

There's a principle in the world of Religious Education (where my classroom roots are) that teachers must avoid the "Vaccination Approach". If adults jab a dead version of religion into children, the likely result is that they will be immune to catching the real deal when they grow up. It's a vivid image and a helpful if brutal yardstick to measure sermons and assemblies against. What I say needs to feel living and real, at least to me: I may not be able to spark an interest in others, but at least I should try not to put them off permanently.

Comparing the process of education to a transmissible disease makes some sense even if sometimes teachers may feel, 'if only it were that easy...!' But the language has a new resonance in the midst of a pandemic when jabs in the arm represents our best hope of escape from the relentless horror of the past 12 months. Enthusiasm is so often the hallmark of a great teacher, but we might hesitate to call it 'infectious' at present. Likewise, it's often said that values have to be 'caught, not taught' – but if anything we are aiming for the opposite just now.

It all shines a light on what schools are for, and how much of that is lost or diminished while we are not physically together. What does enthusiasm look like on screen, when it's so much harder to 'read the room'? How can we secure the values of a community when the interactions and habits that embody those values are all on hold? I am regularly delighted at what *can* still be done, and the articles that follow are a good catalogue of that, from the seed papers of Tu B'Shevat, through virtual volunteering, to the moments of joy caused by students inadvertently singing in Teams lessons or the attention to nature we can still enjoy if we allow ourselves to.

Nevertheless, the barriers to community life are a huge loss to JCoSS. They are hard to put into words when present, but sorely missed when absent. Purim may be the starkest reminder of that, although the Jewish Education department have bold plans, and you should receive some goodies in the post this weekend in preparation (if you can hold off eating them until 26 February).

We have got far better at remote teaching, but all seem to agree that this lockdown is worse on students and parents than the first one. I wonder whether that is despite or because of the slicker and more reliable on-screen experience. Mastering the technology and finessing the content (several subjects say they are getting through the content quicker than usual) may not equate to a better overall experience.

We are interested in your experiences and will shortly be sending a brief survey out (revisiting some of the questions asked last summer) to gauge how it has felt at home. We hope we are drawing towards the end of the remote learning phase but we can still make tweaks, and we are also interested in what, if anything, might be usefully kept from it. Online Parents' Evenings, for example, seem likely to be here to stay, judging by your comments!

It is heart-warming to see the shout-out from students on page 9, which chimes with many generous messages from parents: the JCoSS staff are working exceptionally hard, and battling many of the same issues as you are at home, and it is encouraging to know it is having an effect.

The next few weeks will, we hope, bring more brightness in the darkness: clarity about public exams, a return to face to face teaching at least for some this term, the beginning of a return to some of what we have missed in contact with others, in society, in the economy. The 'Vaccination Approach' may be a lousy model for teaching, but it is at last bringing the dawn of hope to a weary world.

Stay safe, and we look forward to seeing you all as soon as safely possible.

Patrick Moriarty  
Headteacher

## IJE News

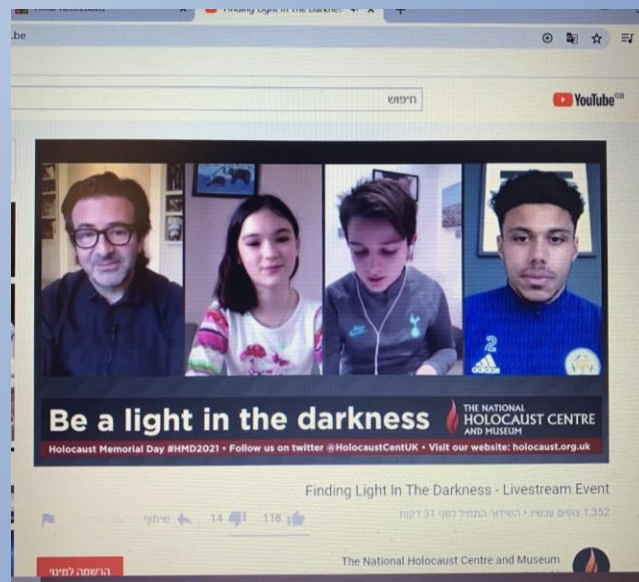
It has been a strange January/February lockdown for the IJE team, with our 2 Shinshinim being sent back to Israel and managing to get their vaccines whilst continuing to work from the Holy Land! Meanwhile we celebrated tu b'shevat by sending seed papers to all our students, hoping for a JCoSS floral explosion when spring finally arrives.

