

Dear Parents

The return of schools was, for the whole nation but especially for students and their families, the first tangible sign of an end to lockdown. For some, that brought immense and longed-for relief, the prospect of something more like normality. For others, though, it brought fresh grief and anxiety as yet another change brought the prospect of more noise or uncertainty. For most of us, it has been a complicated mixture of the two: the frisson of freedom has at least a slight undertone of fear.

Freedom is more complicated than our culture admits. The official line often speaks as if it was an unquestioned political good that allows us to grow and flourish as society, as an economy, even as moral persons. The reality, however, is more difficult and disputed: how much freedom is good for us, what happens when my freedom conflicts with yours, who picks up the bill for choices that have an effect far away in time or space, on the environment or on those unable to get their voices heard?

The gradual return of freedoms after the pandemic coincides with Pesach, the great Jewish festival of freedom. The Haggadah instructs each generation to reflect on the Exodus from Egypt as though we as individuals were actually there. We have not, of course, been slaves, and as long as real slavery persists we should not detract from that reality. But the past 12 months has, in some ways, been a study in the meaning of freedom.

We have experienced at first hand the cost and the value of freedom, and how our freedoms are intertwined with those of others. We have sacrificed our liberties to safeguard the health of the nation, limited livelihoods in order to save lives. The mask is the perfect symbol – worn not to protect ourselves but to protect others, in trust that they will do the same in return. Freedom, safety and obligation, we have been forcibly reminded, are three sides of the one triangle.

All of this forms the backdrop for a different but related discussion which is now underway, at JCoSS and more widely, in the wake of the death of Sarah Everard. How equally are freedoms and fears distributed in society, particular between men and women, boys and girls? If – as seems clear from the open discussion groups we have run for students in Years 10-13 in the past week, and from others who have contacted me directly – there is a problem in the way that some boys treat some girls at JCoSS, how do we change that?

Freedom – as Judaism has always known – is not what you get when all rules and expectations are removed. That is simply anarchy, where no one is free and everyone is fearful – except perhaps the most powerful, for a while. But that kind of power is precisely the ‘toxic masculinity’ variety against which so much anger is now rightly being directed. That kind of power not only damages women and girls, but also the men and boys who are typically the ones who wield it.

Freedom – as Judaism has always taught – only comes when a community thinks deeply and carefully about the balance between rules and relationships, rights and obligations, liberties and restraints. We want to do exactly that kind of deep and careful thinking, together with students past and present, to identify what we can do better as a school community. The discussion needs to explore behaviour in corridors, classrooms and coaches, in gatherings and relationships in and out of school, and to consider how by education or sanction we can stop harassment – especially of girls by boys – and promote self-restraint and respect.

But I hope it will go further and look, for example, at the subjects boys and girls choose, the careers they contemplate, the choices that feel open to them. Freedom from harm is the start; freedom to imagine and enact a better life is the wider goal; if we can increase that, it will bring benefit to everyone.

Chag Pesach Sameach – and when we return from the holiday (data and dates permitting) may we all use our freedoms wisely.

Patrick Moriarty
Headteacher

IJE Virtual Purim and Yom Ha Shoah

Purim has always been a great JCoSS tradition, so the challenge of delivering it virtually this year was daunting, to say the least. With thanks to GenZ events, our programme was put together with the Zoom platform as a basis. Cooking, cartooning, a game show, 2 virtual megillah readings, and an escape room were just some of the workshops on offer, with the JCoSS Talent show and staff video adding to the new rendition of old traditions. We had a fantastic day, but can't wait to go back to the live event we all know and love.

Also a reminder that the Yellow Candle Project 2021 will be happening in a slightly different way from previous years. In previous years these candles have been delivered to JCoSS and we have been able to distribute them. However, as the school will be closed for the Pesach holiday on Yom Hashoah we are unable to do this.

Additionally, the disruption caused by the pandemic, has led Maccabi GB to continually review its distribution plan and find a way to ensure the Yellow Candle project could still happen. To ensure that everyone who would like to take part can receive a Yellow Candle in 2021, all candles will be posted directly to each household.

If you would like to order a yellow candle to light on Yom Hashoah then please contact Maccabi GB directly.

UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge online

During the remote learning period, our high achievers from Years 9, 10 and 11 had the opportunity to participate in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge online. JCoSS Maths department is very proud of the resilience and the enthusiasm our students showed while participating. Not only did they seamlessly adapt to completing this online, but some of our students were also selected to participate in the next round of Pink and Grey Kangaroo challenges. Congratulations to all students who participated and achieved a medal of Bronze, Silver or Gold!

