

Coronavirus update – 07/05/2020

Dear Parents and Carers

I am writing to you today ahead of the long bank holiday weekend which recognises the 75 years that have passed since VE day. In light of this extraordinary milestone in our Nation's history, and in the history of our College, and recognising the degree of synergy that it presents with our current situation, I am delighted to alert you to a special broadcast which can be found [HERE](#). I am particularly grateful to our College Chaplain, whose sage words will, I know, be a comfort to the children; do please enjoy listening to it.

Of course, we all await with some anticipation the announcement from the Prime Minister this Sunday and what the 'exit strategy' means for schools. As I have mentioned to you previously, we have already begun planning for a return. We want to be able to give you as much reassurance as possible that, as a school community, we are particularly well-positioned to operate safely and to handle the on-going threats of the disease proactively and decisively, such that you feel comfortable returning your children to school just as soon as we are allowed to do so.

There has been much ongoing work this week across all areas of the College's operation. In particular, Miss Whitwood has worked hard thinking through the implications of Junior School – Senior School transition, in light of the current circumstances, and Year 5 families will be receiving a letter relating to this before the weekend. Mr Johnson and the academic team have started the significant piece of work that is required to establish grade profiles for Years 11 and 13. They have also had to consider our position in relation to end-of-year examinations, which I detail below. Mrs McLellan has been digesting the results of the recent pupil survey on wellbeing, and is now enacting a plan for how we can respond to this and offer the very best care that is within our ability to give, supporting all our pupils through this very challenging time. Mrs Wilkins continues to offer every possible support to families facing financial challenge, as well as maintaining progress with our building developments. I am most grateful to all the staff at St Dunstan's for working so hard to maintain momentum and to deliver exceptional lessons and resources during this period of remote learning, and for their support for the whole community across this period.

I am aware that there is currently some anxiety regarding our position on end-of-year exams. We believe wholeheartedly that end-of-year exams are helpful: they allow pupils to know where they are in their studies and their rates of progress across the year, as well as being a good practice for more formal exams that will inevitably come their way in the future. They are helpful for us, as educators, so that we can consider ways in which we might offer pupils greater support or challenge in specific subjects, and to ascertain whether or not pupils are fulfilling their potential. This being said, current circumstances dictate that it is not possible for us to confirm whether internal exams will be happening this term or not. If they cannot

happen, either because we are not allowed to return to school in a way that permits them, or because there is insufficient time for pupils to be adequately prepared to take them, we will consider rescheduling these exams next term. If we are able to enact these exams this term, we will make sure that all pupils have at least two weeks' notice to undertake full and meaningful programmes of final revision. I can say that they categorically will not be occurring as originally scheduled immediately after the Exeat. Revision of material by way of an ongoing process is of course to be applauded. This is particularly the case for Years 10 and 12, where pupils should be seeking to regularly consolidate their understanding of subject material across the course of the year; I would actively encourage these pupils to do this if this is not currently happening and in advance of any formal two-week notification period. Revision for these year groups should be proactive, ongoing, and in anticipation of formal testing.

I thought I might end with some highlights of the week.

The launch of the 'Screen Free Fitness Project' has been a great success, with pupils, staff and even parents taking on the 'Two Point Six Challenge' and then 'Run 5, Donate 5, Nominate 5'! We have been delighted to see so many members of the community staying physically active and raising money for worthy causes in the process.

Many senior school pupils have been embracing themed weekly challenges, with 'texture' being the challenge for the first week. Well done to all of those pupils who submitted their own interpretations on that theme. Miss Partridge has also been able to present senior artists with an opportunity to work with a high-profile branding agency. Each year, Unilever partner with Tesco and a charity called the Trussell Trust to raise awareness and money to fight food poverty in the UK. Our pupils will work in teams to restyle the packaging designs of Pot Noodle or Hellmann's mayonnaise, trying to bring more emotion to their campaigns and packaging. Good luck to all those involved in that project!

Our Head of Adventurous Activity, Mr Telford, has been posting his Survival Series educational videos on the College YouTube channel! Having already mastered tying knots and building a shelter, next week you can tune-in and learn to navigate using the sun and everyday items that you might come across in your garden.

Lastly, who would not want to celebrate the impressive talents of our Junior School pupils, who treated us this week to a hugely enjoyable Instrumental Concert starring students from Years 3 and 5. EYFS pupils worked on their own Matisse-inspired creations; KS1 have been sharing achievements that make them proud (from works of art, paper aeroplanes, homemade musical instruments and boat creations, to Mr Chambers' home-grown globe artichoke), and KS2 have stuck to a green theme, including some very entertaining David Attenborough-style garden documentaries, complete with camouflage clothing and face paint to get intimate with garden birds and wildlife.

There is so much to celebrate and to be thankful for. I hope you all have a very good long weekend and I look forward to updating you on matters following government

announcements this weekend in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N P Hewlett', written in a cursive style.

Mr N P Hewlett
Headmaster