On Holocaust Memorial Day (January 27th), JCoSS students took part in a special morning of programming, hearing testimonies from survivors of the Shoah, other victims of Nazi persecution as well as the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Many students painted stones as part of their creative response to the stories they heard. These stones will form part of the Holocaust Memorial planned for at Westminster. It is not too late to join this project and more information can be found here. <https://www.big-ideas.org/current-projects/foundation-stones/>

Students also took part in the ceremony being broadcast from the National Holocaust Centre and Museum in Nottingham, with special credit going to Sam Juggler and Emily Litvak in Year 7 who interviewed the footballer James Justin about racism in football and lessons we can all learn.

Our volunteering programme continues, with Year 8 students virtually visiting Jewish Care residents and Year 7 students finding creative ways to collect volunteering hours for the Yoni Jesner Award. Students have also now chosen their year group's charity for the year and the February '28 Day Challenge' is underway with many students raising money for their chosen causes.

Finally we are of course well into our Purim preparations. It will be a Purim like no other this year, but we are working hard to make sure that the unique JCoSS way of celebrating this festival will be as exciting as any other year... if a bit more virtual! Watch this space...



## Classics Week 2021

This week, JCoSS has been celebrating its seventh annual Classics Week. This year's theme is the myth of Actaeon. He was turned into a stag and hunted to death by his own hounds, after glimpsing the goddess Artemis while she was bathing.

Years 7, 8 & 9 have enjoyed reading and listening to the myth, while also analysing art works depicting this story across the centuries. They have considered the rights and wrongs of Actaeon's fate, and have engaged with ethical questions around hunting (did he simply get his just deserts?).

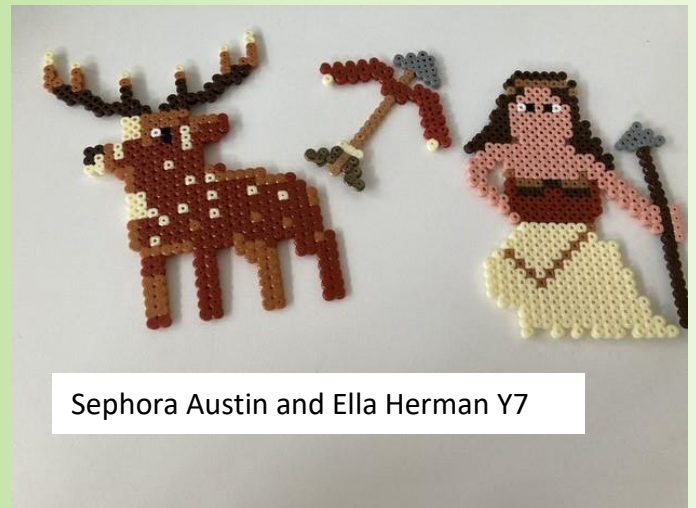
A wonderful range of responses is still coming in, ranging from poetry to drawings and models. It has been heartwarming to see that the creativity of JCoSS students is still thriving! Very many thanks to the English Faculty for their enthusiasm and inspiring teaching.

The Classics Week Prize Crossword is open to all JCoSS students and staff (shared via form tutors) - entries due by Monday 22 February!

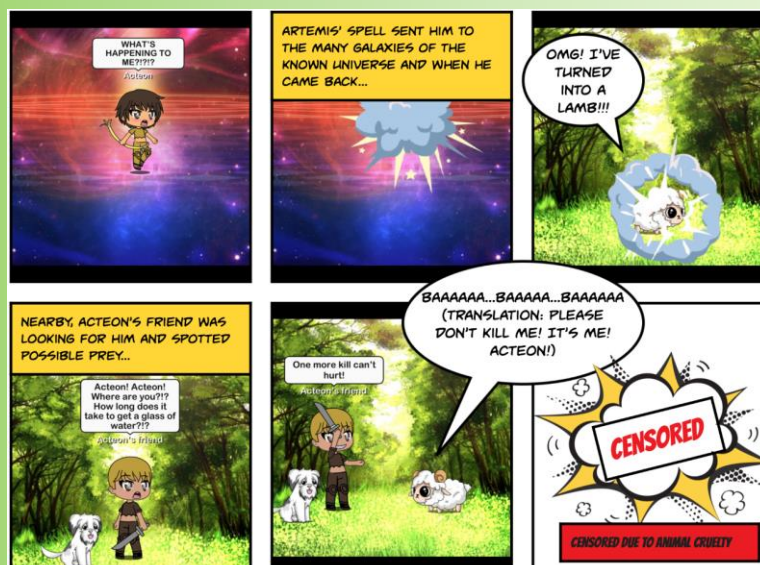
Mr E Arden, Head of Latin



Above: Abigail Copper



Sephora Austin and Ella Herman Y7



Noah Lasserson Y7

# Children's Mental Health Week and More

The first week in February was the 7<sup>th</sup> annual Place2Be Children's Mental Health Week, with the theme "Express Yourself". Children's mental health is at the core of everything we do, every week, but the last couple of weeks has been a great time for us to shine a spotlight on this.

