

# iCollege



## Message from Jacquie

### A Visit from St. Nicholas: Clement Clarke Moore

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;  
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there.'

This is the first verse of my favourite Christmas poem; my mum used to read it to me when I was a little girl. I still have my original copy and I re-read it every year when I have a quiet moment.

This term has been challenging in many ways at iCollege – for learners and staff and families, but we have continued to work together and we have made it to the end of term! Well done to you all! This newsletter will show what we've been up to...

And very soon, we can all take a breath, hang up our Christmas sacks and look forward to Santa's visit on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year and look forward to our **return to school on 5<sup>th</sup> January, 2022.**

With my very best wishes,  
Jacquie



## IMPORTANT Term Dates

### December 17

Break up for Christmas

### January 11

Functional Skills English exam

### February 1

Chinese New Year

### February 14

Valentine's Day

### February 16

Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day)

## Important Covid information – return to school

From January 5<sup>th</sup> 2022, in line with Government guidance, as an 'alternative setting', iCollege will be planning for 'face-to-face' provision for all learners; there is no staggered or phased return. Your child's lead teacher will be in touch to confirm timetables on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022 when staff return to work after the holiday.

Onsite testing will take place for all learners on the first day that your child returns to an iCollege site following the Christmas break.

If the first day back is an 'off-site' day, for example, Auto Skills, Upper Lodge Farm, Work Experience or Outdoor Academy etc. when your child goes directly to the provision, please ensure that a home LFT is carried out and the results shared with the appropriate Lead Teacher. Learners with positive results should not attend iCollege or any planned provision.

As iCollege will be closed over Christmas, all staff and learners should test over the holidays in line with national guidance. This means that you should test if you will be in a high-risk situation that day, and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19.

## Support

- In an emergency, call 999
- For urgent, medical advice, call 111
- Samaritans: 116123
- Childline: 0800 1111
- Cruse bereavement care (West Berks branch): 01635 523 573 [www.crusewestberks.org](http://www.crusewestberks.org)
- West Berkshire Foodbank: <https://westberks.foodbank.org.uk/> or call 01635 760560,

## Unit News

### The Pod

[staff.pod@icollge.org.uk](mailto:staff.pod@icollge.org.uk)



Here at the Pod, we have been taking part in a food tasting initiative. Everyone who has a go earns spots towards a prize. We have tried pineapple, Sharon fruit, grapefruit, dates, mango and celery. Some of these were popular and others not so much!

We all enjoyed coming in to school when the snow came to Newbury! It wasn't enough to build a snowman but we had lots of fun throwing snowballs.



We have created our own Christmas tree (see above) and are really looking forward to going to see 'Cinderella' at the Corn Exchange next week.

Have a lovely Christmas from everyone at the Pod!



### Pod+

[staff.pod@icollge.org.uk](mailto:staff.pod@icollge.org.uk)

Young people at Pod+ have been working hard in all areas of their learning. They have produced some excellent writing on life in the trenches during WW1 and have enjoyed reading Kensuke's Kingdom by Michael Morpurgo. In science, learners have been using the light microscopes to support their understanding of cell biology, and in maths have tackled algebra for the first time.

We are all looking forward to joining the Pod learners for the pantomime next week.

Pod+ has only been up and running for a term and I must pay enormous credit to all staff and learners for working hard to make iCollege's newest unit a success.

Here at Pod+, we wish you all a happy, safe and healthy Christmas.



### Intervention

[office.intervention@icollge.org.uk](mailto:office.intervention@icollge.org.uk)

Young people from Intervention attended the Remembrance Day occasion in Newbury and were very happy to do so in order to pay their respects to fallen soldiers and victims of war. They expressed feelings of happiness as they were able to lay their poppy wreath in memory of the dead, but also of sadness out of respect for the people who died for our freedom. The memorial outside St. Nicholas' Church was well attended and the Mayor of Newbury was also there. The two minutes silence gave them much time to reflect and think about how we live our own lives.



## Independence

[office.independence@iccollege.org.uk](mailto:office.independence@iccollege.org.uk)

Young people at Independence have coped with another term of changes due to COVID. Bespoke and flexible timetables have enabled them to engage with a variety of creative opportunities. For example, Ibis, the community furniture project, mentoring, stables, auto skills, growing together and pre 16 college courses have welcomed our learners. The individualised nature of the offer has seen learners flourish in areas they are passionate about. As a result, we are seeing rewarding personal growth.



