



Beths Grammar School

Excellence - Community - Respect - Nurture

Week Ending Friday 9 October 2020

Charlie, Year 8

During Lockdown, Charlie and his family spent the time buying for and packing 'Happiness Hampers' for families in need in the Woolwich and Dartford areas. I was delighted to be asked by the YMCA to present Charlie with a certificate and a small token of appreciation which I did, over Zoom, to the year group assembly. Well done Charlie.

During lockdown I wanted to help people in our local community. I was able to join my mum and brother to provide Happiness Hampers for families in Woolwich and Dartford. We had to shop all the time to make sure we had enough food for all of the hampers and then organise everything so it could be packed every two weeks and delivered to the families. YMCA Thames Gateway were working with families they help all the time as well as some schools to make sure everyone had enough to eat - it was really hard work but amazing and so worth it when we were able to drop the hampers off to people's houses and see how much it meant to them. I get to do it all over again next week when we're on half term!



Charlie, Year 12

I received numerous emails about Charlie, from members of the public on Thursday. He had selflessly aided an injured bystander near Sidcup Station on Monday morning. I was delighted to present him with a small token of our appreciation this morning and I do believe he was quite chuffed!

"Charlie was just a breath of fresh air"

"Charlie was calm and knowledgeable. He was clear in his direction that I should not be moved and was politely assertive about this with the adults who were also helping me."

"He assisted the driver with this confidently and behaved with a maturity well beyond his years. He was very reassuring, helped me into the car and even secured my seat belt as he was concerned about me twisting around to do that for myself."

"Immediately I felt Charlie was going to be useful and proactive. He was this and so much more. Kind, thoughtful, funny and completely selfless."

"Please pass on my sincere thanks to Charlie for being responsible and community spirited. He deserves much praise for his conduct and is a credit to your school."

"Your school clearly achieves a good balance between achieving academic excellence and developing your pupils' awareness of community responsibility. I would be grateful if Charlie's actions could be acknowledged/rewarded in line with school policy."





A reminder to students that, once they leave the school site, they are breaking the law if they mix in groups of more than six.

We have received numerous reports, not only from our neighbours in the Village, but also from retailers and restaurant owners in Bexleyheath that our students are not adhering to these rules.

Please can you again reiterate the importance of why your son or daughter should adhere to the 'rule of six'.

If your son or daughter is tested for Covid-19, please alert the school and do not allow them to return to Beths until they have received a negative test result. Again, should they be unfortunate enough to test positive, please inform the school immediately so that we can alert the LCRC for guidance.

We have had complaints from our neighbours on Hartford Road, who have told us that vehicles are still blocking their driveways as they drop students off. Additionally, staff have reported that parents are dropping students off by the gates and stopping on the yellow zig zag lines. Please note that even stopping on these lines is illegal and we have noticed an increase in traffic wardens in this area.

We again, remind parents not to use Hartford Road but instead, drop students either at Hall Place where they have given permission, or alternatively, drop them at a distance for them to walk the rest of the way into school.

Masks

As of Monday 2 November, **all students and staff will be expected to wear face masks from the moment they enter the school site** and will only be able to remove them, in the case of students – within classrooms or once they reach their outdoor area for recreation; and in the case of staff, once they are within classrooms and two metres from the class or their departmental office. Please note that the Sixth Form Centre and the LRC will become areas where masks **should be worn** as these are not classified as classrooms. It is vital that face masks are worn correctly, over your mouth AND nose.

We would also recommend that any students travelling to school, via public transport, should wear a different mask to the mask they wear on school site. Please ensure that the mask they are using for travel is placed in a plastic bag when entering the school and a new face mask is put on.

Changes to the timetable for the day

With the onset of winter, we will be looking to tweak the timetable and structure of the school day and we will be informing parents of changes as when they are planned or arise.

Lockdown

Should the Government enforce a period of lockdown for us all, similar to what is currently taking place in Northern Ireland, if it is during our two week half term (19 -30 October), students will not be set any work.





However, should they impose a lockdown which continued into week commencing 2 November, students would then be expected to do work set by teaching staff as this is the period when they would have returned to school. Staff will be asked to set work, using Teams, Zoom, SMHW etc.

Prize Giving

Many congratulations to all the students who received a certificate today. Awards were given out for individual subjects, being a lockdown hero, for contribution to the school, top achievement, top progress and outstanding achievement.

Open Event

On Monday 12 October we launched our first ever Virtual Open Event. The starring roles went to five Year 9 students, along with Jack in Year 13. If you have a moment, please head over to our website and let us know what you think!



<https://www.beths.bexley.sch.uk/page/?title=Year+7+Virtual+Open+Event+2020&pid=167>

11 Plus

The 11+ exams will be held between Monday 2 – Friday 6 November. Year 7 toilets will be moved to using porta-loos outside the canteen during this time, as Year 6 pupils will be using the ones that Year 7 usually use.

