



NEWSLETTER

No. 684
w/c Mon 28 September
Week B

THOUGHT OF THE FORTNIGHT

“Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.” Stephen Covey

Dear Parents and Carers,

I feel like apologising, but after all the high profile announcements this week, there is really only one topic of conversation. Again. I think we would all like a steady state as a basis from which to work. And I would like to write about something else, but unfortunately most of the exciting, interesting, cheerful stuff has been cancelled.....

Rule of Six Months?

There are some good things about working in schools at the moment: one is job security and certainty about monthly income. This week’s events leave many people, including Clyst Vale families, facing a further six months of uncertainty. Hospitality, aviation, retail, the end of the furlough scheme next month, the particular pressures on SMEs and the self-employed are all relevant locally to us. Schools cannot fix any of this, but we can provide a stable and “normal” environment for students when times are difficult for families. (The news is not exactly cheering, either: six months of restrictions, increased fines, threats of future lockdowns and the latest suggestion that university students can’t come home for Christmas). So, we have done everything asked of us, and re-opened to all students three weeks ago. We are very fortunate that there have been only a handful of suspected cases, and (touching wood) no positive tests. Meanwhile, hundreds of schools have had to close or part-close, including some in Devon, so we have to accept it could happen here.

If we do have a confirmed case, there is a clear procedure we will follow. I have attached the latest (23rd Sept) DfE flowchart; this is for schools, but parents can quickly see what relates to them, and can be reassured that there is a clear process. On the flowchart, perhaps the key box for parents is the third one down in the “amber” and “red” columns. We would need to use timetables and other information, with advice from the Health experts, as to which other students (and/or staff) would be deemed close contacts, and then we would need to contact all concerned. All very well writing about this in theory, but fellow Heads who have already experienced this say that it is very stressful for all concerned, not least parents who at short notice are thrown into having a well child at home for a fortnight, with all the implications this may have.

Our attendance so far this term has been around 90%, which is comparatively good. Some of these absences have been aggravated by the deficiencies in test-and-trace, which the government has to get right if schools are to stay open successfully.

Without easy access to tests and results within 24 hours, every suspected case will result in a 4-5 day absence for student or teacher alike. Having encouraged cautious parents to get their children tested if they had concerns, government advice has turned 180 degrees to the extent of blaming cautious parents for clogging up the testing service. It's a real worry for parents in deciding whether to send your child in; for parents who worry that other parents are not so diligent in checking or understanding symptoms; and for my colleagues on the receiving end of spluttering children. If you Google "covid symptom checker", there are 89 million sites. This BBC one is still extremely simple and helpful: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-54145299>. It seems that the snottier the child, the less chance it is of being covid. But I think parents are wise to keep a child off school for a day or two if they are poorly, to see how the symptoms develop, and I think this is why both nationally and here at CVCC that is why attendance is 5% down on pre-lockdown figures.

And we (students, parents, teachers) still need some more definite national consideration and action about next summer's exams and tests; I include Year 6 SATs in this. Clinging on to the "old normal" with no contingency plan for exams is not especially reassuring for anyone. We are already seeing school closures of varying lengths which will impact on learning for students at those schools; some areas of the country probably will suffer repeated disruption.

Day by day, week by week, my colleagues are gradually loading up lessons on to Teams, so that students who are absent can benefit and keep in touch. This is already useful for students who are in very high risk situations and are not in College, and with 10% of students absent each day for these individual days. This is really good for the majority, but not every family has wi-fi and sufficient technology to put a device on the end of it for every child. This "digital divide" is a national issue which can only be properly addressed by significant government investment greater than we have seen already. However, we will do our best. During lockdown we provided laptops, netbooks, and dongles both through the government scheme and from our own resources, including reconfiguring and updating some devices. We will shortly be issuing a digital survey (with due confidentiality and sensitivity) so that we have a clear idea of the position and address it systematically.

Microsoft Teams

Teams is our chosen platform for remote teaching and learning. I have attached Mr Bailey's excellent guide for students and parents which explains what "Teams" is, if you excuse the grammar, and how to get connected. As a College, our use and knowledge of Teams has risen exponentially since the start of lockdown, but we are still learning as we go. That said, all staff are competent in setting homework through "Assignments", and for the foreseeable future that will be the way that pretty much all homework will be set.

Stagecoach

I don't like tempting fate, but things do seem to be settling down into a pattern at last. This is really good news, as students' safety is paramount and parents have every right to expect that their child will get to school or back home smoothly, with the inevitable occasional annoyance caused by roadworks or a mechanical fault. So, we seem to have more buses than we actually need at 3.20 heading into Exeter. And, it's an ill wind: from Monday a bus to Bradninch-Cullompton-Tiverton will COME INTO COLLEGE. This is brilliant news; I've asked for this several times over the years, as it saves our students having to cross the B3181 and then hang around at a bus stop for as long as it takes for the bus to arrive.

Please Dress for the Weather and the Weather Forecast

We're keeping most of the doors and windows open for ventilation, because it helps reduce any covid risk. This makes some rooms quite chilly, if you're sitting still for an hour. Therefore, it is essential that students have enough layers to put on to keep warm. It's not close to winter yet, so we do not want students wearing coats over their shirtsleeves. They can wear a College jumper, or an under-shirt/vest, or both before we need to consider coats. We're at a changing of the seasons, so the weather is changeable, but it can be planned for.

