



Beths Grammar School

Excellence - Community - Respect - Nurture

Week Ending Friday 10 June 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) – updates from the Headteacher

After an unprecedented last 14 weeks of term, we are finally coming to the end of a situation which none of us could ever have imagined!

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone for getting us through, what at occasions, have been really difficult times ... but, we're nearly there. Thank you especially to the Facilities Team for all their hard work in ensuring that the school site has remained safe for us all to continue to work and study and for us to attempt to get back into some sort of routine.

Thursday is the last day of teaching in school (and virtually, for now) and I would like to wish you all a very good, restful break. Virtual lessons will cease over the summer and we hope that, all being well, we will be able to welcome the whole school community back in September.

We have started to work on the plan going forward in September and I will provide you of with details before the end of term. It is my intention to have all students back in school in September and whilst there are caveats and expectations being placed on the school we will do our utmost to make things work for everyone. If the current position changes, I will update you during the summer break.

The school calendar for the next academic year would normally soon be available for parents, however, this year, planning for it has been quite a challenge due to the amount of unknowns going forward. We have therefore made a decision that many of the activities which would normally have taken place during the Autumn term in school, will now take place virtually – this is likely to include things like parent evenings and Governors Committees and, if we are able to run concerts, it is likely that these will be pre-recorded and posted onto the website. My intention is to ensure that we have as few people on site who are not part of the student and staff population as possible, at least for the time being. This will also have a knock on effect to our 'curriculum project' where we welcome children from local primary schools in on a weekly basis, and to our open events – which will also be taking place virtually.

I met with the Full Governing Body on Wednesday and proposed term dates for the academic year 2021/22. These dates were approved by Governors and are published below, for your information, should you wish to do some long-term planning:

Wednesday 1 September – Friday 22 October	38 days
Monday 1 November – Friday 17 December	35 days
Monday 10 January – Friday 11 February	25 days (Bexley start 04.01)
Monday 21 February – Friday 1 April	30 days
Tuesday 19 April – Friday 27 May	28 days – excluding 2 May (Bank Holiday)
Monday 6 June – Thursday 21 July	<u>34 days</u> (Bexley finish on 22.07)
	190 days



For information, Wednesday 1 September will be our only staff training day of the academic year.

A reminder that, having offered a provision to our Key Worker students since Monday 23 March – a total of 80 sessions - we have made a decision that, as of the end of play on Thursday 16 July, this provision will be closed. This is because we feel that, with all the recent changes that have been made by the Government, families are now in a better position to arrange the childcare for their children which they would in 'normal' times.

TFL have also been in touch and asked us to remind all staff and students that it is mandatory that they wear face masks on public transport and we would be very grateful if you could please remind your son and daughter about this. The advice is in place to ensure the safety of all those travelling.

Responses from the Student Council during Lockdown

We take Student Voice very seriously and I thought you might like some feedback from the student point of view. Whilst there are some complimentary remarks there are also some observations that we as a school will follow up. I have summarised 12 pages worth of comments across the year groups to give you a flavour of the students' responses:

- *In my opinion the staff is very supportive as they can respond to students within the next hour. They are also making learning different with using the Satchel One (Show My Homework) app to its full advantages. As in setting us quizzes to test how much we have learnt from the subject. They also say things like, "Take your time". I personally like this as they give us time to do their work as well as other teachers work. On behalf of 7E I think they don't have complaints about the staff or teaching, except the comment I added earlier about too much work. One thing I would like to add is: that if we have two teachers that teach the same subject e.g. Science, English and Maths; both the teachers set work. What my maths teachers do is one teacher sets the work. Instead of having a double load of work. This could be a problem and the possible cause to the 'too much work' statement. We have been in contact with other students of 7E such as the weekly zoom call. We have also been playing games together. Other forms, such as 7H play games with other forms. And we have a 7E group chat to stay in contact with each other.*
- *In regards to your question on how we feel about learning during lockdown, I personally believe that it has been fine. Even though it has been a challenge to work from home, I have been able to do most of my work on time and have been enjoying it. My class however believe that some of the work has been a bit excessive, which I agree with. This is the case especially on Mondays, as we are given around seven pieces to do. Collectively, we ask that the workload would be reduced and for more zoom lessons so we can better understand the work given to us.*
- *I think that there is a good balance of schoolwork set, however, on some days, there are many pieces of work, but on others there is none at all. I think that the work should be spread out more equally to avoid stress and also laziness. I have managed to complete it all by following the timetable I would normally use at school. I have had feedback from the staff, either*





congratulating me on a good piece of work or telling me how I could make it better. I do receive answers to my questions relatively quickly, so I can continue with my work when I hit a block in the road. I do believe that my peers are doing well, and we do speak, and people help each other. In conclusion, my lockdown home-schooling experience has been relatively good. However, one complaint is that some pieces of work are set random times instead of at the time of the lesson, so it causes issues for people who follow the school timetable. I would like to see the work being set at the same times as they would if we were in school. I would also like to see more teachers doing Zoom lessons, as they are a great help and we can speak to teachers immediately if we need something. Thank you for reading my thoughts. Stay Safe.