## Some of the ways JCoSS supports wellbeing and Children's Mental Health Week

KS4 and KS5 have had a session with Dr. Anna Colton, psychologist. She gave an overview of some of our responses to the current situation and helped us to understand why we are feeling as we are. She focused on managing uncertainty and tolerating distress during this challenging time.

The lunch time Safe Space Drop In for KS3 have focused on ways we can express ourselves and encouraging ourselves and each other to notice our feelings and find ways to manage them or celebrate them.

We recently hosted a session for parents on supporting the wellbeing of our children. Over 200 parents signed up to hear from Dr Kalanit Ben-Ari, a psychologist and parenting expert share her knowledge and expertise. The next session for parents will be on 3rd March focusing on Challenges with Eating and more information will be sent nearer the time.

We offer a variety of virtual extra- curricular clubs. These aim to broaden and enhance your child's interests, social opportunities and wellbeing. Information has been sent to parents in the year groups where this is being offered.

Form tutors have been sent packs to encourage discussion around mental health during form times and focused assemblies have been run.

Together with the Wellbeing Ambassadors, we continue to share some uplifting memes on our wellbeing Instagram account @jcoass\_wellbeing. Please follow us if you don't already!

## What can you do to support your children to express themselves?

1. Have a chat over dinner about how your children most naturally and easily express themselves and how you can support that? Maybe they draw / write / play an instrument / dance and they want to show you something they have recently done?
2. Instead of asking your child how they are (and perhaps getting a one word answer), ask them to number their day between 1 and 10. That will give you a greater idea of where they are at.
3. Get creative with them! Dance around the kitchen, get the paint out, do whatever you like to get off the screens for a while and be together!

If, like many, your children sometimes struggle to find the right words, you might find the Emotion Wheel below helpful. Look at it together and see if they can choose the word or colour closest to how they are feeling. You could even put it up at home to inspire some regular conversation on this topic!

## Some Useful Links

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>

<https://charliewaller.org/student>

<https://www.annafreud.org/coronavirus-support/support-for-young-people/>

Jessica Overlander-Kaye  
Emotional Wellbeing Practitioner



## News from JCoSS LRC

The LRC has been busy over the last term, supporting the LRC lessons and also delivering reserved books to students. Students were delighted to have books they were eagerly anticipating reading delivered into their hands. Our new LRC website, called Accessit has been a big success as it enables students to see the LRC catalogue from anywhere in school or at home. We have lots of reading suggestions and links on the front page of the website, including a link to the weekly copy of 'The Week – Junior' magazine. You can find Accessit at <https://uk.accessit.online/jcs00>. Students can log in using their school email address.



### Ebook and audio book trial

We are very excited to announce that we have purchased a package of eBooks and audio books to support students and staff working from home. Please follow the link and take a look. There are 100's of eBooks and audiobooks available, both fiction and non-fiction.

Link to eBook and audiobook trial <https://uk.accessit.online/jcs00>

Sign in with your JCoSS email address and password. Up to two items can be issued for 2 weeks and can be renewed. If you have any feedback or problems please email us at [LRC@jcss.barnet.sch.uk](mailto:LRC@jcss.barnet.sch.uk).



### After the War by Tom Palmer

We would like to recommend the book 'After the War' by Tom Palmer to students in year 7 and year 8. The book is based on the true story of the Jewish child survivors of the Holocaust, who were brought to the Lake District in 1945 directly from concentration camps. They stayed in the Lake District for a few months. The book is based on recollections of real events from experts and survivors. You can read part of the book and find many resources on Tom Palmer's website 'After the War' page <https://tompalmer.co.uk/after-the-war/>. We have 2 copies of the book in the LRC.



Why should we keep reading? We encourage all students to keep reading for pleasure whilst studying from home. There are very many benefits from reading which include increasing vocabulary and comprehension but also reducing stress, improving brain connectivity and increasing empathy. Most of all though, reading should be fun and enjoyable. Keep reading everyone!

Best wishes from all the LRC Staff, Mrs Rice, Mrs Levontine & Mrs Pragai

## Oxbridge and Medicine Offers

We are thrilled that 10 JCoSS students have received offers of places at Oxford or Cambridge or to study Medicine. The Oxbridge Offers include courses Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), Chemistry, Engineering, Maths, Philosophy and Linguistics and Classics.