Parent/Student Survey

We had another great response from our recent parent/student survey and I thought this would be the best opportunity to answer some of your queries and share some comments, in case others were wondering the same.

Questions and comments from dissatisfied students and parents:

“Communication with parents.”

- We believe we have been communicating with parents significantly more since March and we are pushing much of our correspondence through this Blog and through our social media outlets rather than just sending out standard letters via Parentmail.

“You can train up your teachers to use Zoom. During full lockdown parents were disgusted that you had teachers who “WERE NOT COMFORTABLE USING THIS PLATFORM” and lessons were missed. Let me point out that our children had zero experience using this platform yet went ahead anyway and did their lessons. Your teachers are on 40-50k depending on experience and the least you can do is have them trained up 😊”





- It was difficult to train staff in the summer term under the lockdown restrictions on using Teams and Zoom with the only medium to allow this being Teams or Zoom. However we have moved on and I can inform parents of the following: Staff are receiving in-house training during timetabled CPD sessions to up-skill themselves. The school system now allows for delivery of Teams or Zoom which caters for classes to be taught simultaneously to students in the room and students self-isolating. When Year 11 were out of school earlier this term, staff delivered remote lessons to them. Classes and individuals in the Sixth Form have also been included in the same way. Governors approved a capital bid in July to provide laptops to staff and netbooks to all students. These machines were ordered and the laptops belatedly arrived some five weeks late and the netbooks are expected over half term and I hope to be able roll out these devices so that both staff and students are able to gain full access to the curriculum whether they are in school or at home.

“Actually keeping to the allocated bubbles, more varied times finishing school and break times also more food being available at lunch time”

- During the school day, Year 7-11 are in their bubbles in their zoned rooms. Movement around the site is restricted by a three period day. Breaks and lunches are staggered and students are supervised to and from recreational areas back to classrooms. The times of the day are confined to safely supervising students when on site in the morning to some immovable transport restrictions immediately after 3.30pm.

“Prevent mass gatherings in sixth form centre. More toilets and handwashing facilities for girls.”

- The size of the sixth form means that mass gatherings are unavoidable. Each toilet area is designated to year groups which means every year group has restrictions placed upon them. In the case of sixth form girls – they do have two designated toilets facilities - one in the sixth form centre, the other in the school canteen.

“Make sure students wears masks in communal areas. (Fully over mouth and nose) Make sure teachers respect social distancing. Make sure students respect personal space even if they can't socially distance. Make sure students have own supplies so not borrowing pens etc.”

- I can't argue with the sentiment here. We do insist that coverings are worn in all communal areas. We instruct teachers to remain behind the two metre line at the front of the class for their own health and safety and students are expected to keep their distance too. I am not sure whether this is distance between staff and students or students amongst themselves. Staff have been advised that if they need to approach a student in class they need to be wearing a full-face covering and for students, there isn't any need for them be in another's personal space, so this would be covered by expectations of classroom management and expected behaviours on the school site. We instructed that all students must come to school fully prepared and not to expect equipment to be leant out or borrowed.

“Let year 13s stay in school (the LRC and Sixth Form Centre) during periods 5&6 to study.”

- There is not enough space nor rooms that have been sanitised and cleaned during the day for the sixth form to remain on-site in the afternoon for private study. We already have a number of Year 12 classes being taught remotely because of this.





“Online lessons would be safer”

- We are looking to blend learning. Whilst online learning is an option, it fails to generate proper interaction between staff and student, student and student and doesn't offer the opportunity to understand nuances that happen in a classroom based lesson. Remote learning tends to be teacher-led and at sixth form level it needs to be a partnership between educator and learner.

“More effort should be put into tracing students that have been in contact with another student that has tested positive for Covid.”

- We follow the advice provided to the School by the Department for Education (DfE) and The London Coronavirus Response Cell (LCRC) as well as Test & Trace. Each incident is logged and tracked but there is often a delay about what action we should be taking given that these bodies are busy and that we are not allowed, as a School, to act unchecked. We have to be secure in what we are doing is right and approved.

“When someone test positive, and classmates are asked to stay home, why are siblings (of the classmates) not? They are mixing in the same house as someone you've asked to isolate.”

- Those required to self-isolate because a classmate or friend has tested positive provide the perimeter boundary of the possible infection. If none of those providing this boundary become infected, then it is contained. If a person self-isolating becomes infected during their period of self-isolation, the boundary then becomes extended to include the immediate family. The process is designed to be systematic and consistent.

“Be more enthusiastic about commendations.”

- We encourage staff to award commendations and the ratio between commendations and demerits is 6:1 in favour of commendations. However, it has been noted in the Year 9 Student Council that only having three lessons per day sometimes restricts the opportunity of gaining more than one per lesson. We continue to encourage staff to positively award commendations.