- I am coping well thank you. At the beginning of lockdown it was challenging to stay motivated and organised without structure and school in general but I think I've got into it now. Among my classmates I think its the same, staying motivated without structure. However I think now that we are having more zoom classes and sessions with Ms Stevens we have been given that structure and opportunity to connect with each other in a similar way as if we were in the classroom. I think more zoom classes in the language courses will also be useful especially for pronunciations.*
- Fortunately my family and I are doing well, and I feel we have managed to adapt well to the new school life. I hope you are alright as well. I am doing well for school - we have all received plenty of work to do regularly for all lessons, so I definitely do not feel my education is in jeopardy in any way. In addition, I keep regular contact with my teachers, most of whom give my feedback for the work I have submitted. I have not kept daily contact with my colleagues, except from Zoom lessons and emails. I have been told by my classmates that they miss school quite a lot, are bored at times and are keen to go back, since zoom lessons often limit interaction among us all that we usually have. Apart from this, I do not know much more other than that everyone seems to be safe.*
- In regards to Zoom, I am optimistic as I see more and more people coming with each lesson than before. Now, I would estimate half of the class or more attends the zoom lesson. The only minor problems are irregularities in the software, particularly with screen sharing for some teachers. We have recently submitted our GCSE subjects, and many of my classmates are very enthusiastic in their choice of subjects. My biggest concern is what the school's approach may be for students in subjects such as art, music and DT, where the coursework cannot be done at home, how all students in these subjects will be able to come into school to do the coursework safely?*
- I have been keeping on top of my work, but sometimes it is quite tricky as a few teachers have a tendency to be a bit impatient, furthermore, sometimes I may do a piece of work and forget to submit it but more time teachers are understanding and will give us time to submit. Some of my friends have had a harder time keeping up with work due to the amount of work that we get set but usually most people are doing well. I don't really have any major concerns at the moment except that sometimes teachers need to explain what is going on, for example if*
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a different teacher is setting us work for that subject we should be notified so that we are not confused, this is my only concern at this point in time .

- Just a couple of things come to mind; most people would prefer not to have the 3 hour sessions once a week. I realise that the school is trying as hard as they can to start formal learning again in a safe and responsible way, but many people have long journeys and some will have to take public transport. For these reasons, it is simply not worth it for them. I think that a solution such as more zoom lessons but with smaller groups would benefit all students equally. Out of the 8 subjects I take, I only get zoom lessons in 2 of them. Other than that I think that most teachers are setting the right amount of work and I haven't found any piece of work too difficult to complete.*
- Working from home has been an experience that changed the ways i thought i could learn, i have been managing to get most of my assignments done and slipping in some unassigned revision to make up for lost lessons, however this has given rise to some small issues which i believe could be resolved easily, such as teachers setting and expecting work on weekends, this breaks the normal timetable and the timetable some students have made for themselves during this time. Also I've discussed with other peers and we all agree that simply uploading powerpoints onto show my homework doesn't help us at all, as it is still knowledge we do not understand and need explained to us, though i am not a teacher i do believe there are other ways of remotely teaching us, such as uploading videos on youtube or directly onto smhw(e.g. Mr Runacres youtube channel.*
- I believe during this time zoom lessons have been especially helpful in our learning. Some people find it easier to understand their work through a teacher explaining it as they would in a normal lesson, so that aspect of the zoom lessons has been helpful. Furthermore, in regards to the amount of work we have been receiving, at the beginning it was a lot, but now after talking to our teachers we were able to get set work that was manageable.*
- I have been doing rather well. I believe that all my friends at school are doing well too but we are all struggling to keep up with work. Before we left school, we were assured we would be able to contact our teachers to discuss issues and more but unfortunately some of my friends have been unable to do so. Other than this, I believe everything has been alright besides the fact that there have been some ongoing issues with SMHW for a while now. My notifications only appear close to the day that my homework tasks are actually due and when I try to check the tasks I have been set manually, I am not always able to see them.*
- Personally, I haven't struggled too much regarding work - I haven't felt like the workload is too great and that I haven't struggled too much with concentration, but I do know that a few of my friends have been struggling with concentration and this time isn't really ideal for them to do the work and they have felt that they are falling behind. If I'm understanding correctly, when we go back to school it will be mostly revisiting content and filling in the gaps in knowledge, which should hopefully help with the fears that they are falling behind, but people probably have more questions about getting more support in helping filling in some gaps in knowledge further. I definitely can say about myself that I am quite nervous about coming*





