



# NEWSLETTER

No. 665  
w/c Mon 20 April  
Week B

SONG TITLE OF THE WEEK (ONE FOR THE STUDENTS)

**“You’ve Got to Learn” [Nina Simone]**

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



Dear Parents/Carers

I hope you and your families remain safe and well, and that you had a great Easter if the days aren’t all blurring into one! Welcome back to the Summer Term 2020; it will be a term with its own unique challenges, but our job as educationalists remains unchanged. We will strive to make sure that students are safe, happy and successful. In fairness, it’s harder for us to do this remotely: however, all our safeguarding systems are in place, and we have increased our capacity to support families or students whom are struggling. We will contribute to “happy” by setting work which provides activity, distraction and engagement, as well as maintaining regular contact, and supporting students as best we can who are struggling with mental health issues. “Successful” is not just a long-term aim, in the sense that the more learning done now will contribute to future knowledge, understanding and success; but also suggest ways that students can be successful during lockdown in their manner and attitude and resilience.

## **This Week’s Major Concerns: 1**

The whole of our remote learning depends on **e-mail**. Therefore, students need to be accessing their College e-mail accounts every day, ideally more than once a day. They also need to communicate with their teachers by e-mail (some classes have moved across to Microsoft Teams, and all will have done so by a week on Monday – 27<sup>th</sup> April). Many parents are already on top of this, but... **Parents/carers, please nag/remind/bribe your children to log on and check their College e-mail every day.** I’ve already written about the six-month learning gap; students who are barely engaging at the moment will suffer significantly when they return, especially those in Years 9 and 10, and will have to work even harder to achieve their potential. I do not mean to put pressure on families, but this is a statement of fact: students must be engaging with learning. We expect engagement with all subjects, but *if it’s a struggle* parents must feel empowered to concentrate on some subjects rather than others and please let us know. There’s no shame if your CVCC child is sharing a computer with two siblings and a parent working from home: we might even be able to help.

## **This Week's Major Concerns: 2**

I hope parents understand that remote learning is new to me and my colleagues, and we may not get it right immediately. One issue is the **quantity of work** set. This will settle down, but I am aware that some students in Year 7, in particular, feel swamped. This is especially the case if it's a busy household and/or access to a device with a keyboard is limited. I'll repeat what I said before. My colleagues are setting work in good faith, but they may set too much, or sometimes instructions may not be clear. Parents have to feel empowered to say "enough is enough". We are aiming to set 2-3 hours learning a day, a bit more for Year 10. A keen, conscientious student may wish to do more, and we would wish to encourage this, but that's different from having to do it. Obviously I am not recommending that students pack it in too easily, as they do need to develop resilience and the ability to solve problems, but if you consider that the work is too much, too demanding, not demanding enough, or that your child is becoming anxious or stressed over work set, do not hesitate to contact the teacher, tutor or AtHoS. It may be that you have to prioritise subjects, or do 3 or 4 lessons not 5 each day. You know your child, and while I can (and do) go on about welfare in general, you're actually there at the kitchen table. If your child is really hurting, you stop them doing what they're doing. It's the same principle. A Year 7 might be challenged or get stuck with their work, but they should not feel bad about learning. Year 10s are older and theoretically wiser, and they have GCSEs in a year's time: we all should expect more of them.

## **Communications: Reminder**

The announcement of a further three-week lockdown at least provides some stability. We're almost through the crisis-management stage (from a school's perspective, that is) but we are expecting another education-based set of announcements on Sunday or Monday. There is a consultation out about some aspects of exam grading, there has been no guidance yet on the practical matter of uploading the grades, we await guidance on the grading of vocational qualifications, we don't know what additional costs the Government will reimburse, we have yet to see any impact of the changed directive for students in social care, and there has been unsettling media speculation about when schools will re-open (below). Anyway, the plan is that I will continue an update in the Latest News section of the website home page on a Tuesday and a Thursday, and this esteemed Newsletter on a Friday. Anything more urgent and important will be e-mailed; and while I will report on "ECP" and Free School Meals generally, detailed information will be confined to those groups of parents.

## **Phone Calls**

I completely understand that lots of phone calls can be an unpleasant intrusion, especially if you're ironing and get confused. However, we do have a duty of care and it may be that there will be more calls than usual. Certain students and families, particularly of vulnerable or complex students, will receive a weekly call. Most students' parents will only be called if the student has not been in contact with tutor or teacher for a while, or if there has been no assignments returned. This is, of course, a big incentive for parents who do not like phone calls to nag/remind/bribe their children to do their work.....

One technicality: for safety and privacy reasons, we have to protect our personal numbers, so with many colleagues phoning from home not Clyst Vale, calls will usually come through as number unknown or withheld number. We would then leave a message with a specific call-back time.

