

September 2018 Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the new term. We hope you have had a relaxing and restful summer. It was a pleasure to welcome our students back to school and say a big Mary Elliot hello to our new starters.

We have lots of exciting development work across the year to ensure that all students have an exciting and meaningful curriculum that truly prepares for adult life after Mary Elliot School – many thanks to all parents who attended our curriculum information sessions before we broke up last term. We started our term with INSET work alongside Peter Imray - a nationally renowned educator with huge experience in developing a curriculum for the most complex young people, we will be working with Peter across the year to develop our school.

Executive Head teacher Appointment

School Governors held interviews for a new Headteacher for the federation across two full days last term. The school interviewed a well-qualified experienced field of four candidates, with leadership tasks and interviews across Mary Elliot and Old Hall Schools, as well as activities involving the children and students from both schools. Unfortunately governors felt that they did not have a suitable candidate to appoint at that time and have decided to re-advertise the Headteacher role in October with a view to appointing a permanent executive Headteacher by the end of term.

Federation Name – Ideas needed!

Old Hall and Mary Elliot Schools have begun their work as a Federation; we have already completed joint leadership activities and are looking forward to developing the shared partnership with leadership, teachers and TAs working alongside each other to develop their knowledge and skills across the schools for the benefit of students and students. We now need a Federation name as we look to develop our shared vision and values across the next term. We would like to involve the whole school community in this. First of all, we would like to have a new name for the Federation - if you have any great ideas as a parent, please do contact me at school with your suggested name. I am collating these and put forward names for governors to choose the best one, with a prize for the winner!

Class Dojo - Information

The Class Dojo platform allows students, teachers and parents to connect to support and develop student skills. Students can customize avatars, see classes and see individual progress. Parents can also access Class Dojo when they are invited by the teachers, and can visualize the progress of students and the information shared by the teachers. Teachers can reward students with positive feedback in real time when they show good outcomes in a task or activity in class. Teachers are also able to communicate directly with parents through the platform. Following a successful trial at Old Hall, we aim to set up a similar trial to improve communication at Mary Elliot –we have three classes currently trialling Class Dojo, please sign up when you are invited.

Meet the Governors

I will use our newsletter to introduce our Federation governing body to you all – we have an experienced and committed governing body who are well placed to challenge and support staff at Mary Elliot and Old Hall Schools. Governors will often be in both schools to work with staff, students and students across the year. Firstly may I introduce.....

MRS LESLEY FOSTER (Co-Chair of Governors)



'Hello, my name is Lesley Foster (sorry for the awful photo) and I currently Co-Chair the Federation with Teresa Tunnell having previously Chaired the Governing Body at Old Hall.

I have been a School Governor for 15 years and I also Chair another local Primary Federation. In addition I chair the newly formed Walsall Strategic Inclusion Partnership Board (what a mouthful!) I am a member of Schools Forum and sit on the Executive Committee of Walsall Governors Association. You might say I am a glutton for punishment but I really enjoy the work and am passionate about improving the lot of Walsall children.

I run my own business and am a mother of three and a grandmother. I am always happy to stop and chat if you see me around school or you can contact me through the school office.'

FOME – Friends of Mary Elliot

Please come and support the school alongside the Friends of Mary Elliot – Friends meet at school regularly (on Fridays). We would appreciate support from all parents to come and get involved in the life of the school and raise funds which have real impact on the work we do with our students – there are more details on our website.

INSET Days – 2018-2019

Training days are very important to ensure that all in school have the knowledge and skills to support our young people to learn and make progress, as well as keeping everyone in school safe. Our training days for the following year are as follows:

26.10.18 - Appraisal training

29.04.19 - TEAM TEACH (Behaviour support training)

22.07.18 - Curriculum development focus.

Diary date - Harvest Festival and MacMillan Coffee Morning - Friday 28th September at 10.00 am (seated at 9.45 a.m)

Safeguarding updates – Sharon Fogarty (Interim Designated Leader for Safeguarding)

Many of you have social media accounts such as Facebook; unfortunately we are not able to accept 'friend requests' from parents or students. Please understand we must follow safeguarding guidance in school which does not allow this – many thanks for your support on this.

It is always useful to monitor your child's internet use; there are so many apps and sites available for our young people to use. I know you will be aware of the additional vulnerability of our young people because of their communication needs.

We carry out a great deal of safeguarding training at Mary Elliot School, recently we have had training on the changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018). Our Mary Elliot Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy is available on our website.

We now have Tony Lee as Safeguarding Governor for Mary Elliot and Old Hall School. Tony is a very experienced governor and will be contributing a pen portrait very shortly. Tony is often in school to support and challenge staff to ensure all our young people are kept safe in all aspects of their school life.

For parents that would like to talk, I would like to remind everyone that Sharon Fogarty is available for support around bereavement. Sharon can signpost you to lots of support and services, or simply provide a listening ear!

Clive Padgett



**Mary Elliot School invites you to an evening with :
“Sgt. White” -Recruiting men for the War 1914.**

Wednesday 7th November 2018

At Mary Elliot School, Leamore Lane, WS2 7 NR

Refreshments from 7.00 pm

“Sgt. White” will begin at 7.45 pm

Tickets £10

All proceeds from this event will support the Students' Prom Day in the Summer

Weekly Work Experience Gets Underway



To help our students learn about the world of work we now have a weekly work experience placement taking place at The Craft Barn. The Craft Barn is a social enterprise that re-cycles and sells crafting products and materials. The Craft Barn was set up by Saxon Hill school to enable learners with SEND to get support

experience of the world of work. The Craft Barn is open to the public on three days a weekend is always happy to receive donations of craft related items and materials. It's great to get our students to try the world of work, and it means the craft barn can now open for an extra day each week. We also have students undertaking work experience at support staff at Old Hall School, Its great to be working with other special schools to give more opportunities to our students. <http://saxonhillcraftbarn.co.uk/>

Catherine Care

This year is our first year of linking with Catherine Care. We are excited to be sending a group of our Post 16 learners to explore the activities that they might be involved in if they transition to a social care setting when they leave school. Catherine Care as based in Norton Canes and offer day and residential services for adults with learning difficulties and mental health needs. They also have a fantastic vintage tea room which is open to the public during the week and is well worth a visit. To find out more about Catherine Care go online, <http://catherinecare.com/our-services/> .

Back to College

Our college links programme is back. This will be our second year linking with the "Futures" specialist SEND provision at City of Wolverhampton College. Students from our SLD department will be attending college to find out what it's like to go to college, and to integrate into activities offered as part of the "Futures" course. To find out more about Futures go online to <http://www.wolvcoll.ac.uk/category/futures-programme/>

Peter Imray – National Leader of Education



Mary Elliot School are delighted to be working with Peter Imray, Peter has been instrumental in the development of the EQUALS Semi-Formal Curriculum and will working with Mary Elliot School throughout the school year to help us embed our exciting new Semi-Formal and Informal Curriculums. Not only is Peter a vastly experienced SEN teacher and consultant, he has published a number of books and articles with a focus on the curriculum for SEND learners. Most recently "Inclusion is Dead, Long Live Inclusion" (co-authored with Andrew Colley) published by Routledge in 2017.