



Beths Grammar School

Excellence - Community - Respect - Nurture

Week Ending Friday 12 June 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – updates from the Headteacher

As you know, next week will see us starting to open up the school site to our Year 10 and 12 students. This has been a mighty feat to ensure that the school site is a safe place for staff and students to attend in numbers. Due to the social distancing, the class sizes for Year 10 have been reduced to eight students and one member of staff – a quarter of the number you would normally expect to see in most lessons! And for Year 12 class sizes up to nine students.

The plan is to divide the Year 10 into quarters where each quarter is assigned a day – Monday group, Tuesday group, Thursday group and Friday group. This will begin on Monday 15 June and it is intended to offer for the first three weeks a diet of English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and PHSC/Well-Being with each group. Once we get to July, the Option subjects will have the opportunity to have face-face lessons. Each Year 10 student will be in one a week on their allotted day.

The plan for Year 12 is also to divide them into quarters but given that the year group is almost twice the size and has three times the number of options, we have come up with the following. It uses the fact that the four A Level blocks from the current timetable appear on Monday/Tuesday Periods 3-6 and also Thursday/Friday Periods 3-6. From Thursday 18 June. It is our intention to create a two week cycle whereby each group is in school on one of those pairings so that over a two-week cycle, each student receives 90 minutes of face-face tuition with a subject specialist. There will be two cycles this term. Students will be told which group they are in, given a two day timetable which details the subjects, the dates they are expected and the rooms they are in. The rooms are different to where the students would normally go to but when the subjects are in the week hasn't changed.

The Groups have been created to accommodate group numbers so turning when you feel like or your mates are going isn't an option and students who try to buck the system will sent away. Each room is used once only each day before it is cleaned for the next and we have a limited numbers of cleaning staff available to ensure up 35 rooms are ready for the following day so I will not allow any directed studying on site during this period

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. However, we wrote to you during the last half term to say that staff that choose to use 'live on-line leaning' that student cameras would be turned off. We have listened to staff, students and parents and have now decided that although the default setting is that the cameras are off, members of staff at their own discretion can leave student cameras on. Could we therefore ask your son or daughter that they are suitably dressed, in a suitable location in the house with no identifiable personal information in shot. 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. This week we celebrate a distinguished group of students who have collectively enhanced further the image of themselves and



that of the School. We actively promote the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme because we believe that it extends the values that we embed in School. Raising money and devoting a significant amount of time to others are about Community, one of our four core values so I would like to thank all the students involved and the Staff who volunteer their time in making this happen. It is about what we do for others that typifies the caring nature of our School.

Thought For The Week

“War Child”. The media are very good at raising awareness but what happens when the focus fades? Is anybody aware that there is a conflict/war happening still in the Middle East? Children are born into this. What do you think their outlook, prospects, life expectancy are? How is it different to the way you look at things as you go about your day? Would you swap? How would you feel about looking down your road and see only half the buildings standing? Walking down the street dodging bullets? No running water because the pipes have been blown up? Coldness during winter because there is no electricity and knowing there really isn't an end to the situation in sight.

This Week's PHSC Theme

“Learning to Learn” is the theme for the next few weeks. The desire to engage in lifelong learning is an intention well-worth having as it implies there is always something novel to comprehend and understand. It doesn't have to be in the same field of study nor does have to always be factual. Lifelong learning should inspire us to want to push ourselves mentally and physically further. Much is developmental and individuals are able to guide the course of the learning experience. Some of it results in formal qualifications whilst others reap rewards of a different nature. Keeping your mind active as you grow older supports your mental health and well-being and whilst adolescents think they know everything, it might not always be true. Is there any topic or skill that inspires you to want to know more about it? How do you go about acquiring the knowledge? How long will it take? Where do you go onto after you have learned? Next time, I will focus upon ways of learning.

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 headsoffice@beths.bexley.sch.uk email address – we would love to be able to celebrate everything you are doing.





We were delighted to receive the below correspondence from the Operations Officer at the Duke of Edinburgh – well done to all our students who participate for these awards.

“I’m delighted to be sharing with you a certificate of social value for 2019-20 which details the total hours DofE participants at Beths Grammar School donated to their local community. Across London, DofE participants contributed an incredible 356,616 hours volunteering to help others, which equates to a social value of over £1.5 million.

DofE London Director, Clare Argar, has asked me to pass on her thanks to you, your DofE Manager, staff volunteers, and finally your incredible participants who have made such a positive impact on their local community.”





My Beths Experience from Year 7 to Year 11 – by Musa – continued from last week

Year 9 is where our lives took a big turn, yet I say that in the healthiest way possible. At the time, we still did early entry GCSEs so we had finally taken one step into a potential path we may follow in life with the subject we chose.

