



BEECHEN CLIFF

28th January 2021

Message from the Headmaster

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope that your son or daughter managed to make the most of the planned wellbeing session today.

We felt it was particularly important to have this time away from screens and phones and to choose an activity which would act as a 'boost' to them and allow them some time to reflect on what they are doing and what they have achieved. Surrounded as we often are by messages which point out shortcomings it is important for our children to be regarded for what they are doing well and to encourage them to try and have a 'mixed diet' of activities and that goes for parents too, of course!

Thank you for your time spent in filling out the parents questionnaire recently. It was a very positive level of response and we do hope to be in direct contact with parents who provided a name and information which needed following up.

It is always worth publishing the feedback as we do make sure we pick up on any themes and respond. It is, after all, in the interests of us all to make sure their experience of education at Beechen Cliff is as good as it can be. There are no second chances.

Mr A Davies
Headmaster

DfE Consultation on how GCSE and A Level Grades will be awarded in 2021

We appreciate that the current uncertainty about how students will be awarded A Level and GCSEs examination grades this year is both frustrating and may be causing anxiety.

As you may have seen, Ofqual have launched a consultation (link below) to decide how best to proceed and we will update you once the results of this are known at the end of January.

Do please read this to see what is being suggested.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-how-gcse-as-and-a-level-grades-should-be-awarded-in-summer-2021>

In addition the Exam Boards have all issued statements such as this message from the Chief Executive of OCR (<https://youtu.be/1ZDC6LBz4Q4>) and the OCR summary of the proposals.

[Click here](#)

We will provide you with further information as soon as we can but it is important to note that decisions on grading have not yet been made. Therefore please keep studying and working hard to complete your courses, including submitting online the classwork and assessed pieces of work required by your teachers.

Mr T D Markall
Deputy Head (Curriculum)

Calendar

Thursday 28th January

Wellbeing Day

Lower Sixth Parents' Evening (virtual)

Friday 12th February

End of Term

Monday 15th–Friday 19th February

School holiday

Monday 22nd February

Start of Term

Year 9 Pupils - GCSE Options Choices

This just a reminder that the deadline for Year 9 pupils to complete the online options form is Monday, 1st February.

The form is available on the school website:

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/parents/year-9-options-form/>

Mr T D Markall
Deputy Head (Curriculum)

Theme of the Week

Holocaust Memorial Day - 27th January

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) 2021 is **Be the light in the darkness**. It encourages everyone to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to, but also the ways individuals and communities resisted that darkness to 'be the light' before, during and after genocide (we remember victims of all genocides, not just the Holocaust).

Increasing levels of denial, division and misinformation in today's world mean we must remain vigilant against hatred and identity-based hostility (can you think of any current examples of this?). Rapid technological developments, a turbulent political climate, and world events beyond our control can leave us feeling helpless and insignificant. The utterly unprecedented times through which we are living currently are showing the very best of which humanity is capable but also the much darker side of our world as well.

We can all stand in solidarity. We can choose to **be the light in the darkness** in a variety of ways and places – at home, in public, and online.

We will continue to do our bit for as long as we can, secure in the knowledge that others will continue to light a candle long after us.

Gena Turgel MBE, survivor of the Holocaust (1923-2018)

We mark Holocaust Memorial Day to bear witness for those who endured genocide, and honour the survivors and all those whose lives were changed beyond recognition. As many survivors of the Holocaust have died, it is our responsibility to keep sharing their stories - **why do you think this is? What lessons can we learn from their stories?**



If you have time, you can listen to some survivors' stories here: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/concentration-camp-survivors-share-their-stories>

Holocaust Memorial Day is a day of remembrance for victims of ALL genocides, including Bosnia, Cambodia, Rwanda and Darfur - genocide must still be resisted every day. Our world often feels fragile and vulnerable and we cannot be complacent. Even in the UK, prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all.

How can I be a light in the darkness?

Sometimes it is the smallest of choices and actions that provide light in dark places. Survivors of genocides emphasise that any kindness, when surrounded by suffering, indifference, and persecution, is powerful.



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY 27/1

For example, during the genocide in Bosnia, Safet Vukalić took comfort from the people in his community who wanted to help – from the neighbour who refused to join the Bosnian Serb army, to the soldiers already in the army who brought him medication and food instead of torturing and killing like others did. In turn, his family also showed kindness and generosity to others, as his sister made long journeys every day to bring food to men imprisoned in concentration camps.

How can you be a light in the darkness now? Think about ways in which you could be a light in the darkness, especially at a time when there is a lot of division and suffering. You could be a light in your own family, among your friends, in your classes, your communities or online.