## **Years 11 and 13**

You can't help but feel sorry for Years 11 and 13, as I've said before. Not only are they not doing exams, but we are still expecting them to do work. However, this work will be changing. There is little or no point in preparing for exams which won't happen. There **is** a point in finishing NEAs/coursework; I know the Government said that NEAs/coursework won't be sent to the exam board, but if you started it before 20<sup>th</sup> March you should finish it as it could influence your teacher and your predicted grade. There is also point in completing GCSE or A-level syllabuses, especially if the subject is relevant for your course in the Autumn. There is point in looking to your future: we are about to issue bridging materials for our Sixth Form courses, and Exeter College will be doing the same for all students who have registered with them. Some universities are also providing reading lists. Year 11 only from now on.....If you are seeking an apprenticeship, this is very uncertain, so we recommend enrolling in a FE College (and getting some bridging materials J). We will shortly sending out joining instructions for some free on-line courses which develop skills relevant to Y11 à "Y12" students. And, as above, PLEASE can Year 11 students check in with their tutors: we need to know that Year 11 students are safe and well at the very least. They also need to know that we are still here to help in whatever way we can. I can see that setting lesson-by-lesson work is not appropriate for Year 11, but some students are very keen to keep learning, and above all I am not prepared to abandon Year 11. In fact, there will be some contact very soon concerning what students would like to do about a version of a Prom and/or the GCSE Presentation Evening.

## **Year 10 Mocks**

For various reasons, including one or two subjects managing to get these done before lockdown, subjects will be taking slightly different approaches. This is pragmatic, not because of poor organisation! Students will be asked to complete papers or sections at home; some subjects will ask for these to be returned for marking, while others will provide markschemes and model answers. I'm sure you will understand that the point here is to give students experience of the paper, style of question, and so on. It can also help assess a student's individual progress if they took the exam in virtually exam conditions. Judging the whole cohort is simply not possible or sensible. We are contemplating all sorts of things for their Year 11: maybe a set of practice exams in late September, with the mocks after Christmas ? Life will go on....

## **Re-Opening of Schools**

Depending what you read, we've already re-opened, or will re-open on 11<sup>th</sup> May, after May half-term, mid-June, for a couple of weeks in July, possibly mid-August, September as normal, or the end of October. (I take umbrage at "re-open" as well: we've run ECP, supported families who are having some difficulties, are now setting work on a daily basis, and were open every day through the Easter holidays when parents needed to leave their children in our care.) My view, expressed through my professional association and other networks, is that this speculation by the media helps fill airtime but is otherwise very unsettling, hinders planning, confuses parents and creates social media rumour storms. We cannot return until it is safe. Children may be low-risk to the virus, but that's not no-risk and they can carry the virus; many colleagues or their family members are at high risk. Social distancing in a full school is impossible, and to pretend otherwise is a lie. Imagine a one metre diameter circle with a student at the mid-point. You can fit perhaps 18-20 in a typical classroom, if you ignore getting in and out of the door: where does the other third of the class go, and who teaches them? In Denmark, where average class sizes are 20, they can just about manage it. UK class sizes are in the high 20s. Hopefully I've made my point, so I'll stop there. Maybe the three-week extension will dampen the speculation.

## End on a Positive

I am certainly not going to end on a mini-rant about school re-opening! There is always a tendency to focus on the negative, the problems, the mistakes, and the media do not help this; in fact, a mental health coping strategy is not to watch the news at all. My parents' generation lived through World War II, and spoke of people having a "bad war" or a "good war", and there's something similar with coronavirus. This week, various colleagues and I have had some great feedback from students. Many are actually having quite a good time – no early start for school, no uniform, no buses, more sleep, more flexibility in their day, trying different things, more social media time – ironically seeing more of their friends than normal, if not in person, and enjoying time with their families who are not rushing off to work every day. New routines are emerging, and life is simpler. It's very easy to stereotype teenagers, but they are not all monosyllabic, angry and/or obsessed with their appearance; many, even the majority, are fine young people who will grow into fine young adults. Some teaching groups have migrated to Teams, with the chatroom facility, and it's been fantastic to have these conversations and posts not just about work but about how the lockdown is affecting them.

Best wishes,



Dr Bawn

*Well done, Ray!*

*Good Job!*

Over the Easter Holidays, I received the results for my grade 3 theory exam which turned out to be a distinction with 90/100 points.

Ray Phillips YR8

## 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](http://www.devon.gov.uk/childprotection)

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

## 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](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.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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

**Email:** [admin@clystvale.org](mailto:admin@clystvale.org) **Web:** [www.clystvale.org](http://www.clystvale.org)

**Principal:** Kevin Bawn, BA PhD

