



# Beths Grammar School

Excellence - Community - Respect - Nurture

## Week Ending Friday 5 June 2020

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19) – updates from the Headteacher**

Firstly, I hope you have had an enjoyable half-term and that you ensured you took the correct precautions over the lovely sunny weather. Now we are into some form of work mode.

It is my intention to write to Parents next week regarding the gradual opening up of the School for Year 10 and 12 students. The letters will include a number of expectations that we would need to place upon students who are likely to be allowed onto the School Site. The School Behaviour Policy has been amended but to summarise, my overriding concern has always been to ensure that all members of the Beths Community are safe, so any infringement that brings others' safety into question on the site will be dealt with severely. The School site will be a different place than normal and instructions given will need to be adhered to without question.

When lessons do start for Years 10 and 12, the work covered is expected to assess where students are, plug gaps in understanding and move students forward in their learning. Online work will mirror face-face work in school.

I don't generally like to make political comments when representing the School but would like to mention that I felt the recent images from the United States, where George Floyd was callously restrained, resulting in his premature death were appalling and I hope that the perpetrators receive the fullest sanctions possible. It has focussed us all on the value of how we treat and communicate with each other and especially across different members of our school community. Black Lives do Matter and so do others as well and I am proud of the rich and diverse community that Beths has become over the years. All groups who are members of our School Community individually make us more whole and the School is a better place for them being part of it. The BAME community has played a vital role in this. I know we are not always perfect but we will continue to strive to make it a better place for all.

More and more staff continue to use TEAMS, ZOOM or YOUTUBE during their lessons, but please understand that some staff still do not feel comfortable in using these platforms and I would ask that students and parents do not put pressure on them to do so. As said above, we are actively encouraging staff to use a variety of ways of delivering information. Please also keep an eye out for any additional information that we send to you regarding the safeguarding advice around platforms like Zoom and would be grateful if you could speak to your son or daughter about these.

Finally, I feel a great sense of pride when our students do great things. Sophie has been a fantastic addition to our Sixth Form. Her effervescent, warm and friendly way she goes about things will stand her well for her promising future. James has worked tirelessly at home to exploit his designing skills by producing and manufacturing a PPE visor for distribution. His can-do approach is typical of many students here but James' drive to help and do things is phenomenal. He is a real star!



## **Thought For The Week**

“It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things” A quote from Leonardo da Vinci. Here he recognises that great people go out and make things happen, they lead, they inspire others. Can you think of people who have done this? An example is how this article has reached you today via the Internet – whose idea was that? We are very good at expecting things done for us but not so keen on the vision and planning that make things happen, think about how you have made things happen recently.

## **This Week’s PHSCE Theme**

“Diversity and Justice” is the actual planned PHSCE theme of the week. Diversity is an all-encompassing word that covers a multitude. Race, gender, religion, politics are to name four but there are many others that you could consider, what could they be? Justice – what is it? What does it look like? Is it a one-off act? For different people it could be interpreted in many conflicting ways. Think of a situation currently in the news, how can diversity and justice be interpreted? Is there a right and wrong? How can you get someone to understand an opposing view? Can you treat each incident separately or take a longer view?

## **Key Workers**

As we continue to mention, we know that many of our students’ parents and carers are going above and beyond in their jobs as key workers and we would love to be able to create a collage of images of you all, as a massive thank you and to introduce everyone to the extended #BethsFamily.

If you are working in a supermarket, for the NHS or as a carer, a delivery driver, a postman, working in the supply industry etc, please send us a photo of you, in your uniform and we hope to create something wonderful.



Please keep sending your photos in to the [headoffice@beths.bexley.sch.uk](mailto:headoffice@beths.bexley.sch.uk) email address – we would love to be able to celebrate everything you are doing.





## Student Volunteering

We are delighted to let you all know that a number of our students, during their spare time, are volunteering and are creating PPE equipment. This is fantastic news to hear!

One of our Year 13 students has been volunteering to feed the nation at Sainsburys in Crayford since the lock down started and her A levels ceased. She has been working 30+ hours per week, every overtime shift possible, to help. She was also recognised for her efforts by a member of the public and received a certificate.



We have also heard there are a number of Year 13 students working in Sainsburys. Well done and thank you to you all!

Another one of our students has been making PPE visors whilst at home, for local care homes and his old primary school. This is a small school and therefore the donation of this equipment will greatly help with their possible reopening.

We are really impressed with the extra work that students and staff are doing to help keep everyone and the country moving! These are strange times and the contributions you are all making, make Beths Grammar School proud to call you our students!





## My Beths Experience from Year 7 to Year 11 – by Musa

Where do I begin - to tell the story of a lifetime in a place that felt my second home. No words can express every memory, or moment we went through but I can shed light on some of the highlights. So join me in this flashback through the years of my life that made me into who I am today.



**Year 7** is a monumental year for every student, in every school and Beths certainly made it quite the experience for us. An entire academic year packed with trips and activities that got us integrated, accustomed and acquainted with each other.

I vividly remember travelling to Mountfitchet Castle to dive into the history of Normans, from feeding turkeys with my bare hands to exploring to the top of the hill each moment is in my memory forever as it brought me to become friends with the people I'm around today. But the fun didn't stop there, another example would be our trip to Rochester where we searched for clues around the city and spoke with locals while running in the streets. I may not have realised it at the time but its little things like that, that Beths offers in order to truly build character.

