

11th February 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

As we progress through these ever-changing times, I would like to thank you for your continued support. The schools in the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust have been working closely throughout this lockdown period and continue to plan together to meet the challenge of ensuring pupils continue to make progress in their learning.

With your support, we are confident that our robust and blended approach to remote teaching and learning will help ensure pupils continue to make progress in all subject areas while minimising the adverse academic effect of the current lockdown.

Following the latest announcements from the Government, we will continue to remain closed, except for the children of key workers and vulnerable children, until at least the 8th March though dates remain subject to change. Any changes will, of course, be communicated to parents and carers if, and when, necessary.

We remain grateful for your continued partnership work with school to support your child's education during the latest lockdown and appreciate all your efforts in terms of encouraging pupils to stay focussed and engaged in their studies.

Our focus on providing the best possible academic offer for your child remains a priority, but I also wanted to reiterate to parents and carers our continued commitment to providing a comprehensive social, emotional and spiritual care and support offer for your child when they return to school post lockdown.

Finally, please find some helpful reminders and updates below, and can I take this opportunity to thank you once again for your continued support.

Stay safe and God bless.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs M Wilkinson
Headteacher

Half Term 3 Reports

I would like to commend the hard work that all our pupils are putting in whilst working from home. The standard of work produced by many pupils has been very high. This half term a report will be sent home to keep you informed of how well your child has engaged with the online learning and the quality of work that they have produced in each subject. Furthermore, to recognise the achievements of our pupils, each week teachers will be putting forward the names of two pupils in every class who have produced excellent work. We will celebrate their achievements by sharing a praise postcard through Teams and on our social media platform.

Year 11 Examinations

I appreciate that this is a challenging time for pupils in year 11 who were due to sit external examinations in the summer and who may feel uncertain about how their grades will be awarded this year. OfQual has been consulting schools and the public about the best ways to assess pupils and have received over 90,000 responses. You can read OfQual's proposals on their website and I will keep you informed as soon as any further announcements are made. Whilst we await the publication of the findings from the consultation I would like to reassure pupils that teachers will be assessing pupils on the work that has been covered and will likely be able to use a range of evidence such as controlled assessment, assignment work, mock examination results and a final assessment at the end of the year. It is very important that pupils keep up to date with their work to ensure that they are well prepared for the final assessments and for the next stages in their education and employment.

Year 9 Options

Pupils in year nine would normally be pressing ahead this half term with choosing which courses they will study at Key Stage 4. This is a very exciting and important time for pupils. Ideally, we would like to wait for pupils to return to school to support them with choosing their options. However, if this is not possible before Easter the school will host a series of online events to ensure that pupils and parents are well informed about the options process, the choices that pupils have and the possible routes into careers and further education. I will write to all parents in Year 9 next half term regarding the arrangements for choosing courses at Key Stage 4 once there is further guidance on the reopening of schools.

Free School Meals

Stockton Local Authority have agreed to fund Free School Meal vouchers during the February half term holiday. These will operate on the same basis as the winter grant scheme vouchers and be supplied by Wonde.

Applying for Free School Meals

If your circumstance have changed in COVID-19 your child may now be eligible for free school meals.

From 1 April 2018 the Government introduced new regulations for people claiming free schools meals who receive Universal Credit. The change means that if you're net annual earnings are more than £7,400 you will not be eligible to claim free school meals.

View the free school meals qualifying criteria.

If your child is eligible/not eligible you will receive an instant notification informing you of the decision. For eligible cases free school meals will be awarded from the day following receipt of your application.

Please use the link below to make an application:

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/our-people/coronavirus-covid-19-schools-and-childcare/information-about-free-school-meals-and-the-winter-grant-scheme/>

Well-being: Children's Mental Health Week 2021

Last week we raised awareness of the Place2Be's Children's Mental Health Week. This year's theme was Express Yourself. Place2Be has created activities and resources to help children (and adults) to explore the different ways that they can share their thoughts, feelings and ideas.

There are lots of resources on the Children's Mental Health Week website that you can use with your child at home; including activity ideas, tips for parents and carers. Visit childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk to find out more.

As a school we also have a well-being area on our school website for parents and pupils which offers guidance across a wide range of topics.

SEN Support Resources for Over Lockdown

The SEN team have been working on find useful links around a wide range of SEN needs to support parents and carers during lockdown and with remote learning. This can be found on the SEND section of our school webpage.

Big Project

We have received the great news that both of our Year 8 Big Project (Tees Valley wide Careers and Enterprise competition focusing on David Attenborough's 5 Earthshot Prizes) teams have successfully made it through to the second round of the competition. Both teams have worked incredibly hard together with Mr York, Mr Horner and two business mentors from AECOM to produce presentations for the first round which was judged by a panel of business experts. This involved a series of virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams and the pupils working together (without face to face contact) to produce their presentations.

The teams now need to further develop their ideas and produce another presentation for the 29th March 2021.

Lateral Flow Testing

A reminder to all parents/carers who have not yet completed the consent form for their child to partake in the lateral flow testing. The consent document will need to be completed confirming whether you consent or not to your child participating in the testing.

Timing of the school day: Tuesday

Next half term we will be looking to return to our usual times of the school day on a Tuesday. Remote learning will begin on the following times on a Tuesday:

Lesson 1: 8.35-9.30

Lesson 2: 9.45- 10.40

Lesson 3: 10.40-11.35

Lesson 4: 12.30-13.25

Lesson 5: 13.25-14.20

Celebration of Pupil's Work

During this difficult time, we have been extremely impressed with the hard work, resilience, and engagement of our pupils.

To celebrate this fantastic work, staff have chosen two pupils per class to send a 'praise postcard'. These 'praise postcards' have been sent to pupils via Teams and have been added to our school Facebook page.