Face Coverings and Buses

This paragraph can go two ways. I can either praise and congratulate the 95% of students who are doing the right thing by wearing a mask, and keeping it on for the whole journey. These students are making themselves and others feel just a little bit safer, and are showing respect to each other, the driver, and any members of the public. Or I could say the opposite about the other very small number. I do not, of course, include students with medical exemptions. I can honestly say that my colleagues are doing their best: when the buses turn out of the gate at 3.30, almost all students have a face covering on. Please could you reinforce the importance of wearing them.

Social Distancing Student to Student

One thing which is sometimes getting lost is that students should be socially distancing from each other, wherever possible, ideally one metre plus. This includes within their year group “bubble”. This is not possible in certain places, like assemblies, or lessons, or on the buses. However, wherever possible, students should try to be one metre away from each other. Bearing in mind that covid is transmitted by touch or by aerosol droplets, and both of these are accentuated by close contact, then any distance is better than none. Students might like to reflect that in class they sit in rows, facing forward, with the windows wide open. Do they sit like this at lunchtime or elsewhere indoors ? Government guidance, in effect, permits no social distancing in schools, but that doesn’t mean permanent contact with each other is compulsory!

Sleep Patterns and Screentime

In conversations with some students, it’s clear that not everyone has quite made the adjustment back to normal home routines. This is understandable to some extent, as six months away from the school site including seven weeks of school holiday will have created new sleep cycles. Also, throughout lockdown, those screens were a godsend for many families, and essential for students to keep in touch with their two-dimensional friends. Not to mention the expansion of Netflix (other streaming services are available) and free or reduced gaming. Many students are quite tired by lesson 5 (and sometimes lesson 4) even with good sleep patterns. I suppose what I’m saying is an egg-sucking grandma reminder that sleep is so important for teenagers, that they need good routines, and if they are on their screens in the early hours of the morning they won’t learn well and possibly will get into more trouble by being irritable and stropky.

Good News Section

Harry Patch Day

The virus measures in College meant that Harry Patch Day on 22nd September passed more quietly than usual as some of the activities could not take place. Full details are on the website scrolling news page, but the occasion was marked. After six months without much attention, a key job was to tidy up the Harry Patch memorial garden which was duly accomplished.

Success Story

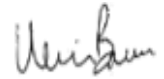
Congratulations to Roxy Allaway in Year 8 who has been commended for her short mystery story entry to the International Agatha Christie Festival, which she wrote during lockdown !

Annual Awards.

If you check the website, you’ll notice that we were able to present the sixth award winner Megan Newbery with her well-deserved “Performing Arts Student of the Year” award. Megan is an amazing musician who has contributed enormously to Clyst Vale over the years.

It still feels like we're in a "settling-in" phase, and this is partly because of new announcements, because we are still making tweaks and reviewing aspects of the new routines and measures as the weather gets colder, there are a few more sniffles, and inevitably students (and staff) get more tired. So, we whistle a merry tune and press on. The vast majority of our students have responded magnificently to all the changes and new routines, which is not as easy as it sounds; they are positive, attendance is pretty good, there is good learning going on in classrooms, we have had very little staff absence, even the buses seem to be ok, and we are getting some great support (and patience) from parents and carers, for which we are always grateful.

Best wishes,

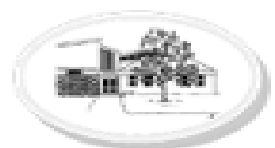


Kevin Bawn
Principal

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 **Web:** www.clystvale.org

Library: 01392 464010



STUDENTS OF THE WEEK



YELLOW SCHOOL

7YPN	Kai Pengelly
8YDS	Tilly Startup
8YSP	Will Crispin
9YNS	Grace Jeffery
10YCW	Leo Garnsworthy & Sarah Hooper
10YRB	Ellis Tagg
11YMBR	Sam Mills
11YZKH	Katie Cowell

RED SCHOOL

7RZB	Indie Perry
8RAO	Amelie Stevenson
8RAR	Finley Hooper
9RGG	Kady Howland
9RER	Peter Large
10RSS	Daisy Pott
10RTMA	Eve Hemment
11RGK	Luana Dart

GREEN SCHOOL

7GABR	Molly Heath & Jack Mansfield
7GDH	Brooke Kift
8GAW	Samuel Hannaford
8GBA	Iona Spry-Gard
9GSW	Erin Davey-Jepson
9GNB	Hollie Mitchell
10GMN	Olivia Kelly
11GHE	Louie Drinnan
11GIM	Beth Lawrence

CALENDAR DATES

DATE	EVENT
Thurs 22nd October	Exeter Food Bank—Non-Uniform Day
w/b 30 November - All week	Y11 Mocks
Fri 04 December	Y12 Geography Fieldwork
Sat 05 & Sun 06 December	Ten Tors/Bronze D of E Event
w/b Mon 07 December—All week	Y13 Mocks
Tues 08 December—4pm—7pm	Y8 Parent's evening
Fri 11 December	Human Rights Day Y11 Geography Fieldwork
Sat 12 December	D of E Gold Y12 Dartmoor Day Walk
Weds 16 December—7pm—9pm (tbc)	Christmas Carol Service, Whimble Church
Friday 18 December	LAST DAY OF AUTUMN TERM St Petrock's— Non-Uniform Day
Fri 12th February 2021	Force Cancer—Non-Uniform Day
Fri 23rd July 2021	Water Aid—Non-Uniform Day

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 - 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.