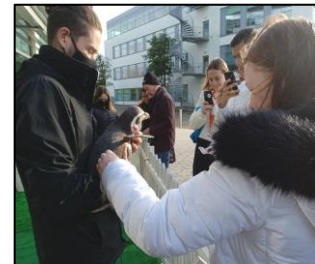
In cooking, learners have been doing some lovely home cooking.



## Integration

[office.integration@iccollege.org.uk](mailto:office.integration@iccollege.org.uk)

This term at Integration, we had some visitors locally who are a LONG way from home! Penguins from a local farm park came to visit Arlington Business Centre for one day only to meet local residents, so the Integration Crew went to go and meet them! Young people got to meet Pringles and Groot the penguins and even got a chance to have a little hug with them – apparently they were surprisingly soft and not slimy at all as some learners predicted. This was a once in a lifetime experience enjoyed by all!

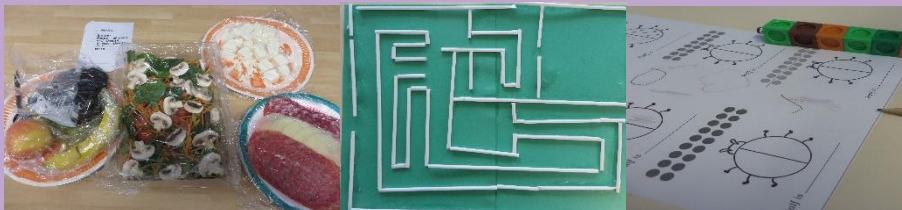


## Inspiration

[office.inspiration@iccollege.org.uk](mailto:office.inspiration@iccollege.org.uk)



This term at Inspiration, we have been enjoying learning about myths and legends. We visited Cliveden to look for the minotaur in the maze to give us inspiration to create our very own minotaur labyrinth after reading the story of Theseus and the Minotaur. We have also built Greek temples. We have been learning about those less fortunate than ourselves and have been collecting food and delivering it to a local food bank. We have taken part in numerous trips to bring the curriculum to life. Our Eco-Warriors have continued to think about our environment and are making sure we switch all our lights off and recycle as much as possible. We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a relaxing break and to say a huge well done to all our learners this term. We would also like to thank parents and carers who have supported this learning.



### iCollege Careers and Community Engagement Event

We were delighted to welcome businesses, charities, public services and further and higher education providers including: The Army, The Watermill Theatre, Abacus Nursery and Pre-school, Berkshire Maestros, Chiltern Training, Berkshire Youth, Outdoor Academy, City Arts, Newbury College, Sparsholt College and New Buckinghamshire University. We were also excited to welcome the Deputy Mayor of Newbury and iCollege Governors.



With pre-allocated time slots, young people from iCollege's secondary provisions had the opportunity to speak with visitors, develop an understanding of offerings and how they may be accessed after iCollege. Activities included developing brick laying skills with Outdoor Academy, using virtual reality goggles with the army and creating 3D models with City Arts! Follow up sessions will be arranged for the many learners who've expressed an interest in learning more.

As usual the event was enthusiastically received by iCollege staff who welcomed guests and supported learners on their voyage of discovery!



### Last Orders Alcohol Education for KS3

Held at Riverside on the 19<sup>th</sup> November and performed by Solomon Theatre to learners from Integration and Intervention, Last Orders is a play which opens conversations around the negative influence of alcohol, the definitions of healthy relationships and the importance of good role models among other things. iCollege learners responded well and reflected on the topics raised.



Three groups visited the Engie

Station Development on 7.12.21. Thank you to Karen Field for arranging this for iCollege Y11 and to the site managers who provided an informative half hour tour of the site.

Learners were able to see different phases of the project and gain an understanding of the trades involved in the construction process.

We look forward to working with Engie in 2022 as they have kindly agreed to help us with Y10 work experience week!

### iCollege Presentation Evening 2021

saw the return of our Year 11 and Post-16 learners and even included a very special guest... No, not just the mayor, (who was also there and whose chain of office is fantastic)...the VIP was iCollege's very own, Kat. Learners and staff were reunited in celebration of learners' achievements. GCSEs were in abundance and there was also a smattering of Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Awards. Joe's incredible grade 8 in GCSE Photography and news of Kat's progress with her English Literature degree at Winchester University were the highlights of the evening. We congratulate last year's Year 11 and Post-16 learners and wish them all the best for the future. Please do stay in touch, we would love to hear how you are getting on.



