



BEECHEN CLIFF

4th June 2020

Message from Headmaster

Dear Parents and Carers

The changes in the rules recently have meant that many more children are leaving their homes to get exercise and to meet with friends. Whilst this is obviously welcome, the tragedy last week in which two youngsters lost their lives in the river, brings home the need to take care and to look after each other. Mr Mann outlines in this newsletter the responses to some of the questions your own children might be asking you at this time and I would ask that you have a conversation about what this means and how they can remain as safe as possible.

For our other pupils and students the likelihood is that we will not be seeing you as we would like until the beginning of the new academic year and this will mean that 'digging deep' and finding the resilience to maintain current academic performance will be required. Again, I thank parents for the exceptional support you continue to give, particularly when you will be facing other daily challenges.

As always, if there is any way we can be of practical assistance, please feel free to contact us.

Mr A Davies
Headmaster

Guidance

What parents and carers need to know about schools, colleges and other education settings during the coronavirus outbreak

Updated 2 June 2020

Please visit the link below or indeed click on the above heading for essential guidance for parents and carers about changes to schools and educational settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>



Year 10 Returning to School Plans

Year 10 parents/carers will now have received a letter with the outline plan for Year 10 pupils to return to school from the week commencing 15th June.

We are looking forward to the pupils returning to school and to providing them with some academic and wellbeing support that will supplement the online curriculum currently in place.

We would be grateful if parents/carers could indicate if their son will be attending school this term via the online form by Friday 5th June. This is to assist us in our planning.

Further details on the arrangements will be provided next week.

Mr T D Markall
Deputy Head (Curriculum)

Coming out of Covid-19 - Which activities are back on the cards?

As the lockdown restrictions begin to be relaxed in England, this week we look at which recreational activities you can take up again

"Unlimited" exercise

Since Wednesday 13 May you have been able to do more outdoor exercise

"as many times each day as you like". There is no longer any limit to the amount of time you can spend outside doing exercise, or in "open-air recreation".

Even better, you can also exercise outside with up to five others from different households. That means small groups of sport teams can resume fitness sessions, but social distancing must be maintained. Remember that the two-metre distancing rule must be obeyed when you are with people you do not live with. Might be a good idea to sharpen up your tennis or football skills with friends so that you're in tip top shape when the full lockdown is lifted.

Groups of six can now meet up, while socially distancing outside.

Why not meet up with a couple of friends for a catch up to slowly get back into some sort of old normality? I'm sure that you can't wait to compare notes on work handed in on Google Classroom!! This is a brilliant development in coming out of lockdown but do use common sense and try not to meet too many people from different households in quick succession.

Does that mean we can have a barbecue?

Yes. You can have a barbecue (*as long as you have permission and an adult nearby*) providing you do it in a socially distanced way, provided everybody washes their hands, provided everybody exercises common sense. Be careful though and remember that you can still spread the virus by passing things from one person to another so it might be wise to take your own food, utensils and cup.

Can you go into other people's homes?

Yes and no. The government has said the science makes it clear the chances of spreading coronavirus is much smaller outside so socialising inside is not allowed.

However, you can go through houses to access back gardens and it is acceptable for you to use your friend's toilet, as long as you flush with the lid down, wash your hands thoroughly and wipe down surfaces afterwards.

How far can you travel?

Now, you can do a DC (Dominic Cummins). You can travel as far as you want to take exercise and spend time outside but you have to come back home; you cannot stay over at friend's houses. We're not quite at the sleepover stage!

So, lots of new opportunities to be out and about to see friends again. Make the most of it and be kind to your parents - remember that for them, pubs and restaurants are still closed until at least July 4th! Do them a favour - offer to cook them a nice meal once a week!!

