



NEWSLETTER

No. 693
w/c Mon 7 December
will be Week A

THOUGHT OF THE FORTNIGHT

"Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel." Socrates

Evenings and weekends – reporting of Covid-19 positive test results

As a further precaution, we have introduced a dedicated phone number, solely for reporting positive Covid-19 test results at evenings and weekends.

The number is:

07818 212 931

It is not for suspected cases, non-Covid-19 illness or absence, and is not an advice line.

We would prefer you to text positive Covid-19 test result information to this number, including:

Name of student

Student's tutor group

Date symptoms appeared

Date of test

Date of test result

If necessary, someone will contact you having received this information. Thank you!

Dear Parents and Carers

Last week of term

Not surprisingly, quite a few parents have contacted me about why Exeter College is switching to remote learning for the last week of term, as revealed in DevonLive, and we (and all other secondary schools) are not. The legal position is quite clear. "Schools and colleges" (and early years settings) must stay physically open for all students until the last day of term. To do anything different, a school or college must make its case individually to the Department of Education. Several test cases reported in the media have shown that the DfE is only willing to agree a closure with remote learning if a setting has been hammered by covid cases, and several schools have been directed to change their plans back from remote learning in the last week.

I have no problem with Exeter College taking the line they have, and would probably do something similar if I was allowed; they are meeting the wishes of their community, are reducing covid risk for their own students & staff, and therefore contributing to reducing the risk more widely. The College has periodic “Flip weeks” throughout the year which are similar to university reading weeks, and have moved one to the last week of their term. I have, however, asked the Regional Schools Commissioner’s office to explain why FE colleges and schools are apparently being treated differently although the guidance is quite clear about “schools and colleges”; the answer seems to be that FE Colleges are bigger, have loads more students, and therefore more chance of spreading covid. That makes some sense in itself, although if colleges were covid secure with students attending in the penultimate week of term, what will change in the last week? However, the government also want the whole of society to be cautious and if possible stay at home in the two weeks before Christmas. And if your family has vulnerable relatives, it is obviously better for you if your child is currently at Exeter College rather than at Clyst Vale or any school’s Sixth Form. In fact, they would be even better off at the independent schools where terms finish earlier than in the state sector and who are free from the guidance anyway. The whole thing is riddled with unfairnesses.

On the other hand, while some families can easily and safely look after children at home for a week, there are others who cannot, where parents have to attend work, cannot work at home, cannot afford childcare. While many children can cope happily at home, accessing remote learning easily, there are others who cannot because of sibling competition over the digital devices, or other cost-related technological issues. While many children are not affected at all by a week or two’s isolation, there are others who desperately need as much school as possible for their emotional and mental health, let alone a better quality of education. And going back to FE, it is much more straightforward and lawful leaving a 17 year-old home alone than a 12 year-old, and especially primary age or younger. (I seem to be coming up with a better response than the RSC.....)

What do I think? To some extent this doesn’t matter - as Principal of a secondary school, I can hardly go around breaking laws I might not agree with. That would be a terrible example to students, and would shatter parental faith and confidence beyond repair. I will always argue passionately for the importance of education and school attendance as core principles of a decent, civilised world.

Might there be a change so schools can at least “go remote”? There’s a slim chance; professional organisations are lobbying the government hard, and there is a parliamentary petition on this issue which had over 250,000 signatures the last time I looked. Even then, I would envisage that schools would still remain open either on an optional basis for all, or for the children of keyworkers or who are vulnerable.

Where does this leave parents? Well, parents and carers have responsibility for their children. Schools are only “in loco parentis” during school hours. During school time, parents are expected to send their children to school, and potentially face penalties if they do not, without valid reason (and there are of course huge educational, social and developmental benefits of attending school). Schools cannot physically drag children into school. So, if a parent wishes to withdraw their child for a short period, the risk is several sessions’ unauthorised absence and probably a warning letter, assuming the child has otherwise reasonably good attendance. I am not recommending or encouraging this, I cannot condone or approve it, I will stress that the child will lose out on all the benefits, and remind parents that they are technically breaking the law. But I cannot stop a parent withdrawing their child, and already a small number of parents have indicated that they will be taking this course of action in the last week of term. Old Bawn’s Almanac predicts that this will be an issue nationally, and school attendance will drop as families protect their Christmases. And I suppose the reason fellow Heads and I are angry is because the government guidance has once again put schools in the front line of enforcing unpopular policies, threatening parents with letters and possible fines, and risking the fantastic working relationships, support and trust we work really hard to build up throughout the year. I haven’t been as grumpy about an issue since Mr Cummings couldn’t find a Specsavers nearer than Barnard Castle.

