



BISHOP VAUGHAN

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

25th January 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

I sincerely hope that this letter finds you and your families well during the current time. I am writing to inform you of two key updates. The first of these relates to our remote learning provision and the second to some exciting news regarding an extra-curricular project. These matters were referenced in the year group assemblies of Friday 22nd January. If your son or daughter has not yet viewed the assembly, please encourage that they do so.

1. 'Pause' Lessons

As you are already aware, colleagues across the school are in touch with pupils daily and the views of pupils, parents and carers regarding the school's offer of remote learning are always carefully considered. Following examination of recent feedback and in listening to the issues raised by pupils in the whole school Wellbeing Survey, it has been decided to introduce a 'Pause' lesson to support pupils with the demands of remote learning and also to support learner wellbeing.

The purpose of the 'Pause' lesson time is to allow pupils additional time to:

- a. Catch up on or to consolidate their work (time which would routinely be built into a classroom lesson)
- b. Refine pieces of work in response to having received teacher feedback
- c. Engage in the 'Journeys' extra-curricular theme referenced below should they wish to contribute

Therefore:

- **Every pupil in Year 10 or Year 11 will have one 'Pause lesson' per fortnight allocated by their teacher, for each subject that they study, from tomorrow onwards.**
- **Every Year 7, 8, or 9 pupil in the core subjects will also have a 'Pause' lesson allocated in the same way - one per fortnight for English, mathematics, science, Welsh and RE.**

These lessons will be identified by your son or daughter's class teacher and I would encourage you to support them in noting these on their school timetable. The only exceptions to the 'Pause' lesson for all pupils are for any subject which has two hours' allocated, for example, PE/ Games. There will be no 'Pause' lesson for a subject which only has two hours allocated on timetables.

The decision to introduce the 'Pause' lesson is in response to feedback regarding the volume of work that pupils address in the home environment and some of the pressures that are inextricably linked with this. The overarching aim of the 'Pause' session is to alleviate some of these pressures. The 'Pause' session also recognises the skill and expertise of teachers in a classroom environment and acknowledges that work will take

pupils slightly longer outside of a controlled and structured classroom environment. Therefore, what would have constituted five hours' learning in daily school-based lessons will generally take a pupil longer to complete in the home and indeed across a week the impact of this on pupil wellbeing could be considerable. The 'Pause' lesson also provides a further opportunity for teachers to support their pupils. While no new work will be set and no homework will be allocated during the identified periods in accordance with the fact that these are a consolidation and catch-up opportunity, teaching colleagues have been asked to be available for the identified session across Teams via 'Posts' to answer questions or to provide support where possible.

Importantly, the 'Pause' session has not been introduced for Year 12 and Year 13 learners as these students have free periods and study periods already built into their timetable. Sixth Form learners also have higher levels of academic resilience and a refined ability for independent learning. It is therefore expected that Sixth Form learners use their free time outside of their timetabled hours to catch up, consolidate or to refine their work. However, should you have a particular concern about your son or daughter's Sixth Form study, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the relevant subject teacher.

2. Extra-Curricular Project

As referenced in Friday's assembly, when our teachers and pupils are together in the classroom, staff are able to regulate the pace for all learners in response to what they can see. This is more challenging when teaching on virtual platforms. While, then, the pause lessons described above will be helpful in ensuring that our pupils are not overwhelmed with the volume of work, we have tried to find ways of replicating the optional extension work and extra-curricular activities, including after-school clubs, that are typically provided when we are on-site at school.

We have therefore put together a range of activities and challenges around a common theme, 'Journeys Through the Imagination'. The central activity in this project is a narrated reading of Tolkien's 'The Hobbit,' a novel that appeals to the full age range in our pupil community, one that has captured the imaginations of countless readers and which offers opportunities for numerous linked projects.

The novel will be narrated by different staff from across the school and streamed each Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 5pm. It will be made available via Teams and recordings can also be accessed after the initial streaming.

While teachers and support staff will undertake the majority of the reading, **please encourage your son or daughter to listen in to this evening's streaming for a special introductory message and an initial reading created especially for the school by a celebrity reader!**

In addition to the reading of the novel- which is about an unexpected journey and the adventures that arise from it - departments have created a range of linked activities about which your child can learn more by logging into Teams. These range from Art and Music challenges to Science and D&T projects, as well as non-academic activities like cooking for pleasure.

Staff have also put together a range of 'Lockdown Journeys' films, introducing pupils to some of the world's most incredible destinations: a reminder that these await us when the current restrictions are lifted, and also that – while we are indeed unable to travel physically at present – we can take journeys to countless destinations (and indeed to

different eras, meeting the most interesting characters and experiencing memorable adventures) if we use our imaginations: watching films and documentaries and, in particular, reading to immerse ourselves in stories that will transport us.

We sincerely hope that your child will find the pause lessons supportive and the extra-curricular project – for which all activities are optional – exciting. As mentioned above, **please do listen in to the special recorded message and the opening of Chapter 1 by our celebrity narrator this evening at 5pm.** While we look forward seeing all of our pupils in person again as soon as circumstances permit, in the meantime we look forward to sharing this ‘journey’ with you all.

With very best wishes and prayers for your continued support and good health –

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Pole
Headteacher