



CHANNING

# Word from the Head

11 September 2020

Dear Parents

It is with much happiness and no little trepidation that I set out to write my very first Word from the Head - such a responsibility! I should start by saying what a joy it has been to spend this week surrounded by the sights and sounds of the school operating at full capacity once again. I know that for pupils and staff alike, despite any initial nervousness, being together again after all this time is a wonderful experience. And for me, who has waited 15 months for this moment, it is truly thrilling.

In my last letter to you, a couple of weeks ago, I talked about the excitement of a new academic year. It is often a time to make new resolutions: of a goal to achieve, a club or activity to try, a new behaviour or habit to practise. Despite the unusual circumstances in which this year begins, this is just as true now as it ever was. In my first assemblies of the year I talked about my vision for the future of Channing and introduced everyone to my motto: 'What would you do if you were 10% braver?'. I am convinced that encouraging our pupils to be brave, alongside their grounding in the Channing Promise of kindness, respect and tolerance, and with the critical thinking developed in this unique Unitarian environment, will prepare them superbly for their lives beyond school.

This is a theme to which I will return in the year group Welcome Evenings and Meet the Head events which we planned to ensure I have an opportunity to speak to all of you, at least via a screen, in the next few weeks. Please look out for more information about these. You might also enjoy reading this interview which has been published this week on the website:

<https://www.channing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Meet-our-new-Head.pdf>.

In the meantime I have been overwhelmed with the warmth of my reception: from staff, who are meeting me individually over the course of the coming weeks, from pupils who enthusiastically wave and stop to chat when they see me walking around school, and from you. I am touched by the emails of welcome I have received from a number of you, and equally happy that many of you have followed those up with questions or concerns about our arrangements for reopening and operational matters in these first few days of term.

It was inevitable that we would need to fine-tune our provision: as Churchill so memorably said, 'however beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results'. One result you have seen already is that we have changed our staggered start in the morning; please could I remind you

now that students should not arrive before 8am? This is extremely important as we are unable to guarantee adequate supervision of your children before that time.

On the note of drop-off and pick-up, I am sure that you will all be aware of the 'Rule of Six' which comes into effect from Monday. Can I please ask that when picking up or dropping off pupils at school, you act in a manner consistent with this rule. In particular, I would request that you endeavour to socially distance yourselves from others outside the school and avoid any gatherings at the start or end of the school day. Unfortunately, we have already had observations from members of the public on this issue and I know that you will equally be as concerned as they were to ensure that all of our actions protect the safety of our pupils and the wider school and local community.

Related to this, I must also mention the perennial issue of parking and safe road-crossing. Please, please be considerate of our neighbours, pedestrians and other road users at the start and end of the day. If you do need to drive your daughter to school please park well away from the school, not on Cholmeley Park or on Highgate Hill itself. We have had a number of near-misses in these first few days, including a three-point turn executed in Cholmeley Park which was frankly terrifying to watch as girls flooded across the road around the car. All our pupils walk some or all of the journey to school and I would be most grateful if you could also remind them of the basics of the Green Cross Code. We will address the importance of safe road crossing with the pupils as well.

On a final point related to Covid-19, we have a small number of students who are having to self isolate or quarantine, who are consequently unable to be in school but otherwise are well enough to complete work at home. Form tutors are asked to make contact with their tutees via their Google Classroom and provide pastoral support, including sharing the content of PSHE lessons. Teachers are asked to set up a Google Classroom as a means to communicate with their students and to ensure that absent students have access to the resources from in-school lessons, as far as possible. This could be:

- providing the resources for independent study via Google Classroom or through another student
- using live broadcast during lessons via Google Meet, and providing the student with the link to join
- recording the screen for part / all of the lesson and posting later in the day

At this point, it remains only for me to tell you all that we have our first prospective parents' Virtual Open Event next Wednesday, 16 September: please tell all your friends that they can sign up [here](#).

With my very best wishes for a well-earned rest at the end of a busy first week,

Lindsey Hughes  
Headmistress  
#WeAreChanning

## Girls Enjoying Success

### MFL News

Over the Summer holidays **Maria Kirpichnikova** (Year 10) participated in the Translation Exchange Competition for German, organised by Queen's College, Oxford and was highly recommended for her translation of a text on climate change. Well done Maria!



Another special mention for Maria Kirpichnikova who has been awarded grade 9s for both French and German IGCSE this summer. A native speaker of Russian, Maria speaks fluent English, excellent French, German and Spanish, and is also learning Mandarin. She is an outstanding linguist whose accomplishments are an inspiration to staff and peers alike.

