

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1

27/3/2020

Dear Parents/Carers

We hope this update finds you and your family well. These are uncertain times and as a school, we are fully aware that many families are feeling anxious. We have a small team of staff on site every weekday, with the rest of the staff working remotely; please remember that we are here to help if you need us. I would like to say a huge thank you to all parents and carers for their amazing resilience over the first week without formal schooling. The new ways we are all having to do things to adapt our lives is challenging, but the feedback we have received from many parents and carers is that we are getting there.

Each week, we will send an update to share the latest information we are getting from the Department for Education about schools, examinations and qualifications. We will also include schoolwork and wellbeing updates with hints and tips for activities to do with your families.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION UPDATE

At present there is no new information, but we expect an announcement next week.

- The Government's priority is now to ensure affected students can move on as planned to the next stage of their lives, including starting college, sixth form or university courses, or an apprenticeship in the autumn. This means ensuring that students achieve a grade that fairly reflects their work and effort over the last few years.
- Ofqual (the governing body who regulates examinations and assessments) will develop and set out a process that will provide a calculated grade for each student that reflects their performance as fairly as possible. Ofqual are working with the exam boards to ensure this is applied consistently across the country, so your child is not disadvantaged in any way.
- The exam boards will be asking class teachers to submit their judgement about the grade to be awarded. Teachers will consider a range of evidence and data collected over the past eighteen months, including performance in assessments, mock exams and non-exam assessment. Please be assured that we have all the evidence that we require in order to supply the exam boards with a grade. Clear guidance to ensure the process is fair and robust will be provided to schools in due course.
- The exam boards will then combine this information with other relevant data, including prior attainment data (SATs results), and use this information to produce a calculated grade for each student. Teachers will not be solely responsible for the grade your child receives. The Ofqual aim is to provide these calculated grades to students before the end of July.
- The government has stated that if a student does not feel that the calculated grade reflects their performance, they will have the opportunity to sit an exam at the earliest reasonable opportunity, once schools are open again. Students will also have the option to sit their exams in summer 2021.

SCHOOLWORK UPDATE

When the school suspected a school closure was imminent, staff uploaded student work for the first week on to Show My Homework. The instruction to staff was to attempt to set the amount of work

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1

27/3/2020

comparable to the time students would have the lessons for in school e.g. if a student had 5 maths lessons then the teacher should have set work that took approximately 250 minutes etc.

All work is set on a Monday, as we cannot expect staff and students to be online at the same time. All work is due by the end of the week and one identified piece is due to be submitted on a Friday.

Teachers have one week to provide feedback.

For most year groups, the work set will be consolidation of work previously taught and exploration of interesting topics within the subject area. All work has been set via Show My Homework.

The volume of work may seem overwhelming, so below are some top tips for making home learning successful:

- The emotional wellbeing of your child is far more important than their education right now. If they are settled and able to focus, then completing schoolwork is great, but if they are struggling and need some time away from work, then that is fine too. Do not compare your child to someone else's. You know them best and can judge accordingly.
- Where possible, let your child lead the learning, but if they are struggling to organise their day then we suggest they follow their usual Barnwell timetable. This will provide a clear routine for your child. They should log in and complete the work set by their teacher in that timetabled session. They may not finish it all and that is fine. The work simply rolls over to the next timetabled session.
- Free online resources and software are great, but the sheer amount can be confusing. Ask your child to select a few key sites and stick to those. This is far better than trying to engage with everything all at once. Some key resources are listed below.
- Although the majority of our work is set online, we strongly encourage you to monitor your child's screen time. Ensure they follow the government guidelines regarding social distancing and complete some form of daily physical exercise. Being active is vital for feeling happy and healthy. Opportunities to undertake practical and creative activities should also be scheduled.
- Remember, you do not have to do all the work with them. They should be working independently a lot of the time. Whilst we expect a level of challenge, teachers are setting achievable tasks.

We have responded to feedback from parents/carers and have now asked the teachers to break the tasks down into more manageable lesson by lesson chunks. Please bear with the teachers as this is a new way of working for all of us.

We are also working with other schools to see what else we can do moving forward to help students continue to make progress whilst the school is closed.