Holocaust Memorial Day enables us to remember – for a purpose. It gives us a responsibility to work for a safer, better, future for everyone. Everyone can step up and use their talents to tackle prejudice, discrimination and intolerance wherever we encounter them.

Ms P Netto

PSHE

Pupil Premium Update

Laptop / IT Lockdown Provision

If your child is experiencing any difficulties accessing online lessons, do get in touch with us and we will do our best to find a way to help you. (rbarros@beechencliff.org.uk / jwall@beechencliff.org.uk)

If you have a working device that is no longer needed, please get in touch as we are keen to support any boy who does not have sufficient access to IT equipment at home.

National Tutoring Programme (Brilliant Club)

Some of our pupils have now started to access the National Tutoring Programme for English and Chemistry this week. This programme, run by the Brilliant Club, is part of the national effort to support schools in addressing the impact of Covid-19 school closures on pupils. The Brilliant Tutoring Programme aims to enable pupils to access a future they deserve by re-engaging them and rebuilding their confidence, delivered by a subject expert.

Places for this opportunity are limited at present and spaces for the first phase of this intervention have already been allocated. Please check for correspondence regarding this as there are a few parental consent forms outstanding.

Mr R Cabarcas-Barros

Parent Survey Feedback

Thank you to all parents who were able to complete our Parent Survey and provide us with valuable feedback on your experience of the school.

I would like to share with you some key headlines in the feedback and also give some responses to some of the comments made.

350 parents of pupils in Years 7-11 completed the questionnaire and were asked to respond to each statement with strongly agree/agree/disagree/strongly disagree/not sure.

Question	% Strongly agree/Agree
My child feels happy at school	95%
The school has high aspirations for my child	85%
My child does well at Beechen Cliff	89%
There is a good range of subjects available	95%
The staff are friendly and approachable	94%
My child is well cared for	91%
The school has helped me support my child's learning	84%
The school has a clear vision for its pupils	95%
The school promotes and supports good mental wellbeing	90%
My child has engaged well with the remote learning provision	87%
Following the normal school timetable (which learning remotely) has been helpful	92%
I would recommend Beechen Cliff to another parent	91%

This does not cover all the questions asked but does highlight some of the feedback provided. Overall the feedback was very positive but it has highlighted a few things we would like to address. As we constantly seek to improve what we do, parent feedback is really helpful.

In regards to some of the answers given and comments made I hope the following information will be helpful.

The curriculum on the school website

On the faculty pages of the school website the curriculum for each subject is available for KS3, KS4 and KS5. This aims to provide pupils and parents with an indication of the topics that will be covered in each subject in each year.

There are separate documents available for each subject at KS3 (Years 7-9), KS4 (Years 10-11) and KS5 (Sixth Form). The faculties page can be accessed via the link below.

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/curriculum-assessment/faculties/>

The structure of the school day

The school day structure was adjusted in September to help us maintain year group bubbles in school. During this lockdown period the timetable remains unchanged to ensure continuity for pupils and to allow us to maintain year group bubbles for pupils attending school.

The timings on the school day are available on the school website and via the link below.

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Temporary-School-Day-Structure-2020-21.pdf>

During the lockdown period the school day finishes at 3.10pm after period 5, although some pupils may be invited to additional remote sessions after school time.

Supporting your child with remote learning

We understand that supporting remote learning can be a real challenge and in particular ensuring engagement and managing workload.

Following the school timetable and submitting work at the end of each lesson can really help with this. In addition, following the recommended amount of time for each subject helps manage workload.

To try and support parents and pupils with remote learning we have collaborated with Hayesfield and St Marks to produce some guidance videos. You will have received a letter about this from the Headmaster earlier in the week. Information about these videos can be accessed from the school website or via the link below:-

<https://www.beechencliff.org.uk/remote-learning-support/>

Types of remote lessons

Pupils and students from all year groups will be benefiting from live lessons and assignments/pre-recorded videos set on Google Classroom. We are aware that some parents would like every lesson to be taught live and some parents would like less live lessons due to the intensity of back-to-back live lessons.

As it stands the expectation is that all Year 11/U6th lessons are live and for other year groups at least every other lesson in each subject is live with appropriate assignments set for other lessons. Feedback from pupils through interviews and focus groups that we have run have suggested that this balance is working well and that whilst they really enjoy the interactivity of live lessons, they also like the mixture. Of course we will continue to monitor this and adapt accordingly.

We are encouraging pupils to turn their cameras on when participating in live lessons wherever possible to improve the interactivity and benefit as much as possible from the lessons.

A more detailed summary of our remote learning provision is available on the school website.

Coping with too much screen time

We understand that with a full timetable of remote learning pupils will be spending a lot of time each day looking at a screen. To help combat this we have asked teachers to run live lessons for up to 50 minutes only to facilitate a longer break between lessons.

