



NEWSLETTER

No. 663

w/c Mon 13 April
will be Week A

SONG OF THE WEEK

“Don't Leave Home” [Dido]

Dear Parents/Carers

Reminder: the start of term for students is **Wednesday, 15th April, 09.00 a.m.**. The College may be officially closed, there may be no School Transport running, but my colleagues are itching to send those e-mailed lessons!

An apology: in some previous communications I said that the start of term for students is 14th April, and teachers will set work. This is totally my fault, and I am very sorry for getting it wrong. We follow the College calendar as best we can, the 14th was always going to be a training day, and colleagues have a (remote) programme of training to follow. I have no excuse: just spinning a lot of plates, and one slipped. It won't happen again. I expect I'm popular with quite a few students, though....

Remote Learning Special: Guidance for Parents

Principles

If you haven't seen it, there was a very good article on the BBC News on Wednesday, which explains the reasoning behind the approach we have tried to adopt: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-52151411>

Remote-learning is **not the same as school learning**. We are not expecting students to follow the 5-lesson school day structure, and we are not expecting parents to teach them (for these reasons, I don't like the phrase “home-school” as it sets up expectations on parents. And, stating the obvious, there are differences between educating those cute jammy-faced Primary and surly or stressy Secondary-aged children. I know....dangerous to stereotype).

If we're not back until September, the learning gap from 20th March is six months. That's enormous; six weeks is bad enough in a normal summer. So, it's essential that we **plug the learning gap**, keep students' brains ticking over; to provide new knowledge and information; to practise skills. This is particularly important for students in Years 10 and 12 who by the time of the 2021 exams could have missed 25% of their 2-year course time in school (we wait to see if the Government and exam boards are going to do anything about this, but in fairness Y11 and 13 are their priorities right now).

And arguably even more important than learning is maintaining a **sense of belonging** to Clyst Vale. This is through regular contact between my colleagues and students. The major way of doing this is through remote learning, but it's not the only way. Even if they have set "project work" over 3-4 lessons, and have no specific work to set, I have asked my colleagues to send an e-mail to their class every day there is a lesson. Unless a teacher is ill, a student should get at least five contacts a day.

Practicalities

We will be setting approximately **2-3 hours learning** and tasks in total each day of term-time. Each of the five teachers on your child's timetable that day will contact each student via e-mail. For Years 10 and 12 the learning should be more than 2-3 hours on some days. The amount will vary according to what is on your child's timetable.

This learning will be sent as early as possible each morning, with a **target time of 09.00**. It will NOT be sent at lesson times, and we will NOT expect classes to be on-line at set times. This is to allow students and parents to fit the learning into family routines and demands. Experience and the media suggest that expecting parents to mirror the school day and lessons is not sustainable, adds huge stresses, and is only really possible if students have their own internet-abled tablets or computers and a big house so that little siblings do not interrupt.

Teachers have been asked to vary the work set so that there is a **mix of on-line and off-line activities**. There is no guarantee that a student will have regular uninterrupted access to a computer or laptop every day. Teachers still need to judge students' learning and progress. In the first week of lockdown, there was an expectation that work set would not be marked. This needs to be softened as time goes on; **occasionally**, more so in Years 10 and 12, students will be asked to **complete a piece of work and e-mail it in**. Teachers will not have the capacity to mark "routine" work, though. (It's important to note that some of my **colleagues face the same challenges in working from home** as you do: a partner who also needs to work, children wanting attention, some of them tiny terrorists...)

Microsoft Teams: Update

From w/b 27th April, we will set work through Microsoft Teams. At its simplest use, this is exactly the same as e-mail. The teacher posts work, with attachments if needed, and students can reply through messaging. The advantage is that only the teacher and the class are in the Team, so it is much easier to find information, and one student can ask a question which all others can see without ploughing through in-boxes. "Teams" has other uses too, and is very similar in functionality to Google Classroom. There is a problem, though, beyond our control. Microsoft is inundated. Currently we have 338/536 classes uploaded, but are hopeful all will be there by the end of this month.

Opportunities

- Things are evolving and developing quickly, meaning plenty of opportunities.
- There is the opportunity for all of us to rapidly develop the use of technologies in learning. By September, all students and teachers will be very familiar with Microsoft Teams, which could become a far better way of setting homework than we currently use.
- For students who love learning and who love going off at a tangent, they will have a great opportunity which the limits of the school curriculum doesn't allow.
- There is a great opportunity for students to develop tremendous qualities of resilience and independence in learning; they can do it!
- There is an even greater opportunity to develop empathy and social skills.
- While the typical teenage brain will start by focusing on what has been temporarily lost or missing, there is an opportunity to reflect on what can be *gained* from the current situation, and to reflect on what is really valuable in life. This is incredible learning.