For me Economics was my first love. As a business minded person involved in many other enterprises, this really was ‘my cup of tea’ and I still remember to this day my first lesson about the economic life cycle along with how excited we all were. When you’re given the chance to do something you’re passionate about ahead of those your age, it really gives you a sense of motivation to achieve the best you can.



And this is exactly is what our Head of Year Mr McBeth capitalised on. His incredible leadership turned a group of boys who were fresh from end of year activities into rigorous workers striving to achieve the best. The seed of hard work was planted in us from young so that as it was gradually watered by teachers challenging us and increasing the workload, we knew nothing but to get to work and make sure we got the best ‘grades 7-9’. An intricate inter-year competitive system provided us with some healthy competition where everyone wanted to have the best test results or coursework/folders and

most importantly, end of term report, as the final results determined who would be part of the prestigious ‘top 10%’ as well as who would be leading their fellow peers and earning the rewards Mr McBeth provided us with.

However, what really changed our mind-sets was the cultural shift in our year. From just enjoyment and healthy mischief it was time to get serious; not only this but the way we all inspired each other continually. The one person putting in the extra hours in the LRC then turned into two, then into four, all the way until there were more of us working away in our free time than any other year group. We had a vision of success, to be the best Beths has ever seen, to break records, to constantly improve ourselves, to never slack off – every single person saw the hustle around them and when even those with commitments outside of school were getting the highest possible grades, it only motivates you to do better so you can share the success. One thing I admire about Beths is the perfect balance we strike in every aspect of our school lives; being around people who have similar goals and ambitions challenges you yet keeps you grounded at the same time. We had a real community, everyone got along and we all supported and inspired each other regardless of our individual friend groups. The teachers too were aware of us not being like any other year group and made sure to cater our lessons according to this, once they saw the seriousness we left behind childish classroom happenings and went above and beyond with our work. The relationships we had built really did change our lives and equip us with values and traits that will help our lives, not just in school but for years to come. Once we had solidified this, all we needed was the extra incentive, daily reminders, continuous motivation and target setting all provided by our Head of Year, for example I achieved ‘Boy Of The Term’ on receiving my report in addition we were told about, and later given ‘honours ties’ as a physical sign of achievement that we could wear proudly as a senior of the school in order to inspire the younger year groups to follow in our footsteps.





One of the reasons our year was so well integrated was we were all brought closer through our experiences, one of them being vaccinated on the same day which is always entertaining amongst boys to see who can make it through, or even serious presentations given to us by elite policemen who properly warned us against the dangers and effects of knife crime, an issue highly relevant in London today.

Nevertheless, there was still balance. I vividly remember leading a multiple class of students for a day in Ms Tolhurst's 'enterprise challenge' where younger students had to design, market and pitch the building of a theme park under timed conditions, while competing against each other. Days like that really bring the creativity out and showcases the talent we have at Beths all while giving me a new experience and responsibility of leadership through which I learnt a lot, such as how to manage groups of people at once, how to address and instruct people while still engaging them and many logistical management skills that come with handling hundreds of items of resources in order to keep organised.

Events like bringing in world class Olympic GB athlete Tommy Ramadan to the school gave the sportsmen a look into the future and what they could be like as well as physically showing us what sacrifice and hard work brings you as we got to touch and hold Olympic medals. Not only this, but due to all our hard work we were rewarded with a trip to Thorpe Park with our entire year! It was something we all desired and our teachers made it happen, from enjoying world famous rides to getting drenched in water to even eating out in the sun, the day was a perfect breather for us that motivated us even more once we realised how far we've come.



By the time we got to **Year 10** there was no confusion as to what our goals were, we were on track and had to push 10x harder as every single one of our subjects now was a GCSE we had chosen and committed to, while still engaging in our schools events and responsibilities such as school council where I was representing issues that the people wanted catering to. There was obviously a priority of GCSEs now and no messing around and even those of us who may have been late to join the cultural shift were on board and making tremendous progress day by day, each student was shown a customised and personalised plan as to their targets which catered to their needs.

Our analytical skills we now put into our English content, our experimental skills we put into our sciences, our technical skills we put into our maths work etc, for our entire timetable was 100% GCSEs now and there was no slacking off as one lesson wasted would be one lesson too many, and there was no room for failure!





However I would be lying if I said it didn't get tough at times. Maintaining that level of motivation for such an extended period of time can be hard, but that's where we had to help each other, remind ourselves of the end goal, provide new ways for revision and shift our routines. Not only this but our school helped us stay inspired by organising for us to attend many events. I remember our top set science class attending the examiners conference at Science Live where we picked up many valuable skills to apply into our exams as well as introducing new more advanced and challenging topics to us in the wider fields of medicine and astrology. Similarly, I was selected to attend the Oxbridge conference at Townley Grammar School which taught me more about the application process and how to go about the interview phase perfectly, should I make it there (hopefully). We also met with some Oxbridge alumni and recently accepted applicants who gave us insight on how to manage GCSEs and A-Levels.