2021 Exams

There was a major announcement this week, which was all over mainstream media if you wish to check the detail. The main points are that in England GCSE, vocational and A-level exams will still go ahead in the period 7th June to 2nd July, with one English and one Maths GCSE before half-term. There are no plans to reduce the number of exam papers further or introduce more optionality than has already been announced, but students (and teachers) will be given notice of which key topics will be examined, and in some subjects (e.g. Languages, Science) students can take in some aids like vocab lists or formulae sheet; texts will not be allowed in English, though.

The biggest issue of all has not been addressed, although a “panel of experts” will be convened (is this the same party which said experts were a waste of time a few years back?). This is the issue that some Year 11 or Year 13 students have had absolutely no disruption since September, whereas others in Tier 3 areas have missed up to ten weeks of schooling, many eight weeks, and commonly four weeks. Meanwhile, in Wales and Scotland students will be doing no exams at all, yet will ultimately be competing with English/Northern Irish students for university places.

While at Clyst Vale students could adopt an “I’m all right, Jack” attitude, this would be unwise, and I have much more faith in my students than this might suggest. While very few students in exam years have had to isolate at all, and our remote learning is actually quite good, and vaccines will be in use today or tomorrow, we are not out of the pandemic yet and meteorological winter is not even a week old. Also, if the governments’ experts do manage to find some differential way of levelling up regional or school-by-school impacts of covid, students in less affected areas like ours might lose a little of the advantage they have. So yet again, the perennial principles apply: to do well in qualifications, you need to get organised, work very hard, and make sure you are really doing your best.

I liken the exams announcement to expecting a tenner from Auntie for your birthday, but actually only getting a fiver. It’s an improvement on where we were. provides some more clarity, there is a little more reassurance for students, and a sense that the DfE understand at least some of the problems schools and students face.

“Blended Learning”

With chunks of Year 7 and this week Year 10 isolating, I’d like to refresh parents’ memories, in terms of remote and blended learning, of what we are aiming to do, capable of doing and how it is different from the long lockdown in the summer term.

During the first lockdown, all students and staff were at home (except a handful), and so were all siblings and nearly all parents. It was a new experience, there were big issues with access to technology and bandwidth (especially if families were large and parents also needed the computer). Therefore, teachers set work which was available at the start of the day but could be done at any time to fit in with the family routines. This flexibility worked really well for the majority of families, although there was some criticism, mostly but not wholly from families with excellent technology and/or rarely more than two children, that we were not doing more live lessons.

Six months on, things have changed enormously. Most students aren’t at home; teachers are in school; we have loaned out thousands of pounds of equipment and, independently, many families have improved connectivity; teacher skillset in use of Teams has improved rapidly so there is almost universal capability to do live lessons. Teachers being in College has mainly benefits, but one or two drawbacks; the most obvious drawback is a lack of flexibility. In the summer, their time wasn’t constrained; now, many have a five-period day, sometimes six, plus duties, plus (virtual) meetings, so it is simply not possible to be as responsive. It is easier to prepare and teach lessons for a class entirely in College, or entirely at home; blended learning and live lessons with a 50-50 or even 75-25 split are more complex to set up, more things can go wrong which are no-one’s fault (my Y7 Read to Learn group will confirm this), and an expectation that every blended lesson will be live is unrealistic. One or two subjects do not set live lessons, most obviously compulsory PE (not including GCSE or BTec).

In normal times, classes will have a variety of lessons within and between subjects, some more active, some more passive, some adjusted to the time of day or the age/ability/size of the group. As a rule of thumb, I would expect students to be receiving three live lessons a day, maybe four. If the lesson is not live, I would expect the work to arrive before or at the start of the lesson, not before 09.00 (unless it's for first lesson); if it does arrive before 09.00 for a later lesson, that's a bonus. There is also the question of managing my colleagues' workload; they are their own worst enemies, and will wish to do five live lessons a day, even though the heightened levels of concentration and increased demands are much harder than normal teaching while we are still learning the clever little ways to reduce this without affecting quality. Teachers (and all colleagues) are a resource: it is better to have them attending all the time, even if some lessons aren't quite as good as others, than every lesson being a showpiece but requiring days off to recover or, worse, gradually declining performance through tiredness.