An overwhelming majority of the year group have also received offers from their chosen universities, many from Russell Group Universities including UCL, Bristol, Durham, Warwick and include offers for highly competitive courses including Medicine and Law.

### JCoSS Key Term Dates – Second Half of Spring Term 2021

Date	Time	Description
Mon 22 <sup>nd</sup> Feb	8.30am	Start of second half of Spring term (week two)
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Time tbc	Year 9 Options Evening
Thurs 11 <sup>th</sup> March	4.30 – 7.30	Year 9 Parents' Evening
Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup> March	4.30 – 7.30	Year 12 Parents' Evening
Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> March	1.10pm	Early closing for end of term

- Pesach (Passover) is 27<sup>th</sup> March to 4<sup>th</sup> April
- Friday timings will remain the same after half term until further notice.
- Morning lessons start and finish at the same time every day of the week.
- All parents' evenings and meetings will be virtual

### Extra-Curricular Newsletter Team

The following articles have been written by the Extra-curricular Newsletter Team:

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Welcome to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition from the newspaper team: this half term has been different to say the least. We were a team in the classroom in December, but now we are a team individually but joined together through technology. A team is defined as 'a group of players coming together to achieve a common goal'. We are playing for a few common goals; to beat this virus, to get back to school and to be a face-to-face community again.

Enjoy the articles and stay well!

# Aspirations for 2021 by Tom Ehrenstein (Year 11)

With 2020 being the year that turned our world upside down and thrust us into our homes to stare vacantly at a computer screen, I've been thinking about the months ahead. What will 2021 be like? How will it change as time passes? And what can I do to change it? Because after a year that obliterated everything that was supposedly set-in stone, there must be something I can do to restore a little normality. I've never had new year's resolutions before, because I am not counting the time Mum dragged me, moaning and whining, to a gym (that was not *my* resolution). But this time, if I can only improve my life by a tiny bit, it will be enough.

So here are a few new year resolutions, or, simply, aspirations for 2021. Unsurprisingly, they are pandemic-related...

## 1. Pay attention online:

Since what feels like the beginning of time, we've spent most of every day looking at a screen. Sites like Zoom and Teams have been become an integral part of our lives. Nearly all of what I used to do in person is now done via Zoom/Teams. Something that makes me long for the before times. And, by now, I surely can't be the only person whose attention has started to waiver. Wondering along a train of thought before coming back to reality with a snap. Even doing the subjects I enjoy. For the ones I don't it's even worse. Words begin to slur and fly straight past me like arrows on a battlefield. It's a battle to keep my attention. I'm not alone in this. I've seen people eating candyfloss, stroking their dogs, and staring intently at their phones. And the latter happened in the first month of the first lockdown.

It's not like we can just make all this time up in an afternoon with a textbook and a little bit of determination. Now, more than ever learning matters. Especially since the pandemic decided to come, uninvited, into my GCSE year. There may not be the major public exams anymore. But there might be mini ones or far more end of unit tests. The teachers are looking now for hard work and dedication. Call me sensitive, but I'd rather not get a three for all my subjects. However, despite knowing this I simply don't seem to change. So, this year I am going to finally concentrate. And nothing can distract me... oh, is that a bird?

## 2. Be kinder to everyone:

This may seem kind of generic, but please just hear me out on this one. For the past four years certain politicians have been abusing their power to divide society for their own gain. People have gone out onto the streets to promote hateful views and insane conspiracies. Culminating in the unfortunate events at the US Capitol. These people may be an ocean away, and they literally are, but their impact is felt around the world. If we think, complacently, that it cannot happen here, then we risk it happening. So, instead of devoting all our 'skill points' into denial, we should instead invest them in making the world a better place. I'm not talking about donating to charity or giving up some of our free time to volunteer at a homeless shelter or care home. Although both of those things are important and welcome.

I'm talking about the little things that people don't do because they think no one notices. Like smiling at someone we pass by every day, saying hello to a person you don't acknowledge or just going out of our way to help. None of these things will bring the whole world's press to our door but they make someone's day. Spread a bit of happiness in what is, for a lot of people, a very difficult time. And if you can imagine lots of people doing that, it'll make an impact all those conspiracy theorists could only dream off.