To obtain feedback on the experience you and your child(ren) have had regarding schoolwork in the first week, we have created an online form for you to complete. Please click the link to complete the [online form](#).

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1

27/3/2020

FREE COURSES

There are a number of free courses available to students and parents to help develop skills and personal attributes. As a school we have signed up to BeReady and the following short online certificated courses have been identified as useful for our students.

Foundations of Communication, Foundations of Confidence, Foundations of Leadership, Foundations of Resilience, A guide to Assertiveness, Developing Communication Skills, Developing Resilience, Developing Leadership Skills.

Students will soon receive an email with log in details and they simply need to select 'browse courses', select the course and work through the videos and resources. We will be able to see who has completed the courses and we will celebrate their successes when we return to school. Please encourage your child to download their certificates as they go along.

On a slightly different note british-sign.co.uk were offering a free *sign language course* but have been overwhelmed by the uptake. In order for them to maintain the service, they have changed their service to a 'pay what you can' model starting at £3 for all students. This is another great opportunity to develop your personal skills.

WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING

In these difficult times, mental health and wellbeing should be at the forefront of our minds. As previously stated, education is important but the mental and physical health of children and young people is the priority.

One of the fundamental elements of wellbeing is exercise, especially when children and families are at home. I know many families, including my own, have been enjoying the daily Joe Wicks workouts, but Sport England have an initiative called #StayInWorkOut that provides links to various options for maintaining an active lifestyle. Please click the link:

https://www.sportengland.org/stayinworkout#join_the_movement

Hertfordshire County Council have continually been working with schools to ensure all students and families get the appropriate support. Most recently we received an email regarding support for children and young people with additional needs at home or in the school setting. The Integrated Services for Learning teams want to make sure parents/carers of these children have access to the support needed. There is one dedicated telephone contact number where the educational psychology service will respond and, if necessary, signpost parents/carers to someone who can offer specific advice and support. This contact line **01992 588574** is available **Monday-Friday between 2:00-4:30pm.**

Hertfordshire County Council also have a website offering Mental Health and wellbeing support and advice to young people, families and professionals around COVID-19 called JUSTTALK.

<https://www.justtalkherts.org/news/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus.aspx>

National Online Safety have created a series of guides to promote e-safety for all. Please click the link

<https://nationaleducationgroup.cmail20.com/t/t-l-nkrhhuy-ajijttth-y/>

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1

27/3/2020

Hertfordshire Constabulary is providing advice for parents and carers of young people who are spending more time online during periods of self-isolation. The closure of many schools due to the coronavirus means that opportunities for children to talk to and play with friends will be limited to online interaction. This will almost certainly lead to children spending more time online. Parents working from home may not be able to monitor their children's use of internet enabled devices as they usually would.

Children motivated by boredom could start to engage with new groups or individuals and this in turn could make them vulnerable to those looking to groom young people.

Detective Sergeant Marc Willmore, from Hertfordshire Constabulary's Halo - Safeguarding Vulnerable Children team, said: "Parents and carers should encourage children to be open about what they are doing online. Keep gaming devices, computers and tablets in the living room, use parental controls and keep up to date on the apps and games children are using. Whilst they're using the internet, ask children to show you what they enjoy doing online and the apps they're using, so you can understand them.

"It is useful to explore the social networks, apps and games your child uses. Reassure your children that if they're worried about anything they see online, they can come to you. Ask your children about their online "friends" and how they know them. Remind children that people online may not be who they say they are and warn them of the dangers of being groomed."

Online grooming may be hard for parents to recognise and groomers may specifically warn children not to talk to anyone about it. There are a number of signs to be aware of (although a lot of them are quite common among teens), but look out for increased instances of:

- wanting to spend more and more time on the internet
- being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit
- switching screens when you come near the computer
- possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them
- using sexual language you wouldn't expect them to know
- becoming emotionally volatile

Groomers often target young people by sending out friend requests on popular sites and platforms to see who responds. They may strike up a conversation to build a relationship with a child and ask them to continue the chat privately.

Speak to your child about who they are talking to and ensure they genuinely know them. Give them advice about the dangers of sharing personal details with people they don't know in real life and the potential risks of meeting up with someone in real life.