Also, and this is very difficult for parents to know on a day-by-day basis, there are genuine reasons why a live lesson might not be possible. Teachers or their children sometimes become unwell with coughs, colds and other bugs and are unable to do more than set cover work. There are a small number of trips and colleagues absent for appointments, training or statutory meetings. Some teacher laptops are functioning slowly and close to their sell-by date, and while we have a replacement programme we can't afford to accelerate it, and in any case we are prioritising kit for students.

I can reassure parents that my colleagues are doing an amazing job, every single day. I would be very disappointed if anyone thought Clyst Vale staff were being lazy or not caring. We are not perfect, stuff happens, and things do go wrong. People get sick, and school staff like everyone else have worries of their own (children, vulnerable relatives, money worries, furloughed or unemployed partners, health issues and family tensions). That said, we are completely committed to doing the very best we can, to provide the sense of belonging to students who are temporarily not with us, and to provide the best possible continuity of education. You can expect work set for all lessons every day, and an average of three or four live lessons a day. If you have any concerns, please contact us.

Year 11 Exams

These have gone absolutely brilliantly so far. Year 11 themselves have been a real credit. They have adapted to the stricter exam rules very well, and to the adjustments to aid covid safety. Their attitude, behaviour, punctuality, resilience and stoicism has been a joy to behold. I must also thank Year 7 in particular, who have had to manage two breaktimes right in the middle of exams, and have also been a credit in terms of keeping the noise down. Mind, they are well brought-up young people (thank you !) who do not talk with their mouths full, which helps. Other year groups have been less affected, but still deserve thanks for being sensible when in the playground area. I'm very pleased and proud of all of them about this.

Field and Marquees

I am less pleased and proud about these, and have issued a fairly blunt message in the student bulletin. It's not all students by any means, but too many, who are messing around, fiddling with the marquees and back-chatting. The thing which parents can do to help us tackle this, especially with Years 7-9 students, is have a chat about it, establish that your child isn't involved (most won't be), and try to empower them to either calm their friends down or tell an adult if something is clearly wrong. Thank you! Respect...participate...learn.

Sixth Form News

We are delighted that Charlie Sparkes has been offered an interview at Cambridge University for Geography and Maddie Knight at Nottingham for Veterinary Science. Fingers crossed. Now that lockdown#2 has ended, we are in discussion with Exeter University Medical School to re-start the Devon Healthcare Hub in the New Year, initially virtually.

Lockdown has inevitably prevented a lot of normal activities from taking place and prevented visitors to College. However, there was a very successful virtual session on personal finance for Year 12 from The Money Charity.

Year 12's TPRs were generally either good or encouraging, and where this isn't the case Miss Haynes is organising some targeted support.

Miss Haynes is talking to groups of Year 11 students about all the benefits of Clyst Vale's Sixth Form, of which there are many – see the promotional video and “talking heads”! Encouragingly, we have already received 4 firm applications; normally there are none before Christmas.

Food Donations #1. St Petrocks' thank you

We received a nice thank you from St Petrocks after the recent Year 8 food donations: “Thank you very much for your donation of food items for Harvest Festival which we received recently. Your kindness will help us make a lasting difference in the lives of local people without a home; we greatly appreciate your support in these challenging times...Christmas will look different for everyone this year, but our teams will be operating as normally as possible to support people throughout the festive season, which is a difficult time for many. They will be providing special meals, gifts and treats - and continuing their ongoing support to help them towards a more settled way of life in the year ahead.”

Food Donations #2, Exeter Food Bank

Tutor group 11RCM are coordinating a collection for Exeter Food Bank (please see the attached poster below listing preferred items: I believe “nice” biscuits are “nice” biscuits rather than “Nice” biscuits specifically :-)). If you would like more information and a video from 11RCM, please follow [Allen Bailey: Support the Exeter Foodbank](#) . There are collection boxes in all tutor group base rooms. The deadline for donations is **Monday 14th December**. Apparently I confused people about deadlines in a previous Newsletter, so I apologise for my first mistake since 2011.... :-)

Glimmers of Normality

This week and next, Sixth Form Geography students are going out on fieldwork. Needless to say, this has been covid risk assessed to within an inch of its life, and activities carefully selected to allow the maintenance of social distancing and minimal contact with any member of the public. But if you're a geographer, fieldwork is in your DNA, it just isn't as good virtually, and students need to experience it as part of a full curriculum.