## Curriculum news and information

### GCSE Examination Information

Ofqual (the national organisation responsible for examinations) made some significant announcements on 11/11/21 about the summer exams for 2022.

Ofqual confirmed that it is 'fully' committed to exams going ahead and feels that it is 'unlikely' that they will have to be cancelled.

**iCollege GCSE exams will begin the week of 16<sup>th</sup> May and finish the week of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2022.**

**Is there a possibility that the exams might be cancelled? What will happen if this is the case?**

Ofqual have stated that there needs to be a contingency plan and this plan will work in a similar way to last academic year: learners will be awarded Teacher Assessed Grades (TAGs.)

Schools are now being asked to assemble evidence of their learners' achievements in each subject. iCollege will be doing this by asking learners to complete GCSE practice questions and parts of past papers under exam conditions and also completing a **Practice Exam Week which will begin on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022.** If the GCSE examinations are cancelled, iCollege will be setting 'in-college assessments' (ICAs) in the summer term.

We appreciate that news of assessments and GCSEs can be a little daunting but the best way to approach the forthcoming months is to take each week at a time and to attend lessons. Our iCollege teachers will support and guide their learners step by step through the process their lessons will equip them with the knowledge and skills they need.

This information is from guidance published on 11/11/21. Further changes will be communicated to you as and when they are made.

### In Conversation with Cheyanne

I'm Cheyanne, a year 10 learner at Intervention, and I'm going to be interviewing various people that work with us here at iCollege. The first person I am interviewing is Dave Hopper who runs outdoor academy (OA).

Cheyanne: So what is OA?

*Dave: We started OA 15 years ago and we now work with a range of alternative schools. We give learners the chance to take part in wilderness activities, team challenges and outdoor pursuits such as kayaking, rock climbing and mountain boarding.*

Cheyanne: How does OA help young people?

*Dave: We provide them with fantastic opportunities and challenges. Every OA session encourages personal development, social interaction and equips learners with skills and qualifications which will help them to get jobs in the future.*

Cheyanne: What are your goals for OA in the future?

*Dave: Great question! We are hoping to move the base of our operation closer to Newbury which will help us improve what we can offer learners at iCollege. We consider ourselves an extension of the staff team at iCollege and we are really lucky to spend time working with such amazing young people.*

Cheyanne: Finally, can you give us an interesting fact?

*Dave: Coconuts are ten times more dangerous than sharks.*

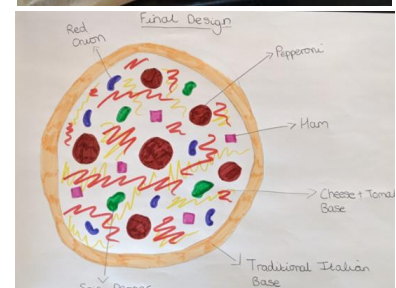


Joni from **COINS** visited Intervention learners on 2<sup>nd</sup> December and delivered a great session on world views, awareness, acceptance and action.

We are looking forward to her session in December on festivals.

### Enterprise and Marketing learners at

Independence were presented with the coursework challenge of designing a pizza recipe for a new national pizza chain 'Perfecta Pizza'. They carried out market research and sought out feedback from both staff and their peers to create a new and exciting design.



## Our iCollege community

'Um, I dunno whether you can give me a diagnosis, but I think I need one coz there's something wrong with me. Maybe I'm bipolar or something. I think my cousin's got it, so maybe I have too?'

'I've got anxiety. I keep having panic attacks. What's wrong with me?' 'I've got anger management. They tell me I need to sort it out.'

Here we are at the end of another year, one in which I continue to hear these sort of organising statements in my work with young people. They've learnt these narratives of distress through the culture in which they've grown up, which has sensitized us all to become suspicious of understandable emotional responses to the challenges of life and to see in them signs of illness. This is a trap in which it's very easy to become stuck. What these young people haven't paused to ask themselves, because no one's asked *them*, is not 'What's wrong with me?', but rather, 'What's happened to me?' And following on from this, the questions of 'How did it affect me?', 'What sense did I make of it?', and 'What did I have to do to survive?' Considered this way, their struggling to keep apace with life makes sense. Big, difficult feelings arise out of our encounters with a confusing, demanding world. Diagnoses and labels locate the causes of distress within the individual (and perhaps within the brain!), and remove meaning, as well as the need to explore each individual's experiences. We need to ask young people these questions (which come from the *Power Threat Meaning Framework*), followed by 'What are your strengths?', and then, to integrate it all, 'What's your story?' Helping young people tell their life story, with all of its ups and downs, helps them to make sense of their lives and find a way forward. Here's to a new year and a more hopeful way ahead.

