News from the Director

Covid -19 Updates

Thank you all for your continued support and understanding with regard to measures we have taken to help safeguard our community. The current COVID-19 measures will remain in effect in Germany until 19 April. Please see my previous emails with regard to what conditions ISU's campus will re-open on, if it re-opens on 20 April. Contingency plans were communicated today via ManageBac should e-learning have to continue from 20 April. Important updates will continue to be communicated directly to you. Our website has a list of resources to help ISU families. Wishing you all a wonderful and relaxing Spring break.

Failure: The Great Tutor

I hope you will indulge me but I like to write about something that is not related to Covid -19 - failure. The sweetest victory is the one that's most difficult. The one that requires you to reach down deep inside, to fight with everything you've got, to be willing to leave everything out—without knowing, until that do-or-fail moment, if your heroic effort will be enough. Society doesn't reward defeat, and you won't find many failures documented in history books.

The exceptions are those failures that become steppingstones to later success. Such is the case with Thomas Edison, whose most memorable invention was the light bulb, which purportedly took him 1,000 tries before he developed a successful prototype. “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?” a reporter asked. “I didn't fail 1,000 times,” Edison responded. “The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.”

Unlike Edison, many of us avoid the prospect of failure. In fact, we’re so focused on not failing that we don't aim for success, settling instead for a life of mediocrity. When we do make missteps, we gloss over them, selectively editing out the miscalculations or mistakes in our life's résumé. “Failure is not an option,” NASA flight controller Jerry C. Bostick reportedly stated during the mission to bring the damaged Apollo 13 back to Earth, and that phrase has been etched into the collective memory ever since. To many in our success-driven society, failure isn't just considered a non-option—it's deemed a deficiency, says Kathryn Schulz, author of Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margin of Error. “Of all the things we are wrong about, this idea of error might well top the list,” Schulz says. “It is our meta-mistake: We are wrong about what it means to be wrong. Far from being a sign of intellectual inferiority, the capacity to err is crucial to human cognition.”

So what does this mean for schools: learning from failure is a key component of a “growth mindset.” This concept comes from Carol Dweck’s 2006 book Mindset: The new Psychology of Success. A person or organisation with a growth mindset is willing to try, fail, analyse and learn in order to get better at their chosen activity. This is opposed to a “fixed mindset”, where a person is more likely to believe that innate talent is the key to success. However, to learn from failure and build up that resilience, you must first be prepared to test yourself. And what is practice, if not trying something over and over again to work out why you’re failing at it, and then putting it right.
For children, helping them understand the importance of a growth mindset in their attitude to learning is crucial. Matthew Syed, journalist and author, uses the following example “suppose I'm a child that thinks talent’s important. I think also that I'm super talented. Can you see the risk there psychologically? I don’t have to work hard, I'm a genius! I'm going to get to the top anyhow”. Success, failure and practice, then, are all part of the same system and at ISU we understand this and know that working on this will produce more resilient students able to learn from their mistakes. As a school, ISU is continually working to create a culture where we are all constantly learning about how to improve, to be resilient and achieve our potential.


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**Calling all ISU Alumni and former staff**

It was great having you as a student at ISU. We want you to know that you are gone, but we will not forget you! As our school continues to grow and develop, it is important that we keep in touch with each of our alumni and former colleagues. On our website (http://www.is-ulm.de) under the Quick Links you will find a link to our Alumni. Your ISU Alumni data is private. It is only accessible by you, the graduates, and the ISU faculty.

Please help the school, your former teachers, and your fellow alumni keep in touch with you by completing the form below. Be sure to keep your information updated with any new events or happenings in your life. By doing so, you offer others the chance to keep in touch with you and to share in your successes.


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*Dr Liam Browne*

*Director*
In the Fall, our young green thumbs of the ISU Garden Club planted bulbs all over the campus. And even though we’re not there to enjoy them right now, our lovely flowers are coming up! Right now we have daffodils and mini-irises next to the parking area and around the campus and grape hyacinth popping up all over. Very soon, the tulips will be out! Thanks, gardeners, for bringing all this beautiful colour to our campus!

Mrs Samantha O’Leary

English and Drama Teacher
Counsellor’s Corner

Coping with COVID-19

Our first week of remote class and e-learning has come and gone and I’m sure it was a massive adjustment for all. I know it has been for me. One of the biggest adjustments for many has been how to manage time and structure the day. What I’ve been learning in my readings, discussions with other teachers, and in discussions with students is that maintaining a sense of normalcy is helpful. And just how can we achieve feeling normal in a situation that is anything but normal? I’ve attached a few helpful hints below:

1. Workdays and school days are still just that: Work and School. Getting up at a normal time and going through normal morning routines can help set a structure for the day.
2. Create separate workspaces. Working where you sleep or play is hard for the brain to adjust to and accept. It’s important to leave the space of sanctuary and go to a designated workspace. If the weather is lovely, take your work onto the balcony and soak in a little sunshine while you are at it.
3. Maintain a schedule. If you are in the middle or secondary school, try to maintain your normal class schedules as much as possible. If you complete work before the end of the class period, use the remaining time for review.
4. Stay ACTIVE! It’s important to find safe ways to stay active and maintain social distance. Going for a walk or cycle as a family on nice days, doing yoga or an indoor workout (there are oodles of free options, even the local gyms are getting in on the act!), finding ways to get your body moving and blood flowing is critical to keeping you sane during a time spent sitting in front of screens for most of the day.
5. Be social! Not in the way you might imagine. Typically in nice weather, we are out and about with friends but the current recommendations as for a 6 ft or 2-metre distance between people and to keep any gatherings as limited as possible. So instead of hanging out, game together online, make video chatroom for friends with your personal accounts, call each other on the phone, write old fashioned letters to be posted in the mail. These are easy ways to keep us all feeling connected when it’s pretty easy to feel alone.
6. Stay positive. It’s hard to feel positive when you are at home and away from your normal routines and activities. It’s a good time to go hunting for all the good around you. Take time to write down or share things that are positive (like, how about that weather?!) at the moment. Try 2-3 things a day as an individual or family.

In a time when there is little we can do to change the current situation, we need to focus on helping one another get through it the best way we can.

Ms Angela Collins
School Counsellor
The news of the pandemic has really been a shock
But given us all a time to reflect and to take stock

Both locally and globally, to consider how we live
And realising, really, there’s so much we can give.

There are people running errands for the elderly and sick
Free yoga, cooking, language courses - just take your pick

Spending time with your family, in reality or online
Keeps us communicating and helps us to feel fine.

Using research and inquiry skills, we’re still learning Dr Browne
Building up our knowledge, even if it’s in our dressing gown!

Healthy, balanced students are what we strive to be,
And when we return to Schwabenstraße, you will see

How the attributes and skills that we learn at ISU
Have prepared us even for this, and a brighter future too.

We have dreams of being back and to how it was before
Next time, we promise not to run wild through the corridor!

And for now, we have our fitness plan from Ms Merkle and Mr Alex too
What we wouldn’t give to play a contact sport or two...

But when we use our thinking skills we know we must obey the rule
Social distancing and hand washing - or we’ll never get back to school!

With our Learner Profile attributes and our AtL Skills we see
We have the ISU toolkit, empowering us “to do” and “to be”

And despite our isolation, keeping the world at arms length
Learning to live together, really is our greatest strength.

So as Spring break approaches, and we wonder when we’re returning
Lets promise to save a chocolate egg to share when we get back to learning

Mrs Charlie Balsom
Grade 1 Teacher
We Miss You!