In addition to this, we watched the sensational play 'Wicked' at London Victoria - what a spectacle that was! The lights, sounds, acting all alongside the singing and dancing showed us the standard these professionals acted at.

While we studied, all these events helped us enjoy our time and the rewards such as Gold Colours, with the schools honorary 'gold' badge engrained into our blazers gave us a real sense of fulfilment and also responsibility as it showed us how we were moving onto bigger and better things hence had to set an example. This level of responsibility was clearly shown through school events where we would have to come back late in the evening and give tours of the school to potential future Beths students.

Being the first person to achieve all 1s for attitude to learning and quality of work in my report really showed me the fruits of my labour and gave me a glimpse of all that I could be therefore I really felt as though these things helped us motivate each other when times got tough. In addition to this, as we were becoming young adults and more independent now hence Beths made sure to provide us with the correct mentorship to gain financial literacy, we had a day with company MYBNK which came and ran workshops with us to help us understand how to save and invest our money better. Undoubtedly this helped many of us understand how to handle our assets better and think long term.

However the real experience of Year 10 came in the summer of 2019. GCSEs. The dreaded, yet necessary exams we had to sit. It felt as though time had flown past us, only yesterday was I walking into that first lesson of economics about the economic life cycle, to now being able to write fluent essays debating complex topics with justifications using modern day considerations such as socio-economic impacts as well as the effect on the broader economy. Within the blink of an eye I was in the exam hall, putting pen to paper quite literally, writing my future. Across the course of a month and a half we completed our RE and chosen options' exams. It was stressful but after books of notes, practise exams, mocks, and late night and after school revision sessions, we were prepared to go do our school and ourselves proud.





The day of the first GCSE was really a sight to see - half our year was smiling uncontrollably trying to make the most of it while others couldn't take their eyes off their flashcards in fear that they might forget a keyword, but after all was said and done we came out victorious having done all we could have, and actually feeling content which is surprisingly rare for students our age sitting exams. Yet we reaped our rewards on the nerve wrecking results day, I stood outside Hamburg town hall on holiday in Germany, sweating profusely as I was on facetime to my mum, who, with Mr McBeth's assistance, opened my results for me and broke the news that I achieved Grade 9(A**) in both my subjects RE and Economics. I was overwhelmed with joy and so were my family. Achieving a goal you've worked so hard for is really the best feeling and I know our entire year felt that as we achieved 52% grades 7-9, we were all proud of each other and saw the effects of uplifting each other's morals throughout the year.



Our year wasn't over after exams though...before results day we had the experience of DofE which gave many of us nostalgia from Year 8 camp as we once again had to walk for miles and miles through the British landscape (which again showed us some mesmerising scenery). However this time we were much more independent, we had to cook, clean, camp all by ourselves only seeking supervision and equipment from our teachers, we had to make it past various checkpoints and motivate each other while someone else may be tired. Nevertheless, it seemed very tough at the time as we had had blisters on our feet from the practise day yet went on to do our official expedition a short while after, however looking back at it now, it was an amazing experience where we learnt so much about patience, bravery and teamwork while utilising the skills of navigation, map reading and cooking. Many of the memories from that fortunate day will remain with me forever, e.g being chased then cornered in a field full of angry cows and hearing my friends scared to death, all things we look back and laugh at today. DofE also enriched us with long terms values too, such as helping our community with volunteering that made us realise the impact we as individuals can have supporting a cause, or learning a new life skill, personally I learnt French which me and KJ still speak today, also the importance of consistent exercise and keeping fit.





Lastly we had the 2 weeks of work experience. For me personally, it was one of the most enlightening, educational and inspiring things I've ever done in my life. Working at JP Morgan, the world's most valuable investment bank, gave the opportunity to learn from some of the most knowledgeable people in the industry. Whether that's analysts, quantitative researchers, traders, or even auditors. Yet that wasn't all, I was given meetings with heads of all sorts of international



departments who were able to guide me in the right directions to find my career path, all while teaching me complex concepts of risk management within the stock market, from the world's top rated analysts, which I have continued to use to this day and plan on teaching the younger students at Beths. As well as this, they gave me some insight as to what they show and provide their clients, in order for me to see how the institution operates. Even aside from the knowledge I gained, the change in environment let me be amongst people of the corporate world every single day, something I always wanted to experience, even working in a trading floor that exchanges hundreds of millions of pounds a day, or eating from a grand food selection with new cuisine every day for lunch, to relaxing on the top floor looking onto skyscrapers on the London skyline - all things that fuelled me with motivation. The desire to experience a life you can look back at from a high point can only be done through hard work and uplifting the others around you, therefore I really feel as though work experience filled me with so much in just two weeks that I couldn't have got from anywhere else.

Find out what Musa got up to in his final year (Year 11) at Beths next week – along with his tips for new students!