“Overuse of mobile phones in the breaks should be stopped. I understand that during this pandemic, facilities are limited. But believe that staring at mobile phones at any opportunity results in a negative atmosphere and limited social interaction as boys are focused on game apps. A shame that this happens in school time, which is meant to be about learning and nurturing individuals who are interested in the world and in the people around them.”

- We are encouraging reading during registration to develop literacy. At breaks and lunch, students who play on their devices are fully engaged in competitive conversation. They are enthusiastic and keen to offer their opinions.

“Teachers aren't abiding by distancing rules.”

- Teachers are advised, as part of their own safety and health, to respect the two metre space between themselves and students. When moving around the site, staff are expected to wear face coverings.





But to lighten the mood, please find below some comments from parents and students who do feel that what we are doing is good...

The school is doing a great job in keeping my son safe. Thank you.

All fine. Well done all at BETHS.

Communication is good. My son feels safe. We feel that he is safe at school. Thank you.

I think Beths are doing a very good job in these difficult times and it is much appreciated; we really want them to be in school to be taught especially during the exam year. I understand there is a process for the students to clean their chairs and tables before they sit down (not sure if I got this right). Perhaps the teachers can enforce this before they start the class? Not a huge point but thinking about whole bubbles going into lockdown again. Thank you

You are doing great! I am so glad that my son is part of a well organised school who has the interests of his students at heart. In these unprecedented times that we are in, I have nothing but praise for all the staff. Thank you.

I feel all safety measures have been considered and put in place.

The School in my view have done the best they can considering the current climate and I am more than happy. My son is comfortable whilst at School but has reservations about public transport so his mother has been dropping him to and from school.

You're doing a brilliant job. Thank you

Very happy with everything the school is doing and the regular updates.

I don't know if there will be a further opportunity to say thank you for your efforts at this difficult time.

I cannot suggest improvement, I think that you are doing a great job in the circumstances.

You have been very informative and done your best. Thumbs up to you all. I cannot see anything lacking. Well done and keep it up.

I think Beth's are doing a great job, I feel very confident you are doing everything you can to keep my son safe. Thank you!!

At this point my son mentioned the school is doing their best so far and thank you for that.





In celebration of Black History Month, Ms Brobbey has written a wonderful article for our blog...

The question I have been asked the most by our students is this “Miss, where are you from?” When I respond with “Britain”, the next question is “No Miss, where are you actually from?” This conversation always has me in stitches because I know that what the students really want to know about is my ethnicity and cultural origins.



I was born in Britain, Islington to be precise, but my childhood was spent in Ghana. I consequently have grown up with a strong sense of pride in my family lineage and Ghanaian cultural origins, all thanks to knowing my family’s roots. My family tree is of great interest to my children. They enjoy looking at family photos, comparing family likenesses and listening to my stories about climbing trees, picking fresh fruit and being a student at Achimota Secondary School which was the first mixed secondary boarding grammar school in West Africa. It boasts of notable alumni like Kwame Nkrumah, first President of Ghana, founding member and third Chairman of the Organisation of African Unity, now African Union and Justice Akua Kuenyehia, first African to serve as Chief Justice of the World Court at The Hague, who also happens to be my aunt. Yes, almost everyone from Ghana is somehow related.

My father was great at telling stories about his childhood. His favourite adage was “if you know where you’re from you know where you’re going”. He was the eldest son of a cocoa farmer in Ghana. Although his parents did not receive any formal education, his father was very keen on getting his sons educated and my father benefitted from this immensely ambitious desire of his parents. He went on from living with a succession of uncles and relatives in Accra, the capital of Ghana, whilst he attended Primary School to getting his GCSEs and A Levels, eventually gaining admission into one of Ghana’s top universities to study Architecture. His pursuit of gaining further qualifications in his chosen field brought him to England where he studied at The AA, the Architectural Association in London. He and my mum got married here in the U.K. and lived here for a number of years before returning to Ghana. He never stopped telling my siblings and I about places he visited on his travels around the world but for me his best stories were about his parents, my grandparents who sadly did not live long enough for me to meet.

Storytelling is an art in Africa, it is how History is passed down. Children sit at the feet of elders after the evening meal to listen to stories about legendary warriors, wise rulers and mythical creatures. All the stories end with a moral, some advice or life lesson. The point is that folktales, as a form of oral literature, draw their material from the realities of society and hence reflect people’s values and worldview. As a result, folktales are often used as a vehicle for transmitting and preserving shared values and collective experience. The most famous mythical creature in Ghanaian folklore is Kwaku Ananse, the Spider. Step aside Spider Man! Ananse is the original web spinner who can get himself out of any tangle. Ananse was a very smart but mischievous god who was changed into a spider by his father Nyame (God) for not giving up his mischievous ways. Ananse stories are often funny and teach





Lessons about the consequences of making bad choices and that it is much better to be smart than to be strong.