A special congratulations to the following students for getting through to the next round:

- ❖ Emily Bentwood
- ❖ Noah Danker
- ❖ Lucy Jackson
- ❖ Zachary Levene
- ❖ Madeleine Noah
- ❖ Kate Perry
- ❖ Kobi Richards
- ❖ Oliver Wilson
- ❖ Natan Boyd

Spring Term in the Science Faculty

Five Year 9 students (Adam Herskorn, Alexander Wilson-Smith, Dylan Elman, Matthew Weinberger and Robbie Gordon) have been participating in a STEM project run by EDT – Engineering Development Trust. STEM is an integrated approach to learning that incorporates the subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The award they have been working towards is the Industrial Cadets Bronze award, which is a 12 week project. The students have been highly motivated and have worked on their project and attended weekly meetings with an industry mentor throughout lockdown, in addition to their school work. The project they chose to work on was designing a building for climate change. They have done lots of research and are now finalising their design, which they hope to test in school now that we have returned. The students will have to present their submission to a panel of assessors from industry, where they will receive feedback. The culmination will be a virtual award ceremony to congratulate students on graduating as Bronze Industrial Cadets.

The students have worked well as a team and have developed key skills for learning, life and work. They have been supervised through-out by science technicians Wesleigh Dawsmith and Karen Hancock, who would like to praise their enthusiasm and commitment.

We will share their final submission and graduation details in a future newsletter.

The industrial cadets Bronze project is aligned to the National Curriculum and the Gatsby Benchmarks in England. For more information about EDT and the award see: <https://www.etrust.org.uk/edt-programmes>

Student of the month

We congratulate all our student of the month nominations, but particular praise goes to Dylan Meranda and Samuel Gassner in Year 11 for each getting 2 nominations in the same month. Dylan received a nomination for both Biology and Chemistry in January, and Samuel for Chemistry and Physics in February. Well done all.

Mazel Tov to..

Lily Plasett 8N celebrated her Bat Mitzvah the weekend of 13th March and, as part of her preparations, she ran a half marathon for charity. As there were no formal races being run during lockdown, she mapped out a route and ran 21km in 2 hours four minutes, running from Totteridge up to Mill Hill and then along the Dollis Brook to Hampstead. She's raised £2,865 for Alzheimer's Research - a wonderful cause! We are tremendously proud of Lily - another JCoSS Mensch!

Year 7 – Experiences of Lockdown

My Year 7 Jewish Education class were asked to create something to demonstrate their experiences of lockdown. There were no limits put on creativity. Here are 2 examples of the work completed.

Ms Abrams

Nathan Ash (7F):

I made a Victoria sponge cake in the design of an emoji. The emoji is wearing a mask to represent the requirements of Covid. I included stars on the cake to represent the non-Covid future, and PS4 buttons to represent my best friend and me playing after my school work is done.



Leo Fink (7F):

Covid 19 definitely changed millions, or maybe even billions of lives. People have died; friends, family and even friends of family. People with conditions have had to be extra careful, and we've all had to wear masks and sanitize our hands regularly – things that we would never dream of doing before Covid-19.

It all started on 11th March 2020, 14 days before my sister's birthday. No one knew much about it. All that they knew was that there was a virus that had started in China. Little did people know, this was going to change our lives forever.

I was in Year 6 at the time, and out of nowhere, my classmates and I were told to stay at home and not go to school for as long as 6 months. I was extremely shocked and get very restless sitting down all day, trying to do my Year 6 work. It would take me 1 or 2 hours to do the work every day, and for the rest of the day I would go and play football in the park with my dad, or go for a walk with my dog and it was quite fun for the first month or so. After a while, however, it got extremely tedious.

It was a real challenge starting at a new school, knowing practically no one and wearing masks and using sanitiser a lot, but after a few weeks I got used to it. Covid has definitely made me realise how fortunate my family and I are. I even started some new hobbies. One of my new hobbies is art. Before lockdown I didn't really enjoy art, but I started to do it a lot more during lockdown and now I really like it. Another thing I got into was playing board games; I really enjoyed playing them with my dad.

News from the JCoSS LRC

World Book Day review by James Harris 8F

On 4th of March, it was World Book Day, a global celebration of everything books, and, as a special treat, we, year 7 and 8 students, got to see a very interesting video made by Tom Palmer, author of *Foul Play*, *Roy of the Rovers* and, more recently, *After the War*. Let's talk about *After the War*; What is it about? Well, it is about World War 2, and, more accurately, orphaned children (mostly Jewish) adjusting to life after the war, hence the title. They were taken to Lake Windermere, in the Lake District, and there, were cared for by local families until they were ready to resume a normal life after their traumatic experiences in Nazi concentration camps.

