

5 May 2020

Dear Parents/ Carers

We keep hearing about the 'new normal' and how we are all adjusting to the new rhythms and routines of our lives. The everyday challenges that these changes present will be different for all of you but I sincerely hope that you have been able to settle into some form of routines that works for you, most of the time.

I want to thank you for your feedback on the new learning grids sent out last week. The intention was to support you more effectively with home learning making it more meaningful and manageable. I'm sure you are all doing your very best to support your children at home but please, don't fall out about it. If you need support from your child's teacher then please contact them through google classroom. Sometimes there will be days when it becomes too difficult for everyone. Self motivation for young people can be quite a challenge under normal circumstances and these are extraordinary times. We are all trying to do our best and we continue to thank you for your support.

The issue of when schools are to reopen has again been at the forefront with the media this weekend. There is still a lot of speculation and Kirsty Williams, Welsh Education Minister, has offered some reassurance. In her latest communication at the weekend she stated that *'...there are key principles for my decision on the next phase for schools. These include the confidence of parents, teachers and pupils, and sufficient time to plan ahead. Most importantly, the safety of pupils, staff and teachers will guide our planning.'* We await a decision from the Welsh government as to when schools can reopen and whether this is going to be a staged approach for different year groups. As always, I will keep you updated and provide you with detailed guidance when we have that information. I am sure that many of you are finding the constant speculation very unhelpful and we will certainly do our best to support our community when that time comes.

I hope that all of our Year 11 students have received either a letter of offer for the school's Sixth Form or a conversation about applications to college. Please contact Miss Stafford or Mr Ben Williams if you haven't received any communication. I want to provide a bit more information for both Year 11 and Year 12 students.

Year 11 into 12 Transition Subject Booklets

We will be publishing a series of booklets especially for our current year 11 students who are coming back to study in the sixth form from September. Each booklet has been put together by the teachers who lead each subject and contain more information about each course. We know how much our year 11 students have been left frustrated by the cancellation of their exams so we wanted to give them the opportunity to prepare for their chosen courses and have included a set of bridging activities in each booklet that students can get stuck into now and over the next few weeks while the school is closed.

Year 12 Work

It is really important that our Year 12 learners continue to be engaged and we have provided them with suitable and challenging tasks to complete during this time. Each subject has put together a summary of work, shared through google classroom, for students in Year 12. Should students have any issues with the work then I encourage them to contact their teacher through the 'classroom'. If there are broader issues with accessing the work then please contact Mr Williams, b.williams@johnbright.uk, as Head of Sixth Form.

School Gateway App

From time to time, we send information to parents via text message to your mobile phone. A new, free, smartphone app for parents is now available for download called 'School Gateway' for Apple (iOS 8 on the iPhone 4S or later, iPad, iPod Touch) and Android (4.0 / Ice Cream Sandwich or later) devices. If you could take a moment to download this new app to your phone (it's free) as it will help us improve communication with parents – and save the school money! The set-up process is simple and will take no more than a couple of minutes.

Finally, Friday is a bank holiday and a day of national celebration so please take some time away from home learning and use the opportunity to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. There are some great opportunities to enjoy the day with a socially distanced 'Stay at Home' celebration.

I hope you all continue to stay safe and keep well.

Yours faithfully

Ann Webb
Headteacher