
Student Forum

Miss S. Harper
Head of Sixth Form

We are delighted to see our student leadership team continuing to develop and shape our community. Over the last year it has been a

delight to see our Year 13 students lead whole school initiatives and individual projects which have benefited many people within and outside of our school. The time that students have given to support others and make an

impact, sometimes behind the scenes more so than publicly, has been inspiring. We look forward to the developments of this new team of over 80 students in supporting our school community through the bubble term and beyond!



Aderin
Curriculum Enrichment



Ellie
Sixth Form Wellbeing



Ru
Charity



Abigail
Year 7 Transition

Messages from the 2019 Senior Team



By Raisa
Student Forum

I feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a Senior Student Ambassador, the new experiences and

responsibility that came with it, is no doubt something that will stand me in good stead as I start my next chapter in education. While in Sixth Form it sometimes feels like there are many things to juggle, I am so happy that I invested the time and effort that I did in the role, and I hope that the student forum and the

essence of harnessing student voice, continues to be a major part of Sutton Girls where there is such a strong sense of community.

Saying goodbye to Sutton Girls is incredibly emotional and as I look back on my entire school experience there are countless different

memories that will always stay with me. I'm nervous but excited to hopefully start University in the Autumn and see what the future holds for me.

Whatever happens, I will always keep with me what I learnt during my time here and be a 'Sutton Girl' through and through.



By Megan
Head of Houses

I have absolutely loved being the Senior Student Ambassador for the House System

throughout my time in Year 13. It has been great to work with my brilliant team of prefects to put on events which have been thoroughly enjoyed by the whole school! We organised a Sports Day, with added features that I think will go down in the school's history! My favourite moment has to

be standing at Wyndley, and hearing the students chanting the names of their houses before we could actually see them! They all brought flags, and were wearing more glitter and face paint than I'd ever seen!

Once the current restrictions have been

lifted, I am looking forward to travelling, and getting some more work experience to find out what I want to do in the next stage of my life! I will also be continuing to improve my own business!



By Matilda
Curriculum Enhancement

As strange as it is to be saying goodbye to

Sutton Girls after 7 years in this unconventional way, I can't help but feel so grateful for the amazing experiences and memories that I will forever cherish. I feel particularly thankful to have been a Senior Prefect in my last year and have the opportunity

to support students from years 7-13 with subject and extra-curricular enhancement. I have been able to engage with the subjects I love and lead a fantastic team who have also enjoyed passing on their interests too. It felt amazing to be able to give back to a school

that has supported me so much. Some particularly rewarding highlights include being able to host open and informal discussions with younger students to help ease some of their tensions towards upcoming assessments etc.



By Nithil
Year 12 Transition

The Yr12 transition role has gone beyond addressing the seemingly stark contrast between Yr11 and Sixth Form and

has become more of nurturing and ongoing support exercise throughout the year, not just on the couple of annual induction days. Aside from easing transition, we introduced opportunities such as mentoring and tutoring, hosting clubs, summer schools and other activities that students

can take up in preparation for university.

We realise that the last couple of years of school can appear quite daunting but with a very friendly and supportive team we were always approachable. We successfully hosted the Yr12 induction day last July, set up a subject fair and some of us

have tutored younger students throughout. Sometimes, a student's perspective into Sixth Form can be invaluable, which is what we were there for. Personally, I am looking forward to attending university this year to study medicine and for the freedom (and responsibility) that awaits!

Celebrating GCSE and A-Level artwork

Mr M. Davis
Head of Art

The abrupt end to the school year for our Year 11 and 13 Art students meant that not only did they miss out on the chance to show off their considerable skill in the examination but we couldn't have our annual art exhibition.

Our students work so hard in refining their art skills and their diligence in producing work never ceases to amaze and make us, as a school, very proud. Undaunted by what the new academic year may bring we are determined to hold the Art Exhibition at some point in the year. We would hope that it would be a physical exhibition to celebrate together and we look forward to safely giving you a chance to view the work in person.