For more advice on how to keep safe online visit: www.herts.police.uk/Information-and-services/Advice/Child-sexual-exploitation and follow @hertspolicehalo for regular updates from our team that tackles child exploitation.

KEY WORKER AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN SCHOOL PROVISION

As publicised before the school closed, Barnwell has opened its doors daily for vulnerable children and children of keyworkers in Years 7-9, where staying at home has not been possible. This provision will

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1 27/3/2020

be continuing throughout the Easter holidays and on the two bank holidays – Good Friday 10th April and Easter Monday 13th April.

The provision would not have been feasible if it wasn't for the amazing staff at Barnwell volunteering their services where possible.

If your family falls into the definition of key workers and/or vulnerable children, have not signed up to the provision but would like to, could you please complete this [online form](#) by 3pm Wednesday 1st April 2020. This will ensure we know who to expect in school over the Easter holidays and on the bank holidays. Please provide the name and year group of your child and details of which category you fall into.

We must stress that the school will be affected by staff absence and will be unable to operate a full curriculum provision. Year groups will be collapsed, and our provision will be limited. We intend to continue to open for students between 0830-1500 and will keep our provision under continual review.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

As a community we are aware that many parents/carers have been affected by places of work closing and earning potential being minimised. The school is always just an email away if you have concerns about your family but below are a few links that may help with financial pressures or queries:

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>

All forms of advice, including employment and finances affected by Coronavirus

https://www.stepchange.org/?channel=ppc&&WT.srch=1&WT.mc_id=270049&WT.seg_1=step%20change%20debt&gclid=Cj0KCQjwpfHzBRCiARIsAHHzYzP-rzWaWlUAJCCdl_OnAbdj3oBRFtb5n2NhJsloPhjfATi3vfNGZ3AaAoTIEALw_wcB&gclsrc=aw.ds

A Debt Charity with information about who to contact for support and advice

<https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

A site for new applications to Universal Credit

<https://www.loansmart.org.uk/#about-loan-sharks>

Tips about how to avoid illegal loan companies

Phone numbers for pre-paid gas and electricity meters

Phone if you have a prepay meter, inform them you are self-isolating and they will send you out 2 weeks' worth of gas/electricity or if you have a smart meter they will top you up.

BRITISH GAS 0333 202 9802

EDF 0333 200 5100

EON 0345 052 000

N POWER 0800 073 3000

SCOTTISH POWER 0800 027 0072

SSE 0345 026 2658

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1

27/3/2020

LEARNING RESOURCES

There are thousands of online and offline resources to help your child remain engaged in education and we appreciate it can be a minefield trying to pick the right ones. Below are some of the ones our teachers, who are also parents, have found and would like to share with the community:

<https://www.independentthinking.co.uk/blog/posts/2020/march/you-are-not-alone/>

Lots of links to other resources and activities

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/amp/technology-52017873?_twitter_impression=true

Minecraft educational resources

<https://bit.ly/AudioElevenses>

David Walliams free audiobooks

<https://stories.audible.com/start-listen>

Free audiobooks for children from Amazon

<https://studio.code.org/courses>

Create games and learn to code

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zf2f9j6/articles/z3c6tfr#z34thyc>

Learn to touch type

<https://idea.org.uk/>

Certificated computer skills courses

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-the-shows-to-help-childrens-learning-while-schools-are-shut-11962915>

TV learning programmes

https://twitter.com/susie_dent/status/1242012534120615936?s=09

Spelling app

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2020/mar/23/10-of-the-worlds-best-virtual-museum-and-art-gallery-tours>

10 Virtual Museum and Art Gallery tours

ONE FINAL IDEA! – Mute the TV and put on the subtitles to ensure children are reading.

We have also attached a few worksheet based ideas to help structure your child's home learning and also a nice activity called Appreciative April for students to complete each day with their families.

Apologies for the incredibly long update but we felt it was important to try and centralise all information distributed from the school. Stay safe and please do not hesitate to contact the school on communication@barnwell.herts.sch.uk if you require clarity or advice on any points linked to education or Barnwell School.

Regards

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Executive Headteacher

Mr M Roberts
Head of School

BARNWELL SCHOOL PARENTAL UPDATE WEEK 1
27/3/2020