**Physics without being physical? An interview with Mr. Smith**

*Harry*

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States hard - especially in Massachusetts, where governor Charlie Baker ordered both private schools and public schools to close in the state; impacting the ability for lessons to run as smoothly as before the pandemic. School teachers were forced to reorganize their lesson plans for the rest of 2020.

We sat down with Mr. Oliver Smith, Head of Science at BISB on how he has adapted his classes to account for COVID safety and regulations.

*How have you adapted the science department and your own classes to the new pandemic environment?*

* ‘At the start of the pandemic we handed out science kits to middle school students. With the equipment sent home it allowed students to do experiment work.’

One of the biggest challenges was the execution of experiments and experiments with consideration to COVID-19. Last year, the Science department had adapted to the changes in their ability to do experiments, since the students were at home. This worked well and effectively, as by May students in Year 9 were able to conduct experiments observing temperature loss in Physics, as well as fun experiments involving Lava Lamps in Chemistry. It’s clear that the initial response to the lockdown was well thought out and organized, benefiting the students involved.

However, now that BISB is operating safely in person, Mr. Smith outlined the amendments he made towards experiments:

* ‘To ensure the safety of those in the classroom setting we reduced the number of experiments we do. We make sure that in all activities we do in class we remain socially distanced and wearing masks and following other CDC guidelines.’

Given the ‘hands on’ approach taken by the science department at BISB, having fewer experiments has been very difficult.

*How have you ensured that you and the students you teach remain safe during in person school?*

* “By following state guidelines, social distancing, protective face masks to fit with CDC guidelines, reducing the amount of contact by passing materials and ensuring the washing hands.”

These ensure safety during the pandemic environment, while also maximizing the quality of education to the highest standard. Though this is my personal opinion, I know that many in the BISB community feel that the safety and education of science classes are of a great quality, especially when we consider the lockdown’s impact on students and teachers alike..

After this, we discussed the personal ways Mr. Smith has dealt with the coronavirus pandemic.

*How have you personally dealt with the pandemi*c?

* ‘The pandemic has been hard for everyone to some degree… I have coped by regularly speaking to family via zoom calls and have become invested in cooking.’

*What have you cooked?*

* ‘Honestly Harry, you name it, I’ve cooked it!’

It seems apparent that Mr. Smith has adapted his personal and professional life to the new situation of the pandemic. On behalf of the students at BISB, we extend our thanks to Mr. Smith for the hard work he has put in to ensure a safer environment for the students and teachers at BISB, while also maintaining high quality lessons for all.