Tom Palmer stressed in his video about the accuracy of books about the Holocaust and World War 2 as a whole. Read a book such as *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*, for example, and you will find all sorts of inaccuracies, but in *After the War* there is none of that. Tom Palmer explained that he did extensive research, such as going to Lake Windermere himself and also meeting some of the children who settled there. He felt that he had a responsibility to tell the harrowing stories accurately, so as to make sure that he did the survivors justice.

I had read *After the War* myself, prior to World Book Day, on recommendation from my mum, and I found it incredibly moving and quite different to some other books I have read on the Holocaust, as they generally focus on the horrors themselves rather than the aftermath, and I found it really interesting. Would the survivors be welcomed into the community or treated with hostility? How long did they have to wait to find out what had happened to their families? These were questions that I hadn't really thought about and yet, now I realise that, for the survivors of the Holocaust, the end of the war wasn't the end of troubles for them. It is a very sobering book, as Holocaust related books generally are, but I would definitely recommend you to read this book, either by borrowing it from the school library (they have 2 copies) or your local library (when you can) or by buying it from a bookshop. It is a great read and I implore you to read.



Photos of students from 7Eng with Tom Palmer books and display



JFS 'Forget Me Not Walk' in Memory of Mia Janin

We have all heard the tragic news of the sudden death of Mia Janin, a student at JFS in Year 10. A typical response when we hear tragic news is a desire to protect those around us and to take action: we hope the following may help a little.

It can be hard as parents to support children through challenging times. Sudden, especially young, death can be deeply shocking and raises questions for young people: as adults we need to try and facilitate conversations about those questions. It may help to remind them (and ourselves) that all emotions are ok, and that it is normal for them to be very mixed and changeable. It is helpful to validate and identify our feelings, and some children may need 'permission' to do this, and encouragement to talk rather than suppress or hide their responses. Psychologist Dr Anna Colton suggests that grief like this can be an opportunity to help children to be compassionate rather than to judge – either themselves or others. I encourage you to identify a "go-to" person for a child who seems emotionally fragile. This person may be you or another trusted adult.

Some of Mia's friends have set up a way to "create positivity in the absence of hers". Please read the special message from her friends and join in this initiative if you can.

JFS 'Forget Me Not Walk' in Memory of Mia Janin – from Mia's friend, Eva Myer Year 10

"Mia was a bright soul who touched the hearts of many in her life. As a school, we have teamed together to create positivity in the absence of hers. She was a charitable person and would always give her time to help those in need, so it is only fitting that we can do this in her honour.

100% of the funds raised will go towards supporting bereaved children and young people who have experienced the death of someone close, and families and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since March last year, there have been over 100,000 deaths due to Coronavirus. Grief Encounter offer professional support services online, including group workshops, individual e-counselling and memory workshops for all of those who need them. They can't do that without your support. Just £26 could fund a helpline session for someone impacted by grief, offering them immediate help and advice following a bereavement.

Please click [HERE](#) to donate and thank you for your support."

JCoSS Key Term Dates – First Half of Summer Term 2021

Date	Time	Description
Mon 12 th April	8.30am	Start of Summer Term. Week One. Rosh Chodesh Iyar.
Wed 14 th April	All day	Yom Hazikaron. School timings as normal.
Thurs 15 th April	1.45pm	Yom Ha'atzmuat drop down day with early close for staff training.
Wed 28 th April	4.30 – 7.30pm	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Mon 3rd May		Public holiday – school closed
Tues 11 th May	4.30 – 7.30pm	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Wed 12 th May	All day	Rosh Chodesh Sivan. School timings as normal.
Mon 17th & Tues 18th May	All day	Shavuot – school closed
Fri 28 th May	All day	Last day of first half of Summer term

- School will end on Fridays at 1.45pm until the end of the school year
- All parents' evenings and meetings will be virtual

Year 9 Art Workshop

I was lucky enough to participate in an Art Workshop with 3 amazing artists, alongside 40 Y9 students. Each artist told us about their job and the differences between them all.

They taught us about positive and negative space, we experimented with different ways of drawing and recording and we used different weight and fragilities of objects that we collected from around the house. We experimented with different materials and mediums to create our art. My favourite was cutting up and collaging our drawings to create a mixed media piece. The artists showed us some of their work and the differences between them and also told us stories about their relationship with art and how they came to love it. I would love to do another of their workshops to learn about a different area of art.

Annie Miller, Y9