back to school in general. But other than that - I'm not sure what many other people think in the school. Through the entire quarantine period, I have coped well with school work and have been supported by teachers in the physics and maths department throughout every step of the way. My friends feel the same way as I do. Overall, I think Beths has managed the situation well.

- *This lock down has been a blessing in disguise as I have been more productive at home than I would have been if I was in school. The level of support we've received from teachers has been excellent and has helped make the best out of a bad situation. I have been able to complete all the work set by my subject teachers, as well as complete multiple extra-curricular activities for my UCAS application. While I cannot say the same for all my peers, I know that others have enjoyed similar success in completing their subject work. In my opinion, how much work one is able to get done comes down to their own personal work ethic and how they balance their time: the teachers have done all they can to help us.*
- *I'm more than happy to pass on concerns my friends have been having. For starters, many of my friends feel it is almost pointless returning to school. Of course, we're aware that it's compulsory for the school to reopen due to government rulings, however they have still voiced discontent: Particularly as we are only attending school for 4 days in total, and many of our teachers have stated that they have found it very difficult so far to teach while maintaining social distancing. I feel like this is more discontent with the whole situation rather than SLT's handling, however I think that we've had sufficient school work in terms of amount, but not enough support to those who may struggle at home. Myself, for example, have quite bad concentration issues which has left me behind in terms of work - of course, teachers have been thankfully very flexible and I'm grateful for that, but I think support in terms of helping concentration or those who cannot learn as well in a home environment would have been a lot better. I think the general consensus with my friends is that they are coping well, however I do have one friend in particular who has lost his motivation for work - this links to what I mentioned earlier about a lack of support for those that may face psychological challenges during this lock down. That friend in particular is only doing the work he enjoys solely because has no motivation to do otherwise - I think support, again, maybe counselling, could and should have been offered, considered or discussed more among the year group.*

Temperature Screening

We have already given you details of the new temperature screening machine that we have had installed next to the Millennium entrance. An additional machine has now also been placed in the school's reception and we are also looking at further machines throughout the school site. A reminder that the temperature screening machine gives an accurate reading of your current temperature and anyone with a reading of over 37.9 will be asked to move away and after a minute, retake their temperature. If it remains above 37.9, if a member of staff, we would ask them to leave the site immediately and book themselves in for a Covid-19 test. If a student, records a reading above 37.9, they will be escorted to the Medical Room where they will remain, whilst being monitored on CCTV,





until their parents can arrive to remove them from the site. Again, they would be asked to arrange for a test to be taken and to report the result to us at their very earliest convenience.

Should a member of staff or student have a reading of above 37.9, an alert will sound both at the unit and remotely to alert a member of staff who will make their way down to the console to assist.

We understand that recording a temperature of above 37.9 does not necessarily mean that they have contracted Covid-19 but, as it is a possible indicator, we would ask that a test is undertaken.

Thought For The Week

“Planning For the Future”: We are creatures who like to know what is going to happen. We do not like surprises nor do we like conditions to be constantly changing. We prefer to set out our intentions clearly. The essence of a plan needs to be

- flexible,
- simple,
- workable,
- inclusive
- clearly communicated.

In planning for the reopening of the school, difficult decisions need to be resolved. The outcomes are not always going to please everybody but the belief will always have been for the vast majority of our stakeholders. The school will try to address individual issues along the way but the overall plan needs to cater for as many as possible.

The success of the plan is dependent upon those it involves and the school will invest much time in making this work through the points made above.

Mr Blyghton’s ‘Dice Football’

As many of you will know, I have been following the Premier League in recent weeks and I have noted the scores in each game. At the end of the season, I will be comparing the final placings from my ‘Dice Football’ with the real table to see whether throwing a few dice down each week has achieved the same results as the actual Premier League. It will be interesting to see if it will have been as profitable an experience sitting in my armchair as it would have been running around in an empty stadium for ninety minutes at a time.