## 3. Go outside more:

Now, I know that this activity has been severely restricted to stop the coronavirus from bringing about the apocalypse. However, if you wear a mask, keep two meters from everyone and return home after an hour, it should be alright. We can see the luscious trees, feel the crunch of the leaves beneath our feet and hear the birds. No, you didn't imagine all these things from the distant and hazy pre-lockdown world. They are all there for you, if you step outside for just for a little bit, be somewhere other than a desk or a sofa all day.

I was glued to them myself until about a month ago. My mum then forced me to go on a walk with her to get some fresh air and exercise. All she got was a constant barrage of complaining as I simplemindedly focused on all the other things I could be doing. Of course, we ended up arguing when we go back. For a while afterwards I just sat in my room, then I got up and went for a walk. Going nowhere, looking for nothing, expecting nothing. Just a walk, and it was a great decision, the outdoors was freedom.

As I'm writing this, I can see the snow falling outside my window. Snowflakes gently drifting to the ground. Completely covering the pavements, roads and cars. Making them look like something out of a children's picture book. A charming snapshot of a winter day when all is right in the world. Very soon I'll go out and play in that snow with my little brother. Throwing snowballs, building snowman that look like it had just received a piece of shocking news and sledding down the hill. Crashing into seemingly every fence, post, or other sled our one can find. Being happier than I've been in a long time. And I wish you that happiness, throughout this year.

## Children's Mental Health Week- 1<sup>st</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 2021

This year celebrates the fifth anniversary of Children's Mental Health Week. Now more than ever, it is important to raise awareness and shine a spotlight on Children's Mental Wellbeing. The Duchess of Cambridge launched the campaign "Express yourself" this year. She highlighted the importance of looking after yourself, looking out for others and the significance of finding the time to individually express yourself.

### Digital Learning Day- 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 by Milly Bryk and Dana Thomas (Year 9)

Digital Learning Day has never been more apt. A year ago, we would have never imagined that such a day would reflect today's lockdown society. We interviewed various members of staff on their experiences of remote learning. Thank you to the members of staff who participated in our interview. Here are some of the answers.

1. *How has your job changed since lockdown?*

The biggest change is the isolation, not seeing hundreds of people moving around, the bustle of a school day.

It is harder to gauge how a lesson is being received without being in the same room, watching people's reactions and seeing where to direct your focus next.

In school with a visual subject a student can always look around the room and make judgements about their work. On line it's not so easy so I hope that students are having more fun, feel less inhibited and more themselves

2. *What challenges have you had to overcome in regard to remote learning?*

This time last year no-one had heard of Teams. Learning how to make the technology work for everyone involves time and effort.

Getting used to the new technology is one challenge but I think it's even harder to not physically be with the students but we are very lucky we have access to laptops and teams which enables us to see each other and meet virtually which really does help a lot!

Challenges I have had to overcome are that I can't really feedback on the quality of work as I can't see it properly. I like touching and feeling work.

3. *As students, what advice would you give us in regard to remote learning?*

Switch off your phones before school starts and don't look at them again until after the last lesson has finished.

Dig deep and try to learn whatever is being taught and remember that it's up to you how much effort you put in.

I would say to try to get as much work done using pen and paper as you can and to make sure you get out for fresh air at least once a day.

Have fun, distance yourself and get lost in your work. Make mistakes, try new things.



4. *What amusing situations have occurred whilst remote learning?*

PE sessions with pets.

Students singing when they think they are on mute!

Asking a child to get out of his hammock.

5. *Do you think teaching has permanently changed, as a result of coronavirus?*

We no longer have the joy of a 'snow-day school closure' to brighten the dark winter days. However, there is no real substitute for the joy of being within a community, sharing spontaneous laughter and watching young people grow up before your eyes.

No I don't think so- I hope we will get back to normal as soon as possible!

Juggling students on teams and in the classroom is going to take a bit more getting used to.

Yes I do think that teaching has permanently changed because of coronavirus. Of course, we don't want to have to sit on the floor inbetween lessons, certainly don't want masks but I guess we will just have to see how long this all lasts.

**Shout Out to Teachers by Amelie Pittack (Year 8) and Emily Litvak (Year 7)**

2020 was a hard year for all of us. Darkness shrouded the world, with many deaths, some of us losing our close loved ones, and many protests and fights. Coronavirus forced us apart and ruined our plans. Yet if you look hard in the dark, there's always a flicker of light. Our hard-working teachers continued to do their very best to get us an education. From the whole school, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts for everything you have done for us and the hard times you've gone through.

In honour of the 2020 BLM protests, 6th form student Bethany White painted an A4 oil painting of George Floyd. It was auctioned and sold for £300, all of which was donated to the charity 'SARI', a charity which stands against racism and inequality.