All of this was coupled with our academic bloom where we were thrown into an ocean of new subjects from languages, where we would rotate and get a taste of each three options, to food tech making every dish imaginable. Moreover being given the right amount of freedom to conduct experiments ourselves in science for the first time was incredible (all while keeping safe of course). We saw metals burn as different colours due to the atom excitation and excess radiation – a key part of chemistry, as well cans shrink into themselves with gas pressure and even learning how colour spreads across a chromatogram with pigments: we learnt about each and every topic in a highly enjoyable practical environment where we were quite literally shown not told so that a genuine interest would spark within every student. Secondary school is a big change and it's essential the early years prepare you in the correct way for your later challenges and striking the perfect balance of freedom and discipline occurs through those very gates on Hartford road.

In addition to this our wave of athleticism began from the first week where we all engaged in try outs for various sports with teams of all abilities so that everyone was involved - not to mention the dreaded, yet necessary, cross country run and 'bleep' test that every newcomer must face.

Our year in particular was blessed with a fine selection of numerous academy footballers at prestigious clubs such as Chelsea, Charlton, Watford, Southend, and County hockey, cricket and rugby players representing Kent, along with many other athletes in individual sports that went on to represent us at national level and even captain the England team! Showcasing their talent. Sporting Ability is highly valued as it shows a level of dedication, perseverance and resilience that not everyone has; not only that but at Beths we developed such mind-sets that even those who's futures were secure in sport did not neglect their education, rather went above and beyond and achieved outstanding grades only to motivate everyone around them.





Personally I committed to the cricket team for my entire time at Beths, and we had hours and hours of laughs and game time as cricket matches are generally longer. Each member of our team remembers the tough training in the nets improving our skills in a progressively challenging environment, coupled with the sweet memory of perfect green fields where we defeated many rival schools as the summer breeze cooled & congratulated us.

As well as this, sports day is something every Beths boy loves as we get to spend our time showcasing our abilities or relaxing under the sun watching our top athletes battle it out on the track and right at the end, even the teachers which is a sight to see!

**Year 8** is truly the time of every student's life at Beths. By now I was settled into my environment, acquainted with the teachers and enjoying my studies. The maturity change from primary to secondary school is really visible from this point onwards and we truly got to be young adults where we were given independent tasks and responsibilities such as co-ordinating research and presentations for history with onscreen explanations to a physical scene we acted out simultaneously. It was the perfect balance as we had no direct pressured exams wise so there was a true sense of happiness every day when our year group would be together on the notorious fields and hard courts of Beths grammar, playing away while we could, what a time.

Yet that's not all, Beths culture was giving us every experience possible, we rotated between 3 different D&T subjects, in each one creating a new project for ourselves. These included: a fully functioning mechanical litter picker in product design which we had to precisely draw, then measure and cut/file adding designs using laser printers, finally connecting it all with a handle; Or a complete product with packaging and guides that we designed ourselves from scratch in graphics with EU regulations and branding; To a phone holder with synchronised lights in electronics which we had to code draw up, and laser cut, each one teaching us a new skill or giving us a new memory until we settled on which one we enjoyed the most and decided to take it further.



We even enjoyed modern foreign language song competitions and performances within our year group and played kahoots in our classes to learn new vocab with Beths' (controlled) bring your own phone policy.

However the true highlight of it all was undisputedly Year 8 camp: a thrilling, action packed week with so much character building that no boy returned home the same! I remember vividly each activity that we participated in from night lining where we made our way through a gruelling mud maze while being blindfolded, only guided by our partner and jumping into the river at the end, the challenging group cycle across the top of hills in the British countryside which left our legs depleted, yet we never complained as we enjoyed it so much. While it was all fun there were also many challenges that taught us resilience and determination, for example having to kayak in rainy weather and pull each other out of freezing water if we capsized! Or enduring long walks for miles and miles, yet the landscape never





bored us as we saw forests full of red trees or historic villages with food specialities. Each day taught us a new skill no matter what we were doing, even as far as cooking! Whether that be the day our team cooked for the whole camp or making a seasoned 2 course meal in a field full of horses - not your average experience.

Overall though, what really made the experience incredible for us was the time we spent together, each night playing games in the forest such as capture the flag and returning to hot chocolate and biscuits, to whispering in the tents with your friends through the night in fear of Mr Temple catching you and making you wash dishes till the morning...



Lastly, to inspire us with our upcoming start of GCSEs Mr O'Regan organised a trip for us to explore Oxford University, to talk and engage in workshops with some professional, as well as spark some real dreams for those such as myself who wanted to achieve the highest ranks possible, this was particularly incredible for us as we had always dreamt of reaching these places one day and were finally standing amongst what could be our future. We saw what it could be like alongside the knowledge and opportunities we would gain and it's safe to say most of us put this newfound inspiration to use.

***In next week's blog, we can find out what Musa got up to in Year 9, 10 and 11!***

### **VE Day Competition**

Students were recently asked to get involved in the schools VE Day Competition, and the History Department received a lot of entries! Students were asked to get involved by either finding and making a wartime recipe, create a piece display, do a live news report of the day, become a journalist by creating a newspaper and write articles or find someone that they know were experienced VE Day, talk to them and then create a video or leaflet of their experiences for others to read.

Below are a few of the outstanding entries received and we will put more of the entries onto our social media pages, so please take a look.





## Library Books

Whilst you are all studying from home, please take the time to have a good look around your bedrooms, book shelves, school bags, cupboards, under beds etc for any school books and, in particular, Library books. We have a number of books missing from our school library and these will all have the school stamp inside the cover. If you find any, please return to school, when you are able and any fines will be waived. We'd just like the books back. You may find one that you'd forgotten even borrowing!

Being at home all the time is an ideal time to look at fiction on your shelves that you no longer want. We are always interesting in adding books to the library, so if you are having a 'spring clean' and are happy to donate books, it is a win-win situation! Parents should know what books to consider donating for the age groups we have. Please can you put any books to donate in a pile ready for when we come back, for students to bring down to the LRC, they will be much appreciated!