The Art Department have appreciated the hard work that all of our students have made in continuing to develop their art skills through remote learning. We would encourage all of the students in the school who have also worked

so hard in lockdown to keep their Art work and we will aim to display as much of it as possible over the coming year.

We will give details of collection in September.





A Day in the Life

Sixth Form student Mahreen gives us an insight into her experiences during the unprecedented COVID-19 lockdown

In the first eight weeks of lockdown, I documented my experience in four fortnightly accounts. Those eight weeks were perhaps the hardest; I was trying to become accustomed to an unexpected change to my daily life and I was learning how to manage a balance between home life and school life whilst staying at home. Admittedly, if I could change the way I handled this task, I would make quite a few alterations since a major downside of my experience at home, was witnessing how rapidly time goes by. I can't comprehend how fast this academic year has gone by. You always hear people say, "it seems like only yesterday that..." but seriously, it seems like only yesterday that I started sixth form and now I'm writing my personal statement for universities. So, lockdown has been a profound wake up call for me in this respect. Nonetheless, lockdown has had some huge personal benefits: I was

able to take full control of my life and lead myself, which was a great chance for personal development.

Unfortunately, due to my hectic schedule, I didn't write about my experiences post week eight and when I had the time, I attempted writing an article or two, but my life was becoming pretty repetitive at that point. However, some of the notable events that occurred were: Eid, going back to school for a few days, attending an online birthday party, and my digital cleanse (this was not voluntary, I just so happened to break my phone during a trip to the Peak District). In recent weeks, I also got the privilege of visiting more members of my family, face-to-face, which was truly wonderful.

As the country is gradually returning to normal life, I look forward to having a summer holiday that is closer to what life was like before lockdown and being able to finally



relax after so many weeks of hard work. It's also reassuring to know that I'll be back at school in September, which I thoroughly look forward to.

I hope you have all been able to make the most of your experience in lockdown and have the restful and pleasant holiday you deserve.

Handmade items for NHS and Care workers

Mr S. Hall
Digital Communications

Year 13 student Hollie and Music teacher Ms Stamoulis are part of a sewing collective providing items for the NHS and care workers in the Midlands. Hollie has been sewing "kit bags" for nurses so that they can then wash their uniforms in the bag without the risk of cross-infecting their families' clothing. So far Hollie has made over 100.

Ms Stamoulis has been making headbands so that nurses and doctors who wear face masks can loop the elastic over the buttons rather than over their ears - they had previously all been getting blisters.

All of these home-made items have gone to various hospitals including the Queen Elizabeth, Good Hope,

Burton and a COVID-19 testing pod in Derby.



Year 11 students impress with independent project work

Miss J. Bailey
EPQ Coordinator

Despite Year 11 not having their GCSEs to study for over the past few months, a number of our students have been working exceptionally hard on their own research projects. Year 11 and some of our prospective new Sixth Form students were presented with the task of completing their own research and producing a 2500 word report analysing what they had found on a topic of their choice. A completely independent, self-directed task in which students have really shown their creativity and self-discipline. There were some really interesting and insightful projects such as:

- "Should the French language become more gender neutral?"
- "With the continuous rapid advancements in technology, could artificial intelligence eventually outsmart humanity?"
- "Stalin was the worst dictator of the 20th century". How far do you agree?"
- "Can we justify the existence of God?"

All students should be extremely proud of themselves, the standard of all projects was incredibly high and despite challenges they persevered and have produced some outstanding work. Well done and congratulations!

Pippa receives the Stephanie Cave Extra Mile Award



Dr B. Minards
Headteacher

Pippa has been the Senior Student Ambassador with responsibility for the school's charity projects this year. In addition to fundraising, Pippa has inspired our school to become more engaged with the charities we support. The Buddy Bag Foundation provides care packages for children looked after in emergency care homes and refuges. Pippa organised donations from students and staff, then a team of prefects to collate the items into 90 bags which were distributed to local refuges through the foundation over the Christmas period. Pippa worked tirelessly to get it all organised and her commitment and passion for the project was amazing.

