

# iCollege



## Message from Jacquie

'Back to School' seemed to come around all too quickly after the lovely summer break and, as always, learners and staff approached the start of the new academic year with energy and enthusiasm.

So far in 21/22, learner attendance has been very good and this is great evidence of the excellent teamwork between school and our families. It also means that our learners are engaging with all the opportunities offered by iCollege for a 'good education' in every sense.

One of the best parts about early autumn is the still nice weather and the beautiful colours of the natural landscape. As Covid is still with us, I hope you can take advantage of the 'outdoors' during the ½ term break and enjoy some fresh air and opportunities for mindfulness. Halloween will be with us at the end of the month and, if you are enjoying some spooky fun, don't forget that it is also the end of British Summer Time when the clocks 'fall back' by one hour!

Finally, as we look forward to November and the approach of winter, remember: "Life is like riding a bicycle; to keep your balance, you must keep moving." *Albert Einstein*



## IMPORTANT Term Dates

### November 4

Functional Skills maths exam

### November 6

Functional Skills English exam

### November 11

Remembrance Day

### December 3

2021 Y11 Presentation Evening

### December 17

Last day of Autumn Term

## Covid information



Please continue to test with a lateral flow test twice a week.

Home tests can be obtained from pharmacies or they can be ordered online using this link

<https://www.gov.uk/order-coronavirus-rapid-lateral-flow-tests>

Results can be reported using this link

<https://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result>

If you have been in close contact with a positive case, follow Government guidelines. Wear a mask indoors and wash your hands regularly.

PCR tests can be ordered using this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>

If you test positive on a PCR, please isolate immediately and follow instructions from Test and Trace.

## 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,

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## Unit News

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### The Pod and Pod+

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

Learners in the long stay Pod (KS2) and Pod+ (KS3) provisions have settled in well to the new term. Much time has been given to making new friends as well as learning new routines and expectations.

Learners in the Pod have been making the most of the good weather exploring the local environment.



Pod+ learners have been enjoying access to the sports hall, local park and sports field. They have been experimenting in science learning about acids and alkalis and have begun making volcanoes for their Geography work on plate tectonics.



A group of Pod and Pod+ learners joined with other local schools to celebrate harvest at Newbury Showground. They behaved impeccably and were a pleasure to take out.



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### Independence

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

Fridays at Independence have been transformed with the addition of Ollie, from Berkshire Youth, and music lessons from Maestros.

Apart from playing football, Ollie has also been invaluable, accompanying young people into some of their lessons!

Also this half term at Independence, Maestros have been leading music sessions including bass guitar lessons for Georgie.



Georgie says that being able to learn an instrument makes being at school fun!

## Inspiration

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

At Inspiration's Forest School this half term, learners have been very busy. One thing they have been learning about is how the fire triangle elements all need to be present to have a fire.



Inspiration also celebrated 'Hello Yellow' and World Mental Health Day, focusing on activities to improve their mental health and well-being. Learners suggested making their 'positivitree' bigger.

## Intervention

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A murder has occurred at Intervention! In English lessons, year 9 have had to collect evidence, identify possible witnesses and write a report. Then, they have had to select relevant information from witness statements to work out who the murderer was, how they managed to commit the crime and why.



Meanwhile in practical skills, young people have been creating furnishings out of fabric and other materials:



Tyler used a sewing machine to make this cushion for his dad. He sewed every seam himself.



Using tiles of various sizes, Cheyanne made this beautiful mirror for her room.



This double-sided, pillow-fold cushion is destined for Cody's mum.

## Integration

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Integration has started its 'Food Bank Challenge'.

Young people have been competing, in teams, to create a meal that could be made with items available through a food bank. They started by seeing who could 'earn' the highest budget – to a maximum of £5 – with a 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' food-themed quiz. One team gained £3.50, whilst another will have to make a 3 course meal with just £1.75! Meals will be being prepared this week and will be eaten for lunch by everyone at Integration.

The food pictured above is what the team with the lowest budget have purchased in preparation for their feast!





### Successes with Pre-16 Courses

Jake (from Independence) and Cody (from Intervention) are gaining valuable experience of what it's like to go Newbury College, and the requirements of the carpentry trade. They are both enjoying the experience and doing well.



Well done to Erin (from Independence), who is gaining a qualification in Health and Social Care at Reading College.

Georgie (from Independence) is enjoying the hairdressing course at Newbury College. She is currently learning about blowdrying skills. It is planned that by the end of year 11, she will have achieved her Level 1 certificate in hairdressing.



Starting in a large, college environment can be stressful. Well done to all four young people for such positive, successful starts to their pre-16 courses.