Clyst Vale Dual-Use Public Library

After the end of the national lockdown, I am pleased to confirm that the Public Library has reopened! This is for call-and-collect and for visits, although numbers are restricted for covid reasons There is one change in that Thursday evening has been reduced to one hour, 16.00-17.00 hours.

Employability Week (January 2021)

Calling ex-students, business people, apprentices present or past, anyone ! Please have a look at the notice below on this Newsletter from Mrs Bennett. Could you help us by providing a brief careers story to help us through another covid challenge ? We can't have our usual visitors in school so Mrs Bennett is aiming to build a “virtual experience” instead for the students. There is nothing more powerful for students than hearing from real people! Please contact bennett@clystvale.org for more information or even better to volunteer!

Apologies – this is a bit of an epic Newsletter! Enjoy your weekend.
Best wishes,



Kevin Bawn
Principal

EMPLOYABILITY WEEK 2021 - January 2021

Can you help us by providing a brief careers story?

We feel it is vitally important for the students at CVCC to develop their employability skills and understand the world of work, which is why we introduced 'Employability Week' a few years ago. Unfortunately, we cannot have our usual visitors in school but I would like to build a virtual experience for the students. There is nothing more powerful for students than hearing from real people about their career journeys. I would love to hear from anyone who is willing to share their positive story and create a short talk which can be recorded and watched by the students. It would be great to hear from people such as ex-CVCC students, local businesses, those who went onto further education as well as those who went straight into employment after school or completed apprenticeships. I will provide full guidelines as to what should be included in the talk, which would only need to be a brief.

If you are interested in producing a short video please email me so I can send out the requirements. I would also need your permission for this to be shown to our students and potentially appear on our website.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Mrs Bennett - Careers Lead
bennettn@clystvale.org

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



Clyst Valley Regional Park - Consultation

East Devon District Council would like to encourage local residents to contribute to their masterplan consultation, regarding the proposed **Clyst Valley Regional Park**, which is a new public green space in East Devon's Clyst Valley.

Where is the Clyst Valley Regional Park?



To view a copy of the draft masterplan, and to take the opportunity to make your views known about the plan's priorities, please look online at the links below.

[Clyst Valley Regional Park Masterplan](#)

The Clyst Valley National Park has its own website, here:

[Clyst Valley Park](#)

East Devon District Council have also produced a short film about it, which can be found on YouTube, here:

[Clyst Valley Park - short film](#)

You have until **midday on Thursday 7th January 2021** to comment.

Having taken feedback into account, the finalised masterplan will be submitted for approval by the District Council at a public meeting, next spring.

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

For Year 12 - 13 Absences

Please ring:

Jassy Barrington (Post-16 PA)

Direct line: 01392 462697

Email: 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 - Trutex Senior stitched down/Taylor Tartan (blue) skirt 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

- 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.

CALENDAR DATES

DATE	EVENT
Fri 04 December	Y12 Geography Fieldwork
Tues 08 December	Y8 Parents' Evening (virtual)
Weds 16 December 7pm - 9pm (tbc)	Christmas Carol Service, Whimple Church
Fri 18 December	LAST DAY OF AUTUMN TERM St Petrock's - Non-Uniform Day
2021	
Tues 5th January	Start of Spring Term
w/b Mon 8 February	Y13 Mocks
Fri 12th February	Force Cancer - Non-Uniform Day
Mon 15th - Fri 19th February	Half Term
Thurs 1st April	Last Day of Spring Term
Tues 20th April	Start of Summer Term
Mon 31st May - Fri 4th June	Half Term
Fri 23rd July	LAST DAY OF SUMMER TERM Water Aid - Non-Uniform Day

CONTACT INFORMATION

Principal: Kevin Bawn, BA PhD

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Tel: 01392 461407 **Email:** admin@clystvale.org **Web:** www.clystvale.org

Library: 01392 464010

