



NEWSLETTER

No. 669
w/c Mon 18 May
Week B

SONG TITLE OF THE WEEK

“Walkin’ Thru’ the Park” [Muddy Waters]

Dear Parents/Carers,

Nothing has changed for three days....

When I was school age and whinged, my late mother – very annoyingly – invariably said “you can always find someone better off than you, but someone else will be worse off” (i.e. stop moaning). Right now, my job’s quite demanding, but being a Secondary Head is much better than being a Primary Head. My Primary colleagues have to achieve the impossible: implement the government’s guidance when their schools simply cannot accommodate the numbers expected AND maintain the required health standards AND manage the range of parental views from “teachers are just making a fuss and stopping me getting to work” through to “I’m keeping my child off until Christmas if I have to.” Local authorities, unions, educational organisations and the government itself are churning out a plethora of guidance and risk assessments. It must be like that scene in the first Harry Potter when the Dursleys don’t give Harry his Hogwarts acceptance letter and a bombardment of paper starts. The media is adding to the frenzy, flip-flopping between reporting all the reasons for not returning and then the harm being done to children’s education (and the economy), which is deeply troubling and something all Heads are torn in half about.

Secondaries have a little breathing-space to watch and learn. I am aware that some schools are being gung-ho, gambling that The Science is too cautious and all will be fine, and planning to recall whole year groups; right now, that seems unrealistic to me unless they have huge classrooms, dozens of toilets, and staff to spare. I noticed yesterday that the “R” number for Devon nudged slightly up to 0.85, which is no indicator for relaxing lockdown. However, it’s clear that we cannot stay in lockdown for ever, and that schools will have to return sooner or later; but that’s the debate in a nutshell – sooner, or later?

I will update parents next week before we break for half-term. I expect I’ll be repeating that I will wait for the outcomes of the next government 3-week review on 28th May before deciding next steps; that we will continue the ECP provision; that IF we bring any students in we will start with Year 10 and this will almost certainly be in small groups. In the meantime we will plan for two or three different scenarios, and (like Primaries at the moment) will probably survey relevant parents after half-term. Therefore, I don’t think anything except ECP is likely to happen at Clyst Vale before mid-June; and I don’t really expect to see years 7-9 in school until after the summer holiday. I’ve mentioned “Safe, happy, successful” many times, in that order. When dealing with others’ children and my colleagues, I quite like “better safe than sorry”, too.

Rights Respecting School

This is still very much underpinning everything we're doing. Practically, RRS tutorial activities are being set every week, on a Friday. If parents/carers are interested in these, they are now placed on the RRS tab on the website. This also contains a variety of information and activities. <http://www.clystvale.org/students/rights-respecting-schools/>. Other subjects continue to promote RRS themes, especially but not only English, B&V and Course 42.

More generally, the big messages continue to relate to "Respect, Participate, Learn". Students are living a lesson about respecting the government guidance and expectations, the health of other people, and the value of frontline workers. They are participating by observing these guidelines and helping not to spread coronavirus; also participation is essential for keeping their learning going. There is the formal learning we are providing, but also all the broader learning from the current situation and lockdown. Students are hopefully learning something about themselves, and their character and resilience.

Remote Learning Reminders

We have at least another eight weeks of this. So, we are seeking to build on what has been very successful so far, but refresh remote learning wherever we can, and continue to improve around the edges. My colleagues and I are not perfect, but we are doing the very best we can. We have families and pressures, too, and sometimes the lessons set will not be as good as others. You are the adult in the room; you know your child; if they are genuinely struggling because they are "down" or because they're having a bad lockdown day or because there is too much work for them to handle, please tell us. Your child's teacher is not a mind-reader; they won't know the impact unless someone tells them. Teachers may misjudge the time needed for a task, so it may take longer than 30-40 minutes; but if your Year 7 or 8 child is spending an hour on one subject, check it is not supposed to be two lessons' work, stop them, and contact the teacher: to quote one of the coronavirus clichés, we're all in this together. Teachers want to help your child learn, not make them miserable. We want students to be purposefully occupied, not stressed and overwhelmed. You, the parent or carer, are empowered to tell them to stop and take some exercise (now unlimited) or a snack (unfortunately not unlimited with teenager appetites). Core subjects will be setting more work because there are more lessons; in Year 10 all teachers, not just Core, are more anxious about students falling behind. Try to build these additional emphases into routines; try to help your child prioritise and plan. Most teachers are now providing extension work and follow-up activities for those who love learning. Almost all work is now set on Teams; there is gradually more variety of tasks and more (safe) interaction. It is rare that a student does not receive five contacts a day. To improve remote learning, we need feedback; I have started seeking opinions from students, which has been positive: but as I would expect, all are completely satisfied with the amount of work being received, and wouldn't possibly want any more.....!