In the Christmas concert Pippa organised a raffle which raised a substantial sum of money for the National Deaf Children's Society, she also encouraged each tutor group to learn Jingle Bells in British Sign Language. This was performed at both the Christmas concert and the final assembly and it was inspiring to see the whole school signing and singing together.

Just before lockdown Pippa organised

a food bank collection at the last minute having heard in the media how supplies were running low, so she arranged for students to bring in donations and then drove to the food bank to take them there. Having organised an 'Evening of Song' concert last year, Pippa was not deterred when this year's event could not take place as we were in lockdown. Instead, she organised an online event and still raised money for the chosen charity, HeartnSoul, a creative arts charity bringing performance opportunities to people with learning disabilities.

Pippa receives 'The Stephanie Cave Extra Mile Award' to recognise her wonderful work this year. Stephanie's parents have kindly sponsored this annual prize in memory of their daughter who sadly died in 2016. The award recognises students who go 'the extra mile' to help others and act as a role model to other students. Whilst we had planned to present this at the summer music concert, we are grateful that Pippa was able to come into school to receive this award in a much smaller ceremony (Dr Minards, Mr Collet, Mrs James and Mr Hall in attendance). It is hard to think of any student who has made such a big impact on charity fundraising in school, and Pippa thoroughly deserves this award.

Students continue Literacy Festival baking tradition at home

Mrs L. Jowett
Senior Librarian

Every year, when the Literacy Festival comes around, the biggest talking point is the Book Bake Off which showcases the incredible hidden talents of students across the school, although this year it was a little different.

While we may not have been able to bake in aid of charity, students took to their kitchens at home to produce some stunning book-themed bakes!



Students take part in the UKMT Junior Mathematics challenge online

Mrs M. Appleton
Maths Department

On Tuesday, June 30th, nearly 300 members of Years 7 and 8 were able to sit the UKMT Junior Mathematics challenge on-line. We were really pleased that the competition could go ahead this year, all be it virtually, as the students undertake a weekly challenge starter in class. It was great that they could put their problem solving practice into action.

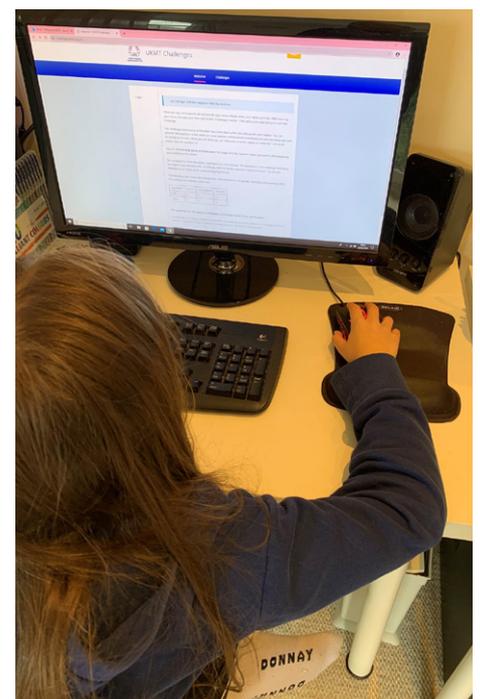
Students had to complete 25 increasingly difficult challenges under timed conditions (this proved quite pressurised with the on-line count down clock running in the top corner of the screen as they worked). We had many great scores, but certain thresholds had

to be achieved in order to gain a prestigious certificate.

In Year 7, 48 students were awarded a bronze certificate, 26 a silver and 12 a gold. Congratulations to Elizabeth who not only achieved a gold award, but also the Best In Year award for Year 7.

In Year 8, 37 Bronze, 30 Silver and 16 Gold certificates have been awarded, with Willow notching up an impressive 129 marks (just one error!) to gain not only a gold certificate but also the awards of Best in Year 8 and Best in School. Well done Willow!