In addition we encourage pupils to their break times and lunch times away from their screens and to get as much fresh air and exercise as possible.

Homework

During the lockdown we have moved the setting of all work onto Google Classroom, including homework. Due to the demands of remote learning we are asking KS3 homework to be set as an optional extra or for it to be completing classwork rather than an additional task.

At KS4 and KS5 homework will continue to be set as usual.

The exception to this will be the last week of this term where we will be running a revision week with Year 7. More details on this will be provided by Ms Sullivan in due course.

Virtual Parents Evenings/Progress Reports

Virtual Parents' Evenings have taken place for 5 year groups so far this academic year. The evenings for Year 7 and Year 8 parents will take place after half term and more details will be provided in due course.

We will continue with our usual reporting cycle even during periods of remote learning. Parents will be contacted via email when Progress Reports are available to view on INSIGHT.

Parental Contact

Where parents have requested we contact them we will do so as soon as possible. In addition we will follow up with parents of pupils who are struggling to engage with remote learning to offer support.

Once again, many thanks to all parents who were able to provide feedback.

Mr T D Markall

Deputy Head (Curriculum)

REPORTING PUPIL ABSENCES

It is important that **all absences** from School, including late arrivals and medical appointments should be reported to School promptly. **Please can parents and carers take note of the following correct contact details.**

Lower School Pupils

To report a Lower School absence please call the Attendance Office direct on **01225 485222**, or you can email attendance@beechencliff.org.uk

Sixth Form Students

For a Sixth Form student absence please contact Mrs Jones on **01225 485221** or you can email

sixthattendance@beechencliff.org.uk

Beechen Cliff Sixth Form's Walk Around the World Challenge

Published alongside this weeks newsletter you can find the full size poster promoting our Sixth Form Walk around the World Challenge.

Harry S in our Upper Sixth spoke about this challenge on BBC Radio Somerset on Sunday 24th January.

You can listen to the breakfast radio show in which Harry speaks (at 9.37am) at the BBC link below.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p093vsx5>

Mrs M Georgiadi

Sixth Form Team Administrator

Beechen Cliff's Walk Around The World

If you fancy a challenge at home then this is an amazing challenge to stay active and mentally healthy, whilst having some friendly competition with your peers.

Starting: Friday 22nd January
Target Date: Sunday 4th April

Step One: Follow the link in the bio, description, or alternatively you can search for the club on Strava (search for Beechen Cliff's Walk Around The World)

Step Two: Create or login to a Strava account

Step Three: Request to join the club and admin will accept you as soon as possible

Step Four: Log your Runs, Walks or cycle rides on Strava

Walk, Run or cycle to help reach our goal of walking the circumference of the world (40,000km). If 400 sixth formers attempted this challenge, then on average, one person will walk, cycle or run 100km. This will be a great challenge for you to do in your spare time at home and will keep you active whilst competing with friends in these challenging times. Good Luck! Up the beech!!

T&L Update from Ms Sullivan

Dear All,

Thank you once again for your continued support as our school community continues to respond to the challenges of remote learning and school closure. We have carried out pupil focus groups with pupils from all year groups over the past few weeks, as well as interviewing many of the pupils who are in school. We have been pleased to hear that the pupils are happy with the work and support being provided for them, and most importantly that they all feel they are continuing to learn and make progress in spite of the current situation. This is in no small part down to the successful partnership we have with you, our pupils' parents, and we are grateful for how everyone has risen to the challenge and embraced home schooling.

There are a few things I would like to provide an update on, following my last T&L update a fortnight ago:

- We are continuing to encourage pupils to turn their cameras on during live lessons, so that they can get the most out of them and fully engage with their teacher and classmates. Please could you continue to encourage this at home. Pupils can change their background to something neutral if they feel uncomfortable with others seeing into their home. Please could I ask that if they do this, they select a static background, so that their background does not distract other pupils

- A reminder that pupils should follow their timetable and submit work completed on the Google Classroom at the end of each lesson. We have now asked teachers to end live lessons 10 minutes early to allow students to submit their work and have a break from their screen before their next lesson. Teachers will be available to respond to queries from pupils during their timetabled lessons. We encourage pupils to use the comment function on Google Classroom or their school email to ask their teachers questions when they need to, but please be aware that these may not be followed up until their next lesson with that class.

- This week, teaching staff have completed an engagement report for all pupils. This is for internal use only, to help us target support where it is needed, but it is worth discussing this with your son or daughter, so that they are aware that their work is being looked at and their teachers are keeping an eye on their progress and effort.