Mr K Mann

Assistant Headmaster

Theme of the Week

Theme of the week this week is focusing on Pride Month, this is also our theme of the term. We are a Stonewall Champion School and aim to create an environment where everyone feels happy, is able to be themselves and be proud of who they are. The month of June was chosen as Pride Month to commemorate the Stonewall riots, which occurred at the end of June 1969. As a result, many pride events are held during this month to recognise the impact LGBTQ+ people have had in the world.

Please watch the following video about why Pride is celebrated each year across the world.



Pride events around the world have had to be cancelled this year, but that doesn't mean that people can't celebrate and get involved in a number of different online activities.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/pride-2020-how-to-get-involved-online-virtual-lockdown-a9534881.html>

<https://inews.co.uk/culture/pride-month-2020-when-date-june-uk-lgbtq-celebration-meaning-2869131>

Sir Ian McKellen, best known for playing Gandalf in Lord of the Rings is hugely involved in Stonewall. He speaks around the world at schools, festivals and events about his life and sexuality. This is a great speech he did at a previous Pride festival.



Mrs A Wilmot
PSHE

Three Peaks and Centurion Challenge



As you are all aware the Beechen Cliff Three Peaks Challenge 2020 has unfortunately been cancelled.

We did hope to reschedule this event this summer at a slightly later date, but as this adventure requires the maximum amount of daylight and a higher probability of good weather we have been forced to delay now until next summer.

It is planned that the Three Peaks Challenge 2021 will depart on Friday 2nd July, returning on Monday 5th July and have provisionally booked youth hostels. Look out in September for more details!



THE CENTURION CHALLENGE

This popular challenge has also been cancelled for this year. However we have provisionally booked the campsite at Fox Hanger Devizes for Friday the 9th July - Sunday 11th July 2021.

The Centurion Challenge 2021 will be the same formidable test of resilience and determination as ever before and we look forward to seeing you there. More information will be disclosed nearer the time, in the Spring/Summer terms next year.

Mr D Brewer and Mr R Stewart

Challenge Organisers

Letter from Mexico

Thought I would share with you a lovely email received from former Beechen Cliff student and boarder Carlos V from Mexico, highlighting how all our friends around the world are sharing the same difficulties we are here in the UK.



Our best wishes go out to all of them. Stay safe.

Mr S Turner

Head of Rugby

Hi everyone - this is Carlos.

How are you? I hope everything is fine with you and your family.

I'm really thankful that I went to Beechen Cliff where I learned how to play and love my favourite sport; Rugby. Now I'm in the Mexican National under 19 Rugby team where I was going to represent Mexico in the 'Rugby Americas North Championship' in the Bahamas, but now with this situation is not possible due to Covid.



Last year I was hoping to come back to England to visit but in the end I couldn't fly to England because my father went on a business trip and I had to help my mom with my two little

brothers. I was planning to fly to England in this summer, to visit all my friends that I haven't seen for over 2 years but because of the virus it's not possible, so the first chance I get to fly to Europe, I will. There is no way I'm missing Bath!



This was the picture after I played the semifinal in Cancun in February of this year with the adults B team. The only reason why I cannot play in the A team is because I need to be over eighteen. Now I

am second row but I want to change to be a flanker.

Please tell my rugby coaches how I am doing. I don't want to be forgotten as just a normal exchange student that went to Bath just to learn English!

I hope you like or enjoy the rugby in Mexico and that Doris the boarding house dog remembers me.

King regards from me and my family in Mexico

carlos

Mental Health & Well-being

These have been and continue to be unprecedented times. This has been the case for all; a collective experience that will be marked in our lives forever. As parents, this is a time that needs thoughtful consideration in how we support each other, and our children, to process what we have and are experiencing and how we can move forward with our lives in a hopeful and useful way. This may be a collective experience that we can explore together; however each and every one of us is different and unique and therefore requires an individual response.

