



Friday 23rd July 2021

Dear Families,

As the year draws to a close, it is difficult not to dwell on the impact of the pandemic, but there are still so many things that we should take time to celebrate. It is more important than ever that we encourage our students to be proud of how they have managed during such a turbulent year. There will also be some positive outcomes that will no doubt have a lasting impact on education. For example, the creation of a high quality parallel (online) curriculum which has enabled our students to learn from home when needed. This is something that we can continue to utilise for students who are not able to be in school.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge an incredible team of staff who have kept our school going through our most challenging year yet! In particular I want to thank them for prioritising student wellbeing alongside academic achievement. There are so many things that have happened 'behind the scenes' of the classroom this year and our staff continue to be supportive and caring throughout it all. We will continue to offer our students the following email address over the summer, should they need to contact someone for wellbeing support: wellbeing@iscaexeter.co.uk

Saying Goodbye to Year 11

Well done to all of our Year 11 students for working so hard and remaining positive this year. We were delighted to spend the evening with many of them at their End of Year Celebration on Wednesday this week, you all looked so fabulous.

It's always bittersweet when students leave our school, but we are so proud of each and every one of you and are confident that they are ready for their next steps. I would like to wish all of our Year 11 students and their families the very best and invite students to consider joining our alumni here: www.futurefirst.org.uk

Performing Arts

Our fantastic Performing Arts team have continued to offer some amazing opportunities despite COVID restrictions, contributing to both the wellbeing of students and their personal sense of achievement. They have filmed several performances including:

[Online Performance – October](#)

[Spring Performance](#)

[The Winter Whirligig](#)

Please join us tonight via YouTube for our annual '[Isca Overground](#)' event which goes live at 6pm!

There have also been many other opportunities including: after school clubs in Dance, Choir, Drama, Rock Club and Samba Band. We have also had 10 students who auditioned to be part of the annual Powderham Live mentoring programme and concert. 10 of our students were successful and began online or face to face sessions with mentors such as the Countess of Devon, AJ Courtenay, and former Isca student Sadie Horler. Preparations were put on hold during further lockdowns but students have now begun rehearsing safely within Powderham's music room and there is due to be a performance at the end of summer or the start of the autumn term. The students are representing Isca fantastically!

<https://www.facebook.com/powderhamlive>



Our Year 10 drama students also had a valuable session talking to professional actors, directors and script writers about what a career in the Drama industry entailed and our GCSE Music students attended a live virtual concert of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. If you want to see our outgoing Year 11s in action, some of them have secured performance (busking) slots at Tiverton Pannier market on Friday and Saturday afternoon throughout the summer.

Outdoor Education

So many of our students continue to benefit from the amazing extracurricular outdoor education programme here at Isca and this year was no exception! A significant number of students have taken part in and completed the virtual Ten Tors event, Exe Valley Challenge, the Jurassic Coast Challenge and of course the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE): all of this during a pandemic! 100 of our students have completed their DofE Award this year which is incredible and our highest number to date! None of this would be possible without our brilliant team of staff and volunteers who support the students with outdoor education. Thank you to them all.

Other Highlights

- A group of Year 8 students during Lockdown, qualified for the semi-finals of the national codebreaking challenge!
- Our Isca Anthology has significantly contributed to increases in student reading ages which will be life-changing for some of our students, especially those for whom reading is a challenge. We have also introduced the Isca Anthology Plus for the top 5% of year 8 and Year 9 readers.
- A group of Year 10 students received mentoring through the Inspiring Girls programme.
- The success of our home-grown Studio 71 reached its peak during Lockdown with over 600 students accessing mental health and wellbeing support.

ILife

As promised, we can now give you details of our exciting new ILife Programme, which will start in September. Students will make their choices when they return, and this will begin from Monday 13th September (the first full week of term). Each session will develop a wide range of skills, and we are incredibly pleased to be able to provide such an array of different activities.

Year 7 will do a 6-week rotation of the following activities:	Year 8 will choose 3 of the following, and do a 12-week programme:
Craft Capers	Netball Club
Learn a new instrument	Equality Champions
Green Car Challenge	Multi-sports
History in Motion	Anything Astronomical
Photography and Photoshop	Community Challenge
Wellbeing Walks	Outdoor Improvements
Philosophy for Kids	Design and Make
	Learn to Crochet

Year 10s will choose 3 of the following. Choices may be limited depending on students', timetables, which they will receive in September.	Year 9's ILife experience will come from the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, plus 3 x 12-week activities, consisting of:
A Tour of Italy	Multi-sports
iMedia/film making	Digital Skills Builder
World of Dance	School Newspaper
DIY	Year 11 will continue with their PSHE lessons, with a bespoke programme to include personal enrichment, Skills Builder, Careers Education and well-being.
ICT	
School newspaper	
Multi-sports	
Cryptography	
Woolly craft	
World Issues	
Health Leaders	

New Year 7

This year we achieved the highest number of applications for incoming Year 7 students and were full on 'first choices', with applications exceeding places for the first time in our school's history. Sadly, we haven't had the pleasure of meeting our new students on site for the usual transition day. However, we are very much looking forward to welcoming them at our summer school and are delighted that 75% have signed up already this year! We know that making the transition to secondary school can be daunting and we will do our utmost to make it as seamless as possible.

End of Year Assembly

Today we held our end of year assembly outside in the breezy but sunny weather. It was incredible to be able to share in our students' successes. We wanted to ensure that even students at home could enjoy the assembly and see if they have won any of our awards too! So please see below two links, one for the video of the assembly and another with a PPT which summarises the awards for this year. We hope you enjoy it.

- [Assembly Video](#)
- [Assembly PPT](#)

I would like to close by saying thank you for your continued support and feedback throughout this year. It has been so wonderful to receive kind words and gestures at just the right time from members of our community. You have all made our work much easier knowing that we have your support so thank you. I do hope you all have a wonderful summer and I look forward to welcoming students back in September for what I hope will be a more usual year for us at Isca. We certainly have plans to make it the best yet!

Yours sincerely,



Aimee Mitchell
Headteacher