### Upcoming dates for your diary:

Adviza Careers advice and guidance sessions: every Wednesday

**EDGE session: 4<sup>th</sup> November**

ASK apprenticeship session: 9<sup>th</sup> November

**Newbury College presentation: 11<sup>th</sup> November**

Last Orders Social Play (for Integration and Intervention): 19<sup>th</sup> November

**Henley College open evening: 19<sup>th</sup> November**

Bracknell & Wokingham College open event: 24<sup>th</sup> November

**Trading Standards presentation 25<sup>th</sup> November**

Engie Regeneration Station site visit: 7<sup>th</sup> December

**Berkshire Youth Waterside visit: 9<sup>th</sup> December**

Reading Football in the Community visit: 15<sup>th</sup> December



to our year 11s from 2020-2021. They have successfully completed their first term! They have coped with a broad range of transitions during challenging times. iCollege young people are now flourishing in Health and Social Care, Drama & Theatre Arts, Motor Vehicle and Construction at Reading College, and Electrical, Motor Vehicle, Public Health Services and Carpentry at Newbury College.

**We look forward to welcoming back our year 11 and post 16 learners from 2020-2021 for their Presentation Celebration Evening on 3<sup>rd</sup> December. Invitations will be going out shortly.**

## Around our community...

'I don't *have* to go to school do I, I mean, at the end of the day no one can literally drag me in there and make me stay, can they? It's my life isn't it, not theirs. God, it's just like them telling me I can't get the piercings I want! I'll do it myself if they won't let me get it done properly. It's my body and it's my life!' I agree with her. 'Yup, you could stick a pin through your nose. And you could absolutely refuse to leave your bed every day. It is your life and your body at the end of the day. You have control, and that's good, but it's also scary.'

For the first time in our conversation today 14 year-old Tammy sits silently. I give her a moment, then ask what's on her mind. 'It's so unfair.' She starts to quietly cry. She's at the point of grasping what's really going on here. My comment didn't come from a place of lecturing her; rather, I was laying out the existential situation as candidly as I could. Young people constantly dare the world to do its worst, feeling both invincible and persecuted by everyone and everything who 'just doesn't get it.' But there comes a point when the sadness of sophistication kicks in and they realise, yes, they are ultimately on their own, and they have a choice in how they respond. Hence the panicking, the retreating to bedrooms, the stuckness, and the tearful 'what's the point of anything?' questions.

To help them on this, it's important we don't provide ready-made answers. It is scary to realize it's up to each of us to decide *whether* and *how* we'll engage in the world and live in our bodies. The universe ultimately isn't interested. But even though we're all alone in facing this, recognizing these big, difficult feelings for what they are somehow connects us and enables us to feel less alone. Then we can begin to explore together how to live with this. iCollege Counsellor

### The Great Garden Project

A small group of men from Glendale Church volunteered their time and skills to help with the continued development of the garden at Intervention. They worked hard to add more vegetable beds which will enable us to grow a wider variety of crops this year.

They also cleared out some of the bamboo in order to create a canopy for a seating area in which we hope to place a memorial bench in memory of James McMahon who once worked as a TA and tragically died last year.



In other garden news, we have secured an allotment in Speen for young people at Independence!



A number of staff from across iCollege have refreshed their First Aid skills.



Young people at Intervention and Independence donated their bakes to a MacMillan Coffee morning.



And finally...

## A note from the governors

This busy term is now well underway, and learners and staff at iCollege have settled back after the summer break. Exam results for Key Stages 4 and 5 came out in August and there was so much to celebrate in these; they reflected the hard work of learners and staff alike in the most challenging of circumstances.

Our Strategy Day at Newbury Rugby Club took place at the beginning of this term. This had had to be postponed in June because of COVID safety concerns. Staff and governors attended, as did representatives of West Berkshire Council who work with iCollege to support staff and learners. The central focus for the day was our shared vision for iCollege. Lots of excellent opportunities for vigorous discussion and debate between staff and governors were created. During the last eighteen months it has been almost impossible for governors to visit the iCollege units, though there have been some virtual visits, so we all very much welcomed the opportunity to meet face to face. Newer governors found this a particularly useful experience. The main themes to emerge from these discussions are summarised below. These represent an important step in our journey.

### *Strategy Day Outcomes: Themes for the 2021 – 2022 School Development Plan*

**IDENTITY:** Identify & promote the values & unique character of iCollege

**COLLABORATION:** With local & national partners & communities

**DEVELOPMENT:** Clarify long term goals through research

**EXCELLENCE:** In all that we do, as modelled by staff & in learner outcomes

**FINANCE:** Clear funding streams to ensure confidence in future planning

A smaller working party comprised of staff and governors will be formed to take these themes forward, so that there are clear time scales and agreed actions in this next exciting stage in the development of iCollege.

## Parent Governor Vacancy:

There is a vacancy for a parent to join iCollege governors. If you are interested to apply and/ or learn more about what's involved, please email the Clerk, Jill Hills at [jhills@icolllege.org.uk](mailto:jhills@icolllege.org.uk)

## Competition Time!

How good are your knife skills?

With Halloween coming up, you are challenged to carve a pumpkin – take a photograph of your creation and email it to [lsamuel-cox@icolllege.org.uk](mailto:lsamuel-cox@icolllege.org.uk) by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

Here's a picture for inspiration:



These were carved by learners at Intervention this week!

Prizes to be won!

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

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

Thank you to everyone who sent items for this edition.

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