I was very excited when I was asked to assist with setting up the Beths Multicultural Society (BMCS), the first of its kind in the school's history. Our school is a wonderful melting pot of ethnicities, cultures and religions and the BCMS is just what we need to showcase this. Although it is still in its very early stages the group, currently made up of Year 13 students has met a numbers of times this term and deliberated on issues like celebrating cultural festivals and independence days all year round, raising the profile of minority inventors and historical figures and decolonising the curriculum. With COVID measures in place it has been a challenge to make the society known to our students and also organise events. However over the last 7 weeks the 15 strong committee, supported by myself and 6 other members of staff and Mr Blyghton, has led the celebration of Nigeria's Independence Day on the 1st of October and is participating in virtual assemblies to celebrate Black History Month.



Students and staff who are interested in joining the committee or contributing their ideas can do so by emailing this address BethsMCC@beths.bexley.sch.uk

Ms Brobbey
Assistant Head of Sixth Form

Year 7 and Year 8 Student Committee

Both committees took place in the last few weeks and the main focus of both meetings was to establish how they have settled in to the new academic year. In the case of Year 7, how have they settled in to secondary school, and for Year 8, how they have adapted to new timetables and classrooms to maintain safety in bubbles, and protect areas for breaks and lunchtimes.

We are delighted to say that Year 7 seem to be really happy, confident, well settled, despite the strangeness of the current situation. The Year 8 students have found it a more difficult process as they, of course, are having to adapt to changes to timetables/zones etc that they did not have last year.

Mr Blyghton attended both meetings, which was very useful for him and them, as he hears first-hand about any concerns or matters they wish to discuss, but it also means that for some questions they get an answer straight from him.





THE GREAT BETHS BAKE OFF

Our Great Beths Bake Off continues this week with Mr Beaney taking up the gauntlet with chocolate week. Mr Beaney headed to the kitchen and created a delicious batch of honeycomb and chocolate brownies - although, as Paul Hollywood said in the programme, 'anyone can make a brownie!'

250g of dark chocolate (can replace some or all with milk chocolate if you want)
250g stick of butter
5 eggs
150g flour
350g of muscavado sugar (brown/caster if you want it less rich)
Optional extras: ginger/pecan nuts/splash of rum/glacé cherries. I added 3x Crunchie bars broken up!



*Melt the chocolate and butter over a low heat.
In a separate bowl whisk the sugar and eggs together until mixed.
Fold the melted chocolate into the sugar/egg mix.
Mix in the flour.
Pour into a lined baking tray
Cook for about 20-25 mins at 180 or until a knife comes out **almost** clean (a bit gooey is good!)*

Next week is the dreaded 'pastry week' on the show and Mr Temple will be in the kitchen for this one!...bethsbakeoff





Please see below a snapshot from the DfE’s website on the wearing of facemasks:

Guidance on use of face covering when travelling to school or college

Children aged 11 and over are legally required to [wear a face covering on public transport in England](#), unless exempt for health, age or disability reasons.

In accordance with advice from Public Health England, we recommend that local authorities advise children and young people aged 11 and over to wear a face covering when travelling on dedicated school transport, unless they are exempt. Coronavirus (COVID-19) usually spreads by droplets from coughs, sneezes and speaking. When used correctly, wearing a face covering may reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) droplets in certain circumstances, helping to protect others.

Schools should support local authorities in promoting the use of face coverings when travelling to and from school, and help them to resolve any issues of non-compliance where appropriate.

The [‘Hands. Face. Space.’ campaign](#) urges everyone to continue to wash their hands, cover their face and make space to control infection rates. The NHS has released a [‘Hands. Face. Space.’ video](#) that may be a useful resource when communicating the importance of wearing a face covering on transport directly to

Parents Association

Monthly Draw Winners below:

First Prize goes to Sajal in 11A with winning ticket No. 126

Second Prize goes to Michael in 8W with winning ticket No. 39

Congratulations!

After School Clubs

Monday	After School	Rugby	Year7	Year 8	-
Wednesday	After School	Basketball	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Thursday	After School	Football	Year 7	Year 8	-





Thought For the Week

Build our own dreams or someone else will hire you to build theirs – Farrah Gray

Upcoming Events

Tuesday 13 October	PA AGM – Virtual Meeting
Thursday 15 October	Year 9 Student Council Meeting
Friday 16 October	Break for Half Term
Monday 2 November	Return from Half Term
	Start of Anti-Bullying Week
	GCSE Exams commence
	11+ Testing
Thursday 5 November	UK Senior Mathematics Challenge (Year 13 Students)