- We are aware that many pupils are using instant messaging platforms such as Discord to talk to their friends during the school day. In many ways, this is a good thing and can help pupils to feel connected during this lockdown period. If your child has been using this method to complete set work with friends from the same class, this is a good way of approaching home learning and is to be encouraged. However, please can we ask you to keep an eye on your child's use of these platforms, particularly during live lessons when they should be listening to and interacting with their teacher and the rest of the class via Google Meet.

With very best wishes,

Ms S Sullivan
Assistant Head—Teaching and Learning

Using Xbox or Playstation to Access Google Classroom



Xbox

1. Plug a keyboard into the Xbox USB slot
2. Go into my games and apps
3. Find Microsoft Edge and select
4. Type in your web address so that you can access the school website
5. Find the RM Unify link and select it
6. Login to RM Unify as you would on any other computer
7. You should now be able to access all of your Google related work including Google Classroom
8. To move around you will need to use the Xbox control or plug in a mouse.



PlayStation

1. Identify the PlayStation internet browser icon (it is WWW with lots of dots around it)
2. Press the PlayStation logo on the controller
3. Go to the library and find options for games and applications
4. Go into applications and you will find the Internet browser
5. Type in your web address so that you can access the school website
6. Find the RM Unify link and select it
7. Login to RM Unify as you would on any other computer
8. You should now be able to access all of your Google related work including Google Classroom



MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

DAY - TIME TO REFLECT



As we approach the end of our first month in this period of lockdown, today we are holding our first Mental Wellbeing Day, on Thursday 28th January, for all pupils, students and staff. We wanted to support the wellbeing of pupils, students and staff (and perhaps parents as well) by pausing online teaching for half a day. We invited everyone to spend time on, and then reflect on, activities that have been helping us cope during lockdown. You may well recognise this as drawing on a Solution Focused approach, which invites us to reflect on what is working, to build on our own strengths and recognise ourselves as experts in our own lives.

In tutor time, all pupils and students were invited to reflect on their strengths and resources and what they have noticed has helped them get through the challenging times of lockdown. As parents/carers, we wanted to share with you what your son(s)/daughter(s) were asked as part of this reflection session as part of our continued Solution Focused approach across the whole school community. We invite you to have a conversation with your family using the same questions and to learn what your child/children have been pleased to notice about themselves. It is an interesting exercise for us all to do, as parents/carers, too. Tara Gretton, our school Solution Focused Practitioner produced this helpful script for staff (and parents) to use in the reflective sessions and conversations.

SF Conversation Guidance and Questions

- At difficult times we are often understandably consumed by the problem, and this can make it difficult to notice what we are doing to cope and manage.
- When we invite ourselves to focus on what is working and what we are doing well, no matter how small, it can bring about a sense of hope and therefore possibility.
- We would like you to invite the students to notice their strengths, resources and capabilities during this lockdown, no matter how small. We would invite you to do the same for yourself.
- Sometimes this can be a difficult question to answer; we would invite you to trust in the process, giving the students and yourselves time to think and formulate responses. We should emphasise how small it can be and maybe give our own examples.
- It is often so tempting to give advice in these situations; we would invite you to resist this and believe that in the process we are encouraging students and ourselves to be agents of our own change. By doing this, we are enabling ourselves to have coping mechanisms to hand not only for now, but for the future.

If we notice the strengths and capabilities we have to cope with adversity and uncertainty then we will be able to cope with further challenges in our lives!

Questions you could ask –

1. What have you noticed during this lockdown so far that you are pleased to notice about yourself?
2. What are you doing to get through?
3. What have you noticed about yourself that is useful to notice during this lockdown?

Follow up Questions –

4. What is it about you that enables you to do these things?
5. What difference are they making to you?

A further opportunity for all Parents and Carers in January 2021.

If you would like to learn more about the **Solution Focused approach** to have positive conversations with your family, then please join the many parents who have already signed up for our second Beechen Cliff Parent Solution Focused 'Time to Talk' coffee morning **this Saturday 30th January** . We look forward to welcoming you all. It's not too late to sign up.

A further opportunity for all Parents and Carers
30th January 2021
'Time to Talk'. 10am – 11.30am

Grab a coffee and join us in this online Open Space especially for Beechen Cliff Parents and Carers – Learn about our Whole School Solution Focused approach.

During the 'Time to Talk' webinar, we would like to share more information about the Solution Focused Approach. As well, we would like to give you all time in break out rooms to talk about your recent experiences of parenting and what your hopes are for the future.

If you would like to have an e-Ticket for this event, please can you sign up using the attached Eventbrite link.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/x/beecheen-cliff-school-parent-coffee-morning-time-to-talk-tickets-135983302719>

We will email you all the Zoom link a few days before the event. We are really looking forward to seeing you all there.

The Mental Health Team