

23 April 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

I hope that you are all staying safe and well as families, although I appreciate the serious challenges that school closures are presenting. I wanted to update you on our continuity of learning plan, GCSE and A level qualifications and next steps for our current Year 11 students.

I am being kept up to date with Welsh government guidance around schools reopening and at this stage there are no timescales or processes in place. The education minister, Kirsty Williams has stated this week that:

'This will only happen when the scientific advice says it is safe to do so but, even then, we cannot assume that it will be an immediate return to business as usual. This means our remote learning support is likely to have a role to play alongside provision in schools. We also need to consider how to support schools in helping children re-integrate into the school setting when that time comes and determining what the focus of learning should be.'

We continue to work with the advice and guidance from the Welsh government and the Local Authority whilst making sure any return to school is managed with the best interest of our students at Ysgol John Bright. We anticipate a significant lead time to help us manage learners' transition back into school, when it is safe to do so and, as always, I will keep you up to date with developments.

Continuity of Learning Planning

Starting from Monday 27th April, we're introducing a new learning plan, to help support our students with their learning and to make things simpler and more straightforward for you at home.

Students will no longer follow their usual timetable of lessons but instead will follow the new learning plan. The learning plan focuses on two daily tasks from English, Maths or Science, along with a subject from the wider curriculum. Keeping safe and well is the key priority for us all at the moment and so each day there is also a PE and a wellbeing activity to support that.

For those students who wish to go the extra mile in a particular subject area, there is also a fortnightly set of enrichment tasks for each subject which can be found on that subject's Google classroom. These tasks are entirely voluntary but will help enhance the understanding of the subject. The directors of learning for each year group have also added some additional tasks specific to the year group which students can choose to do if they wish - we 're calling these the 'DoL Electives' and details of how to complete them will be found on the year group's Google Classroom.

Each week the grid of the week's activities will be published on the school website and on the year group's Google Classroom. The learning grid gives a very brief description of what each subject is focussing on, whereas the detailed instructions for completing the work will be found on the relevant Google Classroom.

Y12 students will be working on bridging materials between the Y12 and Y13 courses; these will be accessed through their subject Google Classrooms. The nature of the work will vary from subject by subject. All Y12 should be using this time to consolidate the skills they've already learned as well as preparing for the work they will be doing in Y13.

We hope that you will find this new approach helpful and we appreciate any feedback as your children work through the week's programme.

Qualifications Update

When I wrote to you on March 30th, I included the details about how qualifications will be awarded to students in Years 10-13 who are completing qualifications this summer.

At the moment staff at Ysgol John Bright (as in all other schools/centres across the UK) are looking at the evidence we hold of a student's performance in each subject. This evidence differs from subject to subject, and is based on work completed up until school closed in March. Having considered a range of evidence the school makes a professional judgement about the grade the student would have most likely achieved this summer had the school remained open and all coursework completed and exams sat in the usual way. This process is strictly confidential within the school.

After significant scrutiny at school level, the grades are presented to the exam board (in late May). The exam board then considers the grades submitted for each subject from every school/centre and applies a statistical model to the centre assessed grades; this may change the grades submitted by the school. Qualifications Wales (the regulator of qualifications in Wales) are due to publish a consultation regarding the statistical model to be used in awarding grades this summer in the coming days.

I realise that these are worrying times for students and families with the uncertainty surrounding qualifications. I can only reassure you that we are doing our utmost as a school to ensure all of our students are awarded the grades they are capable of and deserve this summer.

Year 11 next steps

We want to make sure that all our Year 11 students are prepared for their 'next steps' for September and I know that some certainty around this process is important to both parents and learners.

Many of our young people in Year 11 have indicated their wish to return to sixth form in September and we are currently working through these applications. While we are still working through this process as a school I want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to ensure that students are placed on the most appropriate courses. Year 11 students who have applied for a place in the sixth form will be receiving a letter by **Monday 4th May** with more information about their place and the suitability of their chosen courses.

In addition, from Monday 4th May, we will be publishing a booklet for each sixth form subject that contains detailed information and additional research tasks about the courses that students want to pursue in

September. This will give all our Year 11 students who wish to return to John Bright something to prepare towards their chosen courses during school closure and provide them with a more detailed idea about the subjects they wish to study.

We will continue to support our students who are looking to go to college or follow a different route in education or work from September. We will be contacting all of our students who are not returning to sixth form to ensure they have the guidance and support available with college applications or other routes into employment or learning.

Free School Meals

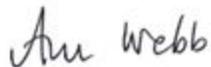
The Local Authority will be in touch with all families eligible for free school meals so that direct payments of £3.90 per child can be made. This will then mean that you will no longer need to collect meals from school. Please be aware that you will not be asked to provide any personal bank details over the phone, the Local Authority will be providing you with a form to provide your bank details to allow this payment to happen.

I am in regular contact with all staff at the school, mainly through google 'hangouts' and our daily on site provision. I know that they are all missing our young people, but appreciate your support with your children's home learning. I know that at times supporting home learning will not be straightforward as many of you have considerable additional responsibilities layered on top. Adolescents can also find themselves easily distracted! You all will have very different family circumstances and challenges but we are all part of a community that needs to stay safe and well, most importantly.

Finally, I have also attached a copy of our newsletter which we had intended to go out before Easter. It reminds us of school life before 'lockdown' and allows us to celebrate our highly talented young people. We are very proud of them! I hope you enjoy it.

Please keep your eye on the website and facebook so that you can follow developments or relevant links and as always email us through general@johnbright.uk if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully



Ann Webb
Headteacher