Well done to all who took part, there will be another opportunity to try again next year.



A Day in the Life

Miss Hewitt gives us an insight into a day in her life during the lockdown



Aiming for four days a week, I have kick started my day with some exercise. Having followed a Joe Wicks exercise programme for the past two years, I was really proud when my PE teacher became the nation's PE teacher – go Joe! I then continued set myself up for the day with a mean green smoothie consisting of spinach, pineapple, mint, banana, lemon juice and coconut milk – delicious! As I awaited our daily staff briefing from Dr Minards, I checked my emails and noted down a rough outline for the day. Some days felt more productive than others – I think we can all relate to this!

During lockdown alongside working remotely, I have acted as a volunteer for The Active Wellbeing Society

and West Midlands Police. This has involved reaching out to some of the most vulnerable people in society. Tasks included visiting vulnerable people at their homes; taking time to have a conversation and see how they were coping, and if they needed any help with day to day tasks. One of the highlights within this role has been organising donations with Thrive Together Birmingham, Edgbaston Foundation. I have been amazed at the generous contributions from my neighbours and my colleagues at Sutton Girls. Each week the collection boxes would fill up and every Friday I would deliver the donations - they were gratefully received.

In taking time out for myself, I took



to venturing out on my mountain bike. Purposefully taking a different route each time to try and find the beautiful, yet elusive Wild Exmoor Ponies; I succeeded on several occasions. I also took time to pursue a passion of mine, baking, conjuring up a selection of goodies from the 'lockdown must' banana bread to mini egg fudge! I found gratitude in being able to purchase flour on each occasion I needed to as I know it was in short supply!

It turns out, lockdown has presented many of us with an unexpected opportunity to make positive changes to our lives.

It is rare for us to have a moment to reflect and an opportunity to reset a range of individual and collective behaviours for the better. I would encourage everyone, as we cautiously creep out of lockdown, to consider the positive changes in their habits and behaviours to create a new and better normal.



Duke of Edinburgh students' success

Mrs K. Tunstall
D of E Coordinator

A huge well done to everyone who has completed all of their sections - volunteering, skills and physical! The 2020 Certificate of Achievement should be on its way to you!

Those who have not yet finished do not worry, you have until **December 2020** to get all three sections completed. If you need an assessor you can ask your form tutor, Mrs Pearce or myself to write it for you.

I am also delighted to show you our official Volunteer Hour Certificate for this year.

Across the entire Central England region, an incredible 596,804 hours of volunteering have been carried out by participants. This has provided £2,596,097 worth of social value back into local communities across the region.

I would like to take this opportunity to all the parents and carers for supporting all our hard working students and their dedication and commitment over the past year.



Please note that photographs here were taken pre-lockdown.

Staffing News

We have had three staff join us this term, two members of support staff; Mr Arrowsmith, Deputy Catering Manager and Miss Male, IT technician. Our new Assistant Headteacher, Dr Munoz-Britton is leading on teaching and learning, he is currently helping staff develop their understanding of Microsoft Teams. We have also welcomed back Mrs Chatterton from her maternity leave.

At the end of this term we say

goodbye to Mrs Williams who has taught biology at Sutton Girls for two years and is relocating to Wales. We also say goodbye to Mrs Lewis who is retiring after 10 years of dedicated service as part of the front office team. Mrs Lewis is known by staff and students alike for her friendly, positive and caring approach. She has been the welcoming face of Sutton Girls and has helped numerous parents, students and staff with their various questions and queries, always with patience, understanding and a smile. Mrs Lewis was due to retire

at Easter, but stayed on to help the school during the uncertainties of Covid-19 and to ensure our new Year 7 students were enrolled and received their induction information.



Mrs Lewis will be greatly missed, we wish her all the very best with the next steps in her adventures.

You can look forward to our next newsletter before the end of the first half term in October. In the meantime, keep up to date by following us on:

[facebook.com/suttcold](https://www.facebook.com/suttcold) or twitter.com/suttcold



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