



# NEWSLETTER

No. 681  
w/c Mon 7 September  
Week A

## THOUGHT OF THE FORTNIGHT

*'If nothing ever changed, there'd be no butterflies'.*  
(Unknown)

Dear Parents and Carers

### A Big Clyst Vale Welcome to New Parents

Sorry we can't do hugs or handshakes, but we are delighted to welcome you and your children to Clyst Vale – a special welcome if it's your eldest child and you are dealing with your own milestone of being old enough to have a child at high school! I know you have had a deluge of information from us, so I'll spare you any more. Your children are amazing: they are more resilient than we all think, will adapt quickly, won't get their heads flushed down any toilets, and over the next few years will make you, and us, proud.

### The Newsletter

Clyst Vale's Parent Newsletter began many years ago as an experiment. I thought, Primary Schools have a weekly bulletin in the little plastic weave satchel thing in which my kids used to bring home their art work "to show Mummy and Daddy" (but really it wasn't good enough to go on display in school but our fridge was fine), and the paint hadn't always dried, either. For some strange reason, in these technological times of blogs and Twitter, parents and even former students love the Newsletter, so it continues in its rather old-fashioned form. It comes out every Friday. Sometimes it's really boring but useful, sometimes it's amazing, sometimes I feel a bit like a vicar writing the parish bulletin, and other times I have a little rant about something. It is not always 100% serious at all times.

### New Challenges

There are always new challenges facing parents, and we try to be as empathetic as possible. There will be challenges in returning to school after the longest school holiday ever, even though we did our best to spoil it by sending home loads of remote learning. But you can do it! You *can* persuade your children to change out of their PJs before 7.00 a.m.. You *can* make them eat breakfast before they're fully awake. You *can* persuade them to clean their teeth in less than 30 seconds of arguing. And think of the positives: you can now deal with the horrors in the further recesses of their bedrooms without interruption, and the bleach will dry before they get home. You will have unimpeded access to Netflix – more stress, what to watch first?? You can go the toilet or have a shower without being uninterrupted because you've run out of biscuits; after a couple of weeks you will be able to take a bath without feeling guilty and barricading the door. You can experience the joy and euphoria only known to teachers when you finally pack up the home-school. Yes, positive thinking is definitely the way forward at times like these.

### Big Picture Stuff

At Clyst Vale, we have taken the view that the way to plan was to start with "normal" and then work backwards to mitigate every single health risk we could, for both staff (more vulnerable than youngsters on

average) and students. We have done all that we can to prepare, and stretched the budget to the max; however, just about every parent in the land knows that it is impossible to guarantee social distancing in a school despite the carefully constructed TV footage of Boris Johnson in a classroom with about five children at 3 metre distances. We might just about manage social distancing for adult to children, but children to children are like iron filings around a magnet. Tactile behaviour (within reason) is a normal part of adolescent development. And most classrooms are about 30 square metres, with say 30 children, making the sums easy; and the rooms have furniture which takes up room.

We are fortunate: our location is more rural than urban; the covid stats for the South-West are currently *comparatively* good; the influx of tourists has not prompted a huge spike. We were promised a world-beating test and trace system which in my view is totally fundamental to schools being able to stay open. Whether it's world-beating yet is a matter of opinion, but we will authorise absence if you need to take your children to Carmarthen or Birmingham to get a test.

We want to work with parents and carers; there was some simply brilliant work during lockdown, which we want to continue. We do not want to drive children back to school by threatening families with fines. Some people are genuinely extremely anxious, with legitimate health reasons, and we need to have a dialogue.

My colleagues have been, and are amazing. Their dedication and commitment over the past few months has been evident. The tutor contact was unbelievably good, backed up by the Welfare Team. There were occasional glitches, but the vast majority of students received useful learning in several dollops a day. I have every confidence that this commitment will continue. It is worth remembering that "the teachers" are not one homogenous lump, but individuals of different genders, ages, family dynamics, health and therefore risk factors; they are all human, and some are just as anxious as parents.

The priority is to get back to College, and make the Plan work, hopefully without too many changes and tweaks. Then we need to make it sustainable. At the same time, we will be building up the learning. There are unfortunately quite a few big things out of our control which aren't yet resolved; possibly the biggest is next year's GCSE and A-level results. What we know is that there will be exams (unless there is a massive lockdown), that some of these exams have been reduced a bit but most haven't; there are many calls for them to be reduced further; they might start at any time between May (as usual) and the end of June. This is, again, no way to plan anything. Students, parents, schools need more certainty than this as we create our long-term plans for the year. We'll be heading off down one path knowing that we might need to jump to a different one in a few weeks' time; on the plus side, we're getting better and better at doing this because of all the practice we've had since March!

### ***The Handbook....***

...has morphed into three handbooks, one for Parents (sent yesterday), Staff (sent yesterday) and Students (going out today). I'm responsible for them, so hopefully they all say the same thing or at least complement each other. They will be kept updated on the covid page on the website, and new versions issued as required (I assume that parents will not thank me for a weekly 24 page document which is 98% the same as last week's...) Please take some time to read them, or pick through individual items from the Index. Perhaps over the weekend families could devise a quiz (remember them? at the start of lockdown people were up to ten a day and getting addicted), or a version of Top Trumps.....

### **"Comms"**

The Newsletter will appear every Friday. I will reinstate the weekly update on a Tuesday which will go into "Announcements" on the website home page, for as long as is necessary. For more urgent and/or more serious issues or updates we will continue to send out parental letters via "In Touch".

