

Life in Lockdown

The bubble emerges



For weeks we have been imprisoned at home. We have remained cocooned, secure in the knowledge that we are doing our bit for the health and safety of our families, our community, our country.

But now, the world is all about **bubbles**.

Now, there's a word I never thought I would use outside of discussion about a good quality, scented body cleanser presented in an attractive glass bottle that is an adornment to any bathroom, as well as being functional and well worth its vastly inflated cost.

Ladies and gentlemen, whilst our life has been all about lockdown in recent months, we are now moving into the age of the **bubble**. This concept is now of great importance in the community of St. Joseph's, as our year 10s started their return to school this week. I can only best describe the atmosphere as one of excited anticipation.

Year 10 are coming into school, one tutor group at a time, for stretches of two hours at a time. During the two hours each tutor group is in school, they have sessions in Religious Education, Mathematics, English and Science. It all begins by a social-distancing registration in the Main Hall. People wave and smile excitedly at one another across the room, chattering about their experiences at home, what working alone is like, and how strange it is to see people outside of the family home.

Then the **bubbles** come into operation. Students are split into bubbles, each one of which is allocated its own classroom that will be its home for the duration of this next phrase of lockdown. As you enter the **bubble**, which is beautifully cleansed prior to use, you gel-up your hands and walk to your own desk. You stay at that desk and in that **bubble** for your whole session. Teachers visit you and the time flies swiftly as your teachers go through the concepts you are learning in your subjects at the moment.

At the end of the two hours, you move within your **bubble** to the school exit and float away down the road. Following the research of James Bird at the Massachusetts Institute of Science and Technology, a bubble does not just burst. It actually divides into smaller bubbles on its edge that go their own way (for those who are interested, you can check out this research). That's you!

But, the bubbles tell the story of a host of individuals. First of all, there are your teachers. They are excited to be back at the front of the classroom (all socially distanced, of course), answering your questions face-to-face (as they have been doing via e-mail all this time), hearing about your experiences over the past few weeks. Working with you is the reason that they decided to enter profession in the first place! The students at the end of their sessions are all pleased that they've had time with their teachers and got answers to their questions. They are also very tired! You do work hard inside the **bubble**.

St. Joseph's has been well-practised in the art of the **bubble**, as we have worked hard with students whose parents are key workers during this time. Your health and safety is at the heart of everything we do in the first instance. However, we have been delighted to welcome more of you back.

This is the age of **bubble**. That is our life in lockdown.