

The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School

Known Nurtured Inspired

Headteacher: Ian Wilson BA PGCE MA NPQH



Dear parents/carers,

Well, after what may have been the longest half-term anyone can remember experiencing, it is a pleasure to be able to reflect on February so far and look forward to March. Everyone connected to our school community continues to thank and applaud parents and teachers (many of whom are parents themselves) for all they are doing to provide the best education for children at Bishops' – to enable them to flourish together, despite all the challenges and restrictions. There are glimmers of hope appearing; some on a national scale such as the hundreds of thousands of vaccinations daily and then some much simpler such as the lighter mornings and spring bulbs, which seemed to just lift us a little.

National restrictions continue during half term and schools have been asked to share the following;

- there are strategies that household members can adopt to prevent Covid transmission. This link advises how to minimise the risk to others in your home <https://www.germdefence.org/index.html>
- Cheshire West and Chester council has pulled together a list of support available to families over the half term break, including information on community food support and financial help through the Winter Grant scheme, www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/halftermsupport
- In addition to this The Wellcome Network have funded a number of organisations to provide community food and activity support. More information can be found on their website: <http://www.welcomenet.co.uk/get-support.html>
- Online classroom [Oak National Academy](https://www.oak.academy/) is now data free on mobile. All major mobile networks have made the site “zero-rated”, meaning any family can access its lessons without any data charges or using any data limits, when accessed on a mobile. Oak passed the milestone of 100 million lessons delivered since the start of the pandemic. The [full list of mobile networks is here](#).
- Online support service for young people to support wellbeing. Opportunities for 11-18 year olds to talk online to a trained counsellor to support their mental health. <https://www.kooth.com/>

Flourishing children will develop because of flourishing adults and flourishing adults rarely flourish alone. Flourishing is not a synonym for everything going perfectly, and few of us will have been relentlessly positive throughout the half-term but being part of the Bishops' community certainly helps. Our academic remote learning has been accompanied by assemblies and positive messages, my personal favourite being - [The Bishops' Blue Coat High School - Count on me \(Music by Bruno Mars\)](#)



Nationally there have been concerns for children's [health](#) as screen times increase for education, video and [games](#). The Nurture Day on the 9th February was an excellent opportunity to be away from a screen and celebrate learning in the widest sense with poetry, baking and Lego all part of remote and in school activities - [Nurture Day 2021 parent carer.pptx](#) Bishops' mixed approach of independent work, feedback and in-lesson questioning has been well received by learners. Nearly 400 students replied to a recent questionnaire and these results from our Year 9 were rewarding to read:

84% having time to complete work, 89% of students feel there are a variety of activities across subjects, 96% reporting extension tasks and 96% feel that the comments received from teachers help them know how to improve.

However, I am very aware that children of different ages have different preferences for the format of learning. 43% of Year 9 would like to continue the current format of remote learning, 25% would prefer all lessons to be via video and 32% liked the current arrangements but would like some video lessons. Two 'V's stand out – variety and video – and you will have received this [Remote Learning Updates PowerPoint](#) explaining further developments in our approach from the 22nd February. Information for our youngest learners who have not used MS Teams before will be emailed in the coming days. All year groups will be ready for their Tutor Time on the 22nd at 8.45am.

As we look forward to March we have confidence in our safety first approach with adults and students. There have been low instances of illness among our 140 employees, but we have had the occasional community transmission case and Covid has proved to be quite debilitating. As you know we are operating at full capacity with every teacher teaching, Key Worker & Vulnerable groups on site and testing twice weekly for employees using further staff and an impressive number of volunteers. This means that unlike normal circumstances, when a member of staff is too unwell to teach, we will be unable to provide live lessons or Satchel comment responses in that instance. It is important that students continue to follow their timetable, engaging with lessons at the same time and order they would if they were in school.

Also this March, Bishops' board of trustees has a vacancy for a new governor, ideally with experience in education and strategic governance. In terms of the practicalities, the new governor will be officially appointed by the Chester Blue Coat CofE Educational Foundation, and therefore should be a practising Christian. If you would like further details, please contact school FAO the Clerk to Governors.

Finally, and not for the first time, we await an impending announcement from the Government aimed at providing clarity over the way forward for schools. This includes not just reopening, but also exams and the longer-term catch-up strategy.

Needless to say, I will update you as soon as I can during the week of the 22nd February. Our examination groups might find this [video](#) from OCR reassuring and to return to this poem from my assembly by Amanda Gorman, 'The Miracle of Morning.'

"We'll observe how the burden braved by humankind
Are also the moments that make us humans kind;
Let every dawn find us courageous, brought closer;
Heeding the light before the fight is over.
When this ends, we'll smile sweetly, finally seeing
In testing times, we became the best of beings."



As hard as these weeks are, I see everyone in education being the best of themselves. As always, we will approach the many challenges of these times with kindness and compassion. It is our connection to each other and our deep sense of principle that will prevail. We will get through this together.

Thank you for all you continue to do.

Handwritten signature of Ian Wilson.

Ian Wilson,
Headteacher.