For Year 13 students, there has never been a better opportunity to prepare for university. Universities are planning on supplying work for Post 16 students to fill the gap. Miss Haynes will contact students and teachers as this becomes available.

Similarly, we are preparing 'Bridging the Gap' work for all subjects in the Sixth Form which will come out shortly. We'll also investigate whether other Post-16 providers will be issuing bridging work.

Problems; SAQ (like FAQ, but *Sometimes* Asked Questions)

I know a CVCC family who aren't connected to the internet. What should I do?

Get them to contact us; phone 01392-461407 or their AtHoS. Or email/phone us yourself. We should be able to find a solution.

Who do I contact if my child is having problems?

The basic guidance is to ask, who would I contact in normal times? If it's a Maths problem, contact the Maths teacher (substitute any subject). If you are having persistent issues with one subject/teacher, please contact Mrs Jacobs who may involve the Head of Department of that subject. If it's a general, social or pastoral problem, contact AtHoS or HoS. If your child has special needs, contact Mrs Long or Mrs Rogers. E-mail is the best form of communication.

How important is it to have a routine?

Very. Psychologists reckon it's one of the biggest things children in lockdown miss about school. However, while it would be lovely to keep the CVCC hours, this is just not practical for most families. So, the advice is to involve all the family, and create a new routine. And each child is different: some can get up at 08.30 and do all their work by elevenses. Others won't surface until noon and would be better doing schoolwork in the afternoon. There will be plenty of time to adjust these routines before we start back. It has to fit your family. And access to the technology.

My child is in Year 11. Are they expected to keep learning remotely? Why, with no exams?

Yes, they are, but there are differences. It is worth completing any coursework or portfolio work because teachers will use it in predicting grades. It is worth doing work which helps complete or deepen understanding of GCSE syllabuses, doubly so if that subject will be relevant to their courses next year. Bridging materials for next year are also worth doing. If students are thinking about re-sitting exams in the autumn, it would be worth doing those as well. The general point is that if we stopped setting Year 11 work now, there would be a five month learning gap, which is significant. Please see also the "letters to Year 11 parents" sent previously.

My child has private tuition? Is it worth continuing?

Again, it depends. If your child is in Years 7-10, or 12, then you have employed them to help build confidence and understanding in a particular subject, and your child will return to school; so, probably "yes". If you have employed a tutor to help prepare for exams in Year 11 or 13, then it's harder to give blanket advice. The focus on exams is no longer urgent or arguably relevant (although some students may re-sit in the autumn); but developing knowledge and understanding in a weaker subject is clearly of value. There are also the health risks to take into account. Sorry to sit on the fence, but it's really up to you!

My child is able, well-motivated, loves learning, and 2-3 hours isn't enough. What do you suggest?

Firstly, do the work which is set. Often there will be extension tasks or suggestions for further investigation. You can also e-mail your child's teachers to ask for extra work or suggestions (in class, the teacher would see a need for more challenging work; remotely, this is much harder and we might need telling!). There are also loads of links to additional resources (the one here is from the government). My advice is to think about a subject or topic to narrow the search down, or it is easy to become lost in the lists.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources>

My child has special needs and is struggling. I can't help them. What do I do?

Your child's teacher will be aware of your child's needs and should be setting work which is differentiated in some way. Please contact the subject teacher with your concerns. If it is a problem across two or more subjects, please contact Mrs Long, SENDCo, or the SEND teacher who works mostly with your child. We are very anxious that students who have difficulties with learning are not disadvantaged by remote learning and not put off learning for when they come back to College.

My child has only got some of their exercise books? What do you recommend?

There are basically two solutions. If computer/tablet access is easy for the child, do the work on that, and save into a folder created for the task. If it's not easy, then develop a paper-based system: ring binder, some card dividers to separate subjects, write/draw/work on paper.

You say you will be asking for more work to be sent in for marking. How do we do that, and how will it work?

Sending work in can be quite straightforward. If it's done on a computer, it can be emailed as an attachment. If on paper, it can be photographed on a smartphone and the photos e-mailed in. One ingenious student in my Year 8 group took a video of her project as if reading it, turning the pages slowly so that when I play back the video I pause on each page and can read it. Marking/feedback would be by e-mail. Marking will only be of key pieces of work; remote learning is surprisingly demanding for teachers, and many have all the pressures of working from home with children that you do.

How do you motivate a teenager?

There are bookshelves of advice on this. Each child is different, and the same child can be different aged 11, 13 and 15. Try lots of strategies, and stick with the ones which work. In general, asking and explaining are better than telling. Why do you think the school is setting work for you to do? Why is it useful to keep your brain ticking over? How difficult will it be when you get back to school if you haven't done any studying? Ask to see the Student Bulletin I emailed to all students last week.

