



Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

15 May 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Pupils,

As we are now four weeks into what would normally have been our summer term, we have been reflecting upon all that has happened since our school was 're-purposed' for emergency childcare.

Our community is working hard in its contribution to the national response: in addition to providing emergency childcare each day for the children of NHS staff and key workers, our staff support home learning activities each day, endeavouring to create engaging and imaginative challenges and to continue learning activity for all pupils, despite the temporary closure of formal education. They are also currently working extremely hard to liaise with examinations bodies in evaluating and evidencing pupil performance to reach centre-assessed grades for consideration by awarding bodies. Our pupils would have sat thousands of papers this summer and we are committed to doing everything we possibly can to ensure that they receive fair grades in August. As you can imagine, the volume of work involved in this is very significant as it must be firmly evidence-based, but teachers are working tirelessly to collate all available evidence as part of this process.

It is vitally important that no pupil who is eligible for free school meals whilst school is open misses out on this entitlement because of this unforeseen closure period. To that end, Welsh Government and the Local Authority have put in place provision that was initially in the form of daily 'grab and go' bags; this provision was refined to reduce the need to travel each day and is currently in the form of weekly food parcels. While families will soon have the option of choosing between these and a BACS transfer payment for their value, at present all eligible families are offered parcels.

Each Monday morning, therefore, our dedicated teams of volunteer staff arrive at the school – in a separate area to that being utilised for childcare – to collect the hundreds of food parcels that the catering team have been working to put together throughout the morning. Whilst some of these are collected by eligible families, most are collected by the volunteers who each have a route allocated allowing them to get the parcels to families across the city and its surrounding areas. Ours not being a community school, but a faith school which draws pupils from a very wide area, these routes are wide ranging, yet a huge number of staff have volunteered for this work to ensure that families receive the support to which they are entitled.

All of us at Bishop Vaughan are very keen indeed to support the medical community. Indeed, we have a particularly high proportion of our pupils' parents working in the health sector and, year-on-year, it is the sector into which the highest proportion of our pupils move following

their school-based and Higher Education studies. It is in fact the most popular career path by a very considerable measure!

Whilst we are proud, even in normal circumstances, to see the contributions that our former pupils are making as paramedics, doctors, anaesthetists, nurses, radiographers, midwives and health visitors, amongst so many more medically-related roles, more than ever we are keen to recognise the enormous contribution that they are making each and every day during this time of global challenge. In addition, we are keen to do all that we can to keep our medical staff safe, given the shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) that exist. To that end, staff in the Technology department have been making use of the 3D printer and laser cutter in producing large quantities of visors and headbands for use by medics locally. This has been delivered by school staff to hospital wards, GPs and pharmacies across the city. The school has also donated all of its Science and Technology eye protection for this purpose, and many of our staff are contributing to the work of those teams of volunteers across the city who are sewing laundry bags and scrubs for use by frontline medical staff and/or delivering it to those who need it.

It has been touching that those staff, amongst many others, have received messages of thanks for this from the medical community, from individuals and families themselves, in addition to letters of thanks from local politicians and those working within the community, who have noted what Bishop Vaughan is doing to support families, the community and the medical profession. In truth, however, it is the families and the healthcare professionals themselves to whom the thanks are owed. We are immensely proud of all our pupils for the resilience and faith with which they have faced these unprecedented challenges and grateful beyond measure to the medical staff who put others before themselves each day in the greatest acts of service imaginable.

With all of the above in mind, we have been considering ways of creating a permanent record of Bishop Vaughan's response to the 2020 pandemic. These include the following:

- We have been particularly impressed by some of the efforts and imagination of our pupils undertaking home learning, with many photos and emails about their creative efforts. We would like to create an anthology later on in the year which will be published in paperback form and made available for parents, pupils and their families. We therefore invite our pupils to consider making a contribution to this. Parents, grandparents and siblings are also welcome to offer material. Ideas might include:
 - artwork contributions
 - poetry
 - prayers
 - reflections in prose
 - journal entries
 - photos
- Any of these could encapsulate –*
- *your feelings at this time,*
 - *your views of/ feelings about the local/ national/ global situation,*
 - *your 'heroes' at this time,*
 - *what your days are like during lockdown*
 - *the people, experiences and things that you miss*
 - *the things for which you are grateful*
 - *what you look forward to*

Contributions for this may be sent to: bishopvaughanH@hwbmail.net

- There are also plans for a dedicated outdoor area that will mark this period of time, provide space for reflection and which can be cultivated in the years ahead. The design for this will be opened up as a competition to all year groups, details for which will follow on our website and social media pages. We look forward to seeing our pupils' designs and to creating the garden together when we return to school once more.
- We would also like to invite all former pupils who have gone on to pursue careers in the medical and care sectors to get in touch with us just to tell us where they are currently working and, if they are happy to do so, to allow us to note their contribution on our BVS/ NHS Heroes tribute by including their name and role within it. Should they be happy for us to do this, details can be sent to bishopvaughanH@hwbmail.net

I am sure that as we all started 2020, we would not have seen some of our most important work as a school community being such as it currently is, and all within a wider context of each of us – pupils, their families, staff and governors - being unable to see colleagues, friends and family for very many weeks in our efforts to keep them safe and halt the spread of a pandemic. I have no doubt, however, that despite the pressures and challenges, the strength of the response from our pupils, their families, our former pupils and our staff will mean that once more our community has united to provide support to others and to draw something positive and meaningful from even the most difficult of times.

With very many thanks for all that you and your families have done and continue to do, whether through your roles as key workers, through supporting your child's home learning or through supporting all of those around you be adhering to the guidance to 'stay home and stay safe'. All of this plays a vital part in halting the spread of the virus, allowing us to all see our families and friends once more and bringing ever nearer the day we will be able to resume something closer to normal life here at Bishop Vaughan. Your contributions to this are appreciated by so very many people and they continue to make evident what makes our community such a very special one of which to be a part.

With our prayers for your continued safety and good health –

Yours faithfully,



Mrs. E. Pole
Headteacher