**Chiara Lewis** in Year 13 has also been highly commended on her entry for the Gonville and Caius College essay competition. Chiara's essay, 'The Politics of Devotion in Alfonso Cuarón's Roma', was a superlative piece of writing of which Chiara can be justifiably proud! Her success came as no surprise to her language teachers, who know her to be a gifted and intuitive linguist.

### History news

Over the summer break we were delighted to find out that **Juliet Freeman** in Year 13 had won Peterhouse College, Cambridge's Vellacott History Prize 2020 for her superb essay entitled '*To what extent is La Malinche both a Hero and a Villain in Mexican History?*'. It is a superbly well written piece and very well researched. Well done Juliet!



## **Pastoral Notices (Mr Underwood)**

### **TikTok**

I have become aware of some disturbing content on the TikTok app which many pupils have access to. Graphic footage of someone ending their life is sometimes accessible amongst more usual content.

TikTok have been asked to remove this content but it may be still visible on some streams due to the autoplay function.

Please be mindful that the age rating for TikTok is 16 years of age. If your child does have access to this app, please do alert them to the possibility of upsetting and disturbing content and please inform us if they have been affected in any way.

### **Masks**

At present, it is expected that pupils wear masks when in transit around the school or in common school areas. The School Nurse has asked me to remind you that masks should be kept in a small clean bag and not put into pockets or school bags. Ideally, both the small bag and the mask should be washed daily to minimise the risk of contamination.

## **T&L News (Mr Boardman)**

It has been wonderful to have pupils back in the real classroom. You daughters might have found that teaching and learning has felt a little different this week. The way that teachers are organising lessons and especially workflow and resource sharing will be far more technology-based, and in lots of ways this change is a good thing. We encourage you to have a conversation with your daughters about how this is working for them - this sort of conversation will support our whole school focus of improving their metacognition and self-regulation.

Two of Channing's core aims are to inspire scholarship and independence in our pupils. Channing teachers are empowered and supported to be the best creative professionals they can be. Our approach to Teaching and Learning is founded on a synthesis of evidence from authoritative educational studies. We use the findings of this evidence and our professional judgement to focus on areas of practice that are known to improve pupil learning and outcomes.

The overwhelming body of research finds that the most important factor in improving student outcomes is good teaching. To support our teaching staff every year we create a Teaching &

Learning Development Plan. The aim is to ensure Channing continues to deliver an exceptional and relevant education for your daughters and that staff continue to develop their practice. This year the Senior School staff have two key areas of professional development:

- **Feedback:** We are embedding a variety of departmental feedback strategies in our classroom practice so that pupils can answer the questions: 'Where am I going?', 'How am I going?' 'Where to next?' Our aim is that our pupils understand how to develop as a result of regular, high-quality feedback from staff who use a wide range of feedback strategies and that pupils know how to and are given a good amount of time to respond to feedback. When teachers use a range of strategies to give students feedback it is powerful than just using traditional '*marking*'.
- **How Pupils Learn:** Metacognition and self-regulation: developing pupils' self-confidence, self-awareness and understanding of how to be a successful learner (metacognition).

Watch out for various (virtual) Parent Information Evenings on feedback and metacognition where we hope to work with you to help you understand how a range of feedback strategies help children progress, and also to understand and value that the school is explicitly developing our pupils' metacognitive knowledge and the role you can play in this. There will also be an opportunity this year for parents to find out more about our expectations of your daughters in relation to technology, how we as teachers are improving our use of technology, and how you can best support them in utilising technology to enhance their understanding and develop them as independent learners.

### **Out of year and external examination entries**

In light of the pandemic we have made a change to our policy regarding entering pupils in out of year or externally taught public examinations. While we hope that the GCSE and A level examinations will run smoothly in the summer of 2021, we must be prepared for all eventualities. We are concerned that we may unintentionally disadvantage these students: as we have not taught these courses ourselves we will be unable to calculate grades, if that were to be required, nor assist in appeals against them if that were necessary. You may wish to consider applying to Immanuel College or London Brookes College where Channing pupils in Years 9 & 10 have chosen to sit additional examinations in the past.

## Alumnae News

### Throwback Thursdays

I was amazed and impressed to learn that Miss Frances MacRae was a "School teacher and aerobatic ace"! By day, Miss MacRae taught English at Channing from 1946-82; and in her spare time was an aeronautical enthusiast and World Aerobatic Champion.

Please have a look at this [short video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBAiQJpSlqg) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBAiQJpSlqg>) from the BBC2 documentary, *Look, Stranger - Patterns in the Sky* (1970) to find out more. What an inspirational woman to have taught generations of Channing girls!



## The Week Ahead

### Monday 14 September

Year 13 Exams Commence

18:00 Virtual Welcome Evening Year 12

### Wednesday 16 September

17:00 Virtual Senior School Open Evening

### Friday 18 September

Jeans for Genes Day

Jewish New Year (sunset)