I normally punish my child by removing their technology. Is this still a good idea?

In these unprecedented times, I (and many psychology experts) would really not recommend it, especially the smartphone. That said, please keep a close eye: there are big concerns nationally about on-line safety at present. Obviously there are different technologies which could be removed, but a huge teenage worry is a fear of being isolated, so denying them contact with friends is certain to cause rows, and may even impact on mental health. There's also the matter of connecting with school. "Community service" sanctions, ie additional chores, are a better punishment if you need them.

In Other News.....

Absence

I know it sounds daft when all students are at home and literally absent, but please let studentabsence@clystvale.org know if your child develops covid-19 symptoms, or any *significant* non-covid illness.

Supporting Younger Children

Here's a very good way of telling younger children about the virus, which has come recommended to us. I say younger children, but *everyone*, including grumpy or sophisticated 16 year olds, loved the beautiful illustrations in the Gruffalo.....

<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler/>

Year 7 Parents' Evening, 23rd April

For somewhat obvious reasons, there is no way that this event is going ahead as planned (gatherings of no more than two people....). We did investigate the possibility of holding it via video-conferencing links, but have decided against: this would be fraught with timing issues, and we would need to buy in new, untried technology. My colleagues will be pleased to supply e-mailed comments or arrange a phone conversation, if you have any particular concerns; please e-mail them directly. Please be mindful that some of my colleagues have two or even more Year 7 groups.

Free School Meals: Important

Last week, we tried to switch from the Voucher Express Tesco-only scheme to the (better) government scheme. On Tuesday we were approved, but then there comes a delay before the voucher codes are issued by the government contractors, Edenred. The DfE sent an update stating this delay is around 48 hours. As of today, there was no sign of voucher codes. We phoned: "offices shut until Tuesday"; we e-mailed: "responses up to five working days". SO, trying to get the money to families in a steady flow, we have reactivated the Tesco only scheme at £15 per child per week to buy time for Edenred to process the codes. Vouchers will be sent to the student CVCC e-mail account to ensure maximum coverage.

Trips and Visits

A quick update if you have not been assiduously reading the covid-19 updates..... Chepstow has now been refunded; we have just had confirmation that Bude will be covered by insurance so that will be refunded in due course; Belgium will also be refunded in a later due course, but we are still negotiating whether the company or the insurance will be liable.

Apprenticeships

Just a repeat reminder that there are understandably doubts about apprenticeships starting in September. Students planning on an apprenticeship should keep in touch with the provider, but are advised to think about a back-up plan such as applying for a college course. Please feel free to e-mail Mrs Bennett on bennett@clystvale.org

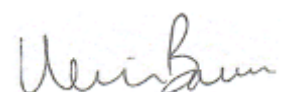
"Proud to Care" (Devon)

Hundreds of people have stepped up to help support the county's most vulnerable by applying for roles in health and social care. The coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) means there's an even greater demand for Healthcare Assistants in residential homes, people's own homes and hospitals in Devon so temporary and permanent workers are needed to fill a variety of shift work. You don't necessarily need qualifications or previous work experience. What's important are your values and attitude towards working with people who need care, and your ability to cope in challenging environments.

[Find out more, including how to register, on the Proud To Care website.](#)

That's an awful lot of information, but I hope it's helpful. If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to ask them. In the meantime, very best wishes to you and your families for a peaceful Easter weekend.

Best wishes



Safeguarding

During the closure, we encourage all parents to be responsible for safeguarding children in our communities. If you have any concerns, please contact the school and ask to speak to a **Designated Safeguarding Lead** (Mr Sutton, Mrs Albutt, Miss McConnachie, Mr A Pearce).

If this is not possible please contact **MASH, The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub: 0345 155 1071**. Further information on safeguarding children can be found by visiting www.devon.gov.uk/childprotection

Alternatively contact the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Attendance, Absence and Requests for Absence

DURING THE COLLEGE CLOSURE FOR COVID-19, PLEASE CONTACT THE COLLEGE ON THE CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW IF YOUR CHILD HAS COVID-19 SYMPTOMS OR HAS ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT ILLNESS WHICH HAS AN IMPACT ON THEIR ABILITY TO LEARN EFFECTIVELY WHILE AT HOME.

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 (Attendance Officer)

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

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



COLLEGE DRESS: WE WILL BE BACK EVENTUALLY !!!

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.

- 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.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Clyst Vale Community College, Station Road, Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon EX5 3AJ

Tel: 01392 461407 **Library:** 01392 464010

Email: admin@clystvale.org **Web:** www.clystvale.org

Principal: Kevin Bawn, BA PhD