### **The Tripod**

I mention the Tripod at each Open Evening and New Intake Parents' Evening. The concept is straightforward: a tripod is at its sturdiest and best with all three legs contributing equally to the best of their efforts. Substitute "school", "home" and "student" for the three legs, and if these three parts work to the best of their ability, the student will be at his or her sturdiest and best. Note that "student" is one of the legs: we

believe very strongly that students have to take *some* individual responsibility, and are not passive spectators. Some tripods have bracing supports between the legs: this is an even better metaphor, because if there aren't lines of communication between student, home and school the structure is weaker. So, if you have worries, information to share, questions, good news, please let us know.

I am really looking forward to Monday! I've said it before that a school thrives on the buzz and energy of young people, and it's been weird (although pleasantly quiet) without them. We are as prepared as we can be, and very alert to further improvements that can be made. For most students, the anxiety of thinking about returning will be worse than actually turning up on the day, although we will be particularly sensitive to those students who find the process very difficult.

Last minute haircuts, shoe-shop appointments, lunchbox shopping....Have a great weekend!

Best wishes.



Kevin Bawn  
Principal

### **Attendance, Absence and Requests for Absence**

Please let the College know of any absence on the first day it occurs.

If the absence continues beyond the first day, please contact the College on each subsequent day of absence, too. To comply with safeguarding obligations, we cannot simply assume a student's sickness absence is ongoing; we need to be certain that the reason for absence is due to continuing illness.

If you do not notify the College, then we will make contact with you to identify the reason for absence. This is important as it helps to reduce unauthorised absences and truancy.

Please note, the College may ask you to provide medical proof if a student is absent from College due to illness.

### **Medical Appointments**

We encourage students to maximise their levels of attendance; research indicates a direct link between attendance and examination performance. The timing of many medical appointments means that often students can attend school first, and return afterwards. By doing so, students minimise missed learning whilst keeping their attendance levels as high as possible. Therefore, we ask that parents/carers send their child into school for morning registration, even when a medical appointment takes place in the middle of the morning. Similarly, appointments scheduled for the afternoon should, where possible, be arranged after Period 4 - during lunchtime. Students are encouraged to return to school after a lunchtime appointment, if they can.

Thank you for your support in helping your child maximise their attendance and learning.

### **For Years 7 - 11 Absences**

Please ring:

Penni Ball/Sharon Leaman (Attendance Officers)

Direct line: 01392 463911

Email: [studentabsence@clystvale.org](mailto:studentabsence@clystvale.org)

### **For Year 12 - 13 Absences**

Please ring:

Jassy Barrington (Post-16 PA)

Direct line: 01392 462697

Email: [barringtonj@clystvale.org](mailto:barringtonj@clystvale.org)

## COLLEGE DRESS

Clyst Vale aims to maintain a simple pattern of College dress to promote a clear sense of identity and enable students to come sensibly dressed, at reasonable cost, for a range of learning activities. If a student is improperly dressed, correct uniform will be provided for that day or the student may be sent home to change his/her clothing, at the discretion of the Principal. **If parents are in any doubt about the suitability of an item of uniform they should check with the College before buying it.**

### Uniform for all students in Years 7 to 11

- White collared shirt
- School colour tie
- Clyst Vale V-neck jumper with College logo.
- Boys trousers - Banner Slimbridge (Black)/Banner Falmouth (Black).
- Girls trousers - Trutex GTN (2 pocket black)/David Luke DL965 black).
- **All trousers must have Clyst Vale logo rivet on waistband.**
- Skirts - Blue Tartan and knee length
- Trutex Senior stitched down/Taylor Tartan (blue) skirt and may be worn no more than 2" above the knee. Knee length black tailored shorts may be worn.
- Black sturdy shoes or **all black** trainers.
- White socks or black tights with skirts.
- Clyst Vale reversible jacket or other outdoor coat.

***All uniform and PE Kit can be purchased from Thomas Moore, Exeter. Thomas Moore offers both a personal service in their shop and also the opportunity to order on line at [www.thomasmooretoymaster.co.uk](http://www.thomasmooretoymaster.co.uk)***

- Eyebrow jewellery, facial, tongue, nose and lip studs are not permitted.
- Leather jackets, all denim garments and all hoodies are not permitted.
- Hats should not be worn indoors.
- Outer coats should be predominantly plain in colour and without large logos.
- A plain white t-shirt or vest may be worn under the shirt.
- On health and safety grounds, shoes should be appropriate for a work place. Flipflops, open toes, Uggs, Dr Martens (or equivalent) are not permitted.
- Jewellery may be worn, providing it is not excessive or potentially hazardous. However, it is a legal requirement that all jewellery must be removed before undertaking sporting activities. It is the responsibility of the wearer to do this.

The Principal, in consultation with the Governors of the College, will decide on the suitability of the appearance of a student attending the College - extreme hair styles, of either cut or colour, are not permitted.

Do you use Twitter? Then why not follow us @clystvale to find out what's going on in the College community.



### CONTACT INFORMATION

**Address:** Clyst Vale Community College, Station Road, Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon EX5 3AJ  
**Tel:** 01392 461407 **Email:** [admin@clystvale.org](mailto:admin@clystvale.org) **Web:** [www.clystvale.org](http://www.clystvale.org)  
**Library:** 01392 464010

**Principal:** Kevin Bawn, BA PhD