iCollege counsellor

## A note from the governors

It's been a crazy term for staff and learners alike at iCollege. With Covid 19 still providing a range of problems it's amazing how well all the units have coped. Governors would like to thank all iCollege staff for their unstinting commitment, perseverance and hard work to support learners in so many ways through these difficult times, which look set to continue into 2022. The recent Presentation Evening at Independence was a splendid celebration of the achievement of last year's Year 11 and post 16 learners. The awards were all carefully planned and clearly very well received by these young people. It was good to see so many of these at this event, as well as their parents and the Mayor. The Mayor, Jacquie, Emma Douglas and one of the leaders from Outdoor Academy all gave short speeches in praise of these learners' considerable achievements in this most extraordinary year. This evening is an important date in iCollege's calendar and gives a very welcome opportunity to celebrate learners' successes with their parents, governors and iCollege staff.

A working party of staff and governors has been formed to follow up on key issues arising from the Strategy Day held earlier this term. Governors will also be hoping that they can resume visits to units in the New Year. They were very pleased to come into some units for some photographs alongside learners for the updated iCollege website and for the Careers' event at Independence. Even though in-person visits have continued on a reduced basis, virtual visits have proved to be a good substitute while restrictions remain.

Finally, governors would like to wish all staff and parents and carers a very happy Christmas and many warm wishes for the New Year 2022!

## Inspiration Forest School

Finding uses for fire!



From September this year, iCollege staff have been undertaking training and guidance in order to achieve



the Rainbow Flag Award. This is a framework for primary schools, secondary schools, SEND schools and colleges. The award focuses on positive LGBT+, (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, plus other related identities), inclusion and visibility.

The Rainbow Flag Award encourages a whole organisation approach to LGBT+ inclusion, as well as developing strategies to effectively challenge and combat LGBTphobic bullying. By committing our school to this award, we are making a commitment to improve the lives of not simply the LGBT+ young people, but all the young people with whom we work.

And finally...



### Who are we?

No matter which school you are coming from, or what your reasons are for needing time with us away from mainstream, Integration is usually the first stop for secondary learners who are referred to iCollege. We support learners needing some in-reach support here at the school away from mainstream, learners who have been excluded (both fixed term or permanently and awaiting new placement), or learners who need somewhere to continue their learning whilst awaiting a new school placement for various other reasons.

### What can we offer?

Although young people can't stay with us on a permanent basis, we definitely look after you whilst you are with us (and often afterwards too!). The culture we promote is very much one of respect, support, and progress – not necessarily always focused on only education, but also progress for you as a person and what you want to do next in life. Education is a stepping stone to what comes next, and whatever you want to do (or even if you need help figuring that out!), we are here to help set you up as best as possible on that journey.



We have two main learning groups here at Integration – the morning group, and a smaller afternoon group. Once you have joined us for your initial meeting with Fram (our Lead Teacher), a space will be allocated for you in one of those groups, based on what would work best for you. The curriculum itself is not too different, but we do have a heavier emphasis on regular physical activity breaks to help you maintain focus throughout the day, also providing you an opportunity to sit down and chat with our lovely team about anything that may be on your mind, or even just to try and beat our reigning Uno champion!



## Remembrance poetry in Y10

### I Miss You

I miss seeing your face when I wake up  
Thinking will you ever come back  
Waiting for you  
We all love you  
Be safe my dear.

Where are you my love?  
Are you doing ok?  
Are you safe?  
Will you come back soon?  
I'll be waiting my dear.

You're always on my mind dear  
Dinner doesn't taste the same  
And our loving home seems empty  
Always thinking of you  
I miss you my dear husband.

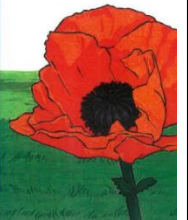
### Time Heals

By Casey

Blood, Bodies, Trenches  
Corpses, Gas, Stenches,  
Surrounding every man  
Holding death in their hands.

In the place where there was  
once guns there are now roses.  
In the place there was once  
death there is now life.

Time heals but there is still pain  
Times change but the scars stay.



If you would like to contribute to the next iTimes, please email:

[sgiaever@icollge.org.uk](mailto:sgiaever@icollge.org.uk)

Thank you to everyone who sent items for this edition.

For general enquiries, contact:

[office@icollge.org.uk](mailto:office@icollge.org.uk)

01635 48872