In the last Parents' Newsletter before half-term, Mr Oldham wrote to you all to explain our plans to look after the mental health and wellbeing of all our students during Term 6 and beyond. Based on this, our Mental Health Team would like to support all students, staff and our parent body using Solution Focused (SF) techniques in relation to everyone's mental wellbeing and their best hopes moving forward. Starting this week, the staff Mental Health Team will be sending you 3 questions in the weekly Parents' Newsletter to explore as a family. This is an exciting **whole school Solution Focused** initiative involving all students, parents and staff. All Beechen Cliff students, staff and parents will be invited to ask themselves the same 3 questions each week using different themes. We hope, as Beechen Cliff parents, you will take an active part in this positive approach to our wellbeing and discover how to have SF conversations with your children and each other.

Only last week, 'The Guardian' newspaper published an article highlighting the positive use of Solution Focused Practice. You may enjoy taking a few minutes to read this and to see why we are so pleased to be adopting this method across the whole school:

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/may/29/the-miracle-cure-for-lifes-problems-more-of-what-youre-already-doing>

Term 6 Week 1: Parent Solution Focused Activity

SF Questions for you to ask yourselves, your children and even open discussion with your friends and family.

Top tip: Record your answers and your number on the scale somewhere so that you can look back on these at the end of Term 6 to see what difference you have noticed.

1. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being you at your best and 0 being the opposite of that, where are you on the scale since lockdown?

Please record this number on the scale during week 1 of Term 6 as it will help you to notice any positive change by the end of term

2. What have you noticed about yourself that has pleased you and makes you that number and not lower?

So what are the good things that are enabling you to be that number and not lower? We would like to invite you to think about what has been useful during this time; what have you been able to do/to cope with that has surprised you? What coping strategies would you like to take forward with you and what difference will these strengths and resources make for you after lockdown and when your children return to school? We encourage everyone to write their thoughts down because the detail may well show us all what personal strengths and resources we have been using to cope

3. Now you have looked where you are on the scale in relation to being at your best, describe what being at your best would look like for you.

Maybe think about what would need to be happening for you to feel happy for your children to return to school with no worries? What aspects of school before the covid-19 were really important to you and supported your children to be at school and feel safe and supported? If you were to move up the scale towards your being at your best, what would you notice you and your children would be doing differently to now?

Thank you for taking part in this exciting whole school SF initiative and take care.

The Beechen Cliff Mental Health Team

Further Information of Solution Focused Practice

The SF approach is a language of hope and possibility, because it has a focus on what people can do, not what they can't. It's solution focus enables people to move away from problem solving and quickly invites a greater sense of self-belief. If the language of SF is applied, it can change a culture. It can give hope and possibility in an equal and compassionate way; where people not only consider themselves, but can consider others in a way that negates judgement and discrimination.

With the solution focused approach there are clear assumptions that underpin it. We would invite you to have a clear understanding of these and to consider what difference it would make to your conversations with one another if your practice was underpinned by these assumptions.

- People are unique
- No problem happens all of the time
- People are not defined by their problems.
- Change is happening all of the time.
- Change is possible
- People are experts in their own lives
- People have existing strength and resources to make further changes in their lives.

SF was developed in the 1980's in Milwaukee in America. The approach was developed as a model of therapy; however, it is now widely applied across, health, social care and educational settings. It can be applied in any setting, whether it be in an organisation, a community, groups, families, parenting, as well as for individuals. The SF approach places people as experts in their own lives; with the strengths and resources to reach their own solutions. The approach works with people to enable them to have a clear vision of how they want their life to be and how they would like things to be different; what their best hopes are for the future.

Tara Gretton, our Solution Focused Counsellor at Beechen Cliff, has written a short, but highly relevant blog about the powerful use of SF techniques to help young people with their mental wellbeing. Take a few minutes to read and see for yourselves why we are so excited to develop an SF culture to match the amazing Mental Health openness we have at Beechen Cliff.

<https://www.solutionrevolution.co.uk/post/don-t-be-afraid-to-feel-the-importance-of-understanding-our-emotions>

Mental Health Team