Other Brief Updates (well, "brief" by my usual standards...)

ECP. This is for the children of key workers and for children defined as "vulnerable" by the Government. Numbers have been small, but are now building. The group is quite regular, and although few were friends before, are creating a little identity and mutual support among themselves. The programme remains the same: 2-3 hours on remote learning, then a choice of activities. We have so far been able to run just one group of children (now being called a bubble), but will need to adapt our systems to scale up to a second group before long, ensuring we maintain the very high hygiene levels in place. It could be that as more key workers wish to return to work after half-term, and we are even more active in "chasing" vulnerable students, numbers will rise more noticeably. Depending on our capacity (which depends on Government guidance, which depends on The Science) this could reduce our ability to allow Year 10 to re-enter safely even in small groups.

Welfare Team

This is one of the best things to have come out of the current situation. We thought we were quite good at parental support and communication, but this has really improved contact with families who are finding lockdown and home-schooling to be an almost impossible challenge for various reasons. I've described the Welfare Team's work before, and it continues to meet once a week on a Wednesday and do its work throughout the five days. Some families receive daily contact where needed.

Exam Grades

Teachers have predicted students' GCSE, AS and A-Level grades (and we're beginning to see some general advice about vocational qualifications), and put students into a rank order. We are running a statistical check on them to see if they are broadly in line with the government algorithm or some way out. Results will be uploaded to the Exam Boards in the week after half-term, with results on 13th August (A and AS level) and 20th August (GCSE). We are still getting calls and e-mails asking for students' predicted grades, or at least grades for NEA (non-examined assessment, formerly known as coursework). I am sorry, but this is strictly prohibited by government guidance which, for once, was perfectly clear and unambiguous. In fact, we have even received guidance on how to decline a freedom of information request for this information. A little irony is that for the last three years schools (not us, naturally) have been told off for not observing the requirement to tell students their NEA grades, but that's scrapped for this year.

Laptop Scheme

Devon has responsibility for the scheme as it relates to students deemed as vulnerable, which basically means a child has an assigned social worker. We have claimed our full allocation of eleven laptops for Year 10 students; we have been advised that delivery will not be until the end of June or beginning of July. If the Year 6 experiment is a massive success, Year 10 might be back in school by then..... Or not. Or some of them. Who knows?

Trips and Visits

Better news, at last! We have finally prised the money from the companies running the Year 8 Bude residential, and the Year 9 Battlefields visit to Belgium. Because this has gone past six months, we are not allowed because of financial regulations to refund parents/carers through the Gateway. Therefore, parents will be contacted to ask whether you are prepared to submit bank details to us or would prefer us to send you a cheque. The company which organised the Year 7 Paris Trip is being stubborn about issuing a refund to us and offering only a credit note for a future booking. Clearly, we are stepping up the challenge to them, as this is not lawful.

Year 11: nearly gone, but not forgotten....

Funny things, teenagers. You hear nothing for days on end, but put "celebration event" in an e-mail subject title and they suddenly spring into life. We are consulting them on nominations for the Yearbook, and briefly on what they might like to do as an event for some "closure". Here's the link to the form "Year 11 Questionnaire" if it's needed:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=VVitC4GfxUOIAyHbzz3WeWT5ibQL9NIgpdvzvzJYzLkhUQU1FU1IVR1Y2T1hTVjZBU1pPNOM5RjZBVS4u>

John Clarke

We were sorry to learn of the death of John Clarke. John was part of the “Five Lives” team which regularly came to Clyst Vale as part of Course 42 and Deep Learning Days to lead sessions on difficult topics such as alcoholism, drugs, and self-harm. John himself was a recovered drug addict. He also mentored two students in 2018-2019 who needed help with their growing habit. If you wish to find out more about Five Lives, or more about John himself, their link is <https://fivelives.org.uk/john/>

Thank a Teacher, 20th May 2020

Wednesday is “Thank a Teacher” Day. This is a national initiative, and students send off video clips of themselves thanking a teacher. If you are interested, the link is: <https://thankateacher.co.uk/thank-a-teacher-day/>. However, what would be great and much simpler would be if students sent an e-mail or message saying “thank you” to their best teacher or teachers; it really doesn’t have to be very long, even one sentence. Compared to NHS or care home staff, teachers are much less at risk, but even if they don’t merit a weekly clap then a “thank you” e-mail would be really nice and greatly appreciated.

As ever, very best wishes to you and your loved ones.



Dr Bawn



***someone to talk to**

space*

Call Back Offer
Chat with a Youth Worker
by phone or text

Are you 13 or over?
**Would you like to speak to
one of our youth workers via
text or a call-back?**

**All you have to do is fill in this form
Which is also available on our
website:**
<https://spacepsm.org/>



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.

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



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 (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

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.

- 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

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

Principal: Kevin Bawn, BA PhD

