



# FAMILY NEWSLETTER

25<sup>th</sup> June 2021

## ***PUSHED FOR TIME? QUICK SUMMARY:***

- **Rise in Devon's Covid-19 Cases** – You will know from local TV and radio updates that Covid-19 case numbers have risen across the region. At school, we are still keeping our pupils within their “bubbles” and making sure our staff continue to work in a safe manner (twice weekly lateral flow testing, wearing masks in the corridors, washing hands, using hand sanitiser). It is likely we will keep pupils in “bubbles” until the end of the Summer term.
- **BB Rural Skills Update** – There’s lots happening in our Rural Skills Dept! Selected Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students are working towards their Level 1 BTEC in Land Based Studies and also Construction. We have new staff who are working on the allotment. We’ve received some money to purchase a poly-tunnel, a new fruit cage, new gardening tools and plants. The staff are also working on the Sensory Trail but this is taking a bit of time.
- **HOPE Programme** – If you have a child under the age of 4 and would like some support, you can join an online support group which is meeting every Tuesday from 10.30 am – 12 noon. Call Briony on 07554 993842 to find out more.
- **Passwords** – As a parent, you may well have a number of logins and passwords provided to you to access various online apps. School has provided you with a login and password so you can access online learning for Jotter and teachers have access to this information, just in case you lose your login details. Please therefore do not use this password for any other personal logins you may use.
- **Holidays Abroad** – If you are thinking of taking a holiday abroad this summer, please factor in time to allow your family to quarantine upon your return. Updated travel details will be available on the Government website. Pupils return to school next year on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.
- **Get a GCSE qualification for free with Learn Devon** - Devon County Council’s adult education service is offering free Maths and English GCSE qualification courses to Devon adults starting this September. Click on the link in the newsletter for further details.
- **Cygnets - Parent Autism Awareness Course** – Available for parents with children between 7 and 18 years. Courses run on a Monday throughout July and August. Email the link in the newsletter for further details.
- **Bidwell Brook Playground** – We’ve received some funding and now have £11k left to find for Phase One works on the playground. If you would like to raise money for our playground or know someone or an organisation that would be able to help, please pass on our GoFundMe link <https://gofund.me/61c91c14>
- **Arts Week @ BB** – Week commencing 28<sup>th</sup> June – We have lots of activities planned including a Dance Workshop, a visiting artist to work with selected students on an outdoor Mosaic plus Taiko Drumming.
- **Diversity Week** – Today was **Rainbow Friday** and our pupils celebrated what has been a great week of learning. Photos from across our schools will be sent out to parents next week.

Dear Parents & Carers,

**Rise in Devon's Covid-19 Cases** – Having attended a number of County Council meetings over the last few days, Devon is currently experiencing an exponential rise in the number of Covid-19 cases. Health Professionals attending these meetings have confirmed the Delta variant of Covid-19 has not yet fully impacted across the region but there is an increased number of positive cases being reported, particularly in Devon’s secondary schools.

This is likely due to secondary-aged students regularly taking lateral flow tests which identify and confirm positive cases, whereas primary pupils and special needs pupils do not need to take a test.

As Senior Leaders, we review our Risk Assessments and Safer Working Practice and constantly monitor to check our schools are as safe as possible within the current Government guidelines. Our pupils are still keeping within their “bubbles” and there is no intention at present to deviate away from our “bubble” working before the end of this term. This will help keep our pupils and staff as safe as possible until we break for the summer holiday. Staff continue to take and register their lateral flow tests twice weekly, wash hands regularly, use hand sanitiser and wear face masks when in corridors and communal areas.

**Rural Skills Update from Tom Bates, Rural Skills Lead** - The Rural Skills site at Bidwell Brook School has been operational for a little over 5 years and in April, we had two new members of staff join the team. Alex Hannis, the original team member, will be making a sideways move and working across both Bidwell Brook and Ellen Tinkham soon, delivering and assessing Level 1 BTEC’s in Land Based Studies and also in Construction to some of our Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 students. At Bidwell Brook, the two new members of staff will be delivering our Rural Skills programme and making further improvements and developments to the site.

At Bidwell Brook, we have also been successful in obtaining significant grant funding for the redevelopment of the school allotment which now forms part of the Rural Skills site. This is hugely exciting as it has allowed us to invest in much needed resources for the horticultural elements of the programme, including a new poly-tunnel, fruit cage, bespoke composting system, raised beds, and stock fencing, as well as make repairs to the existing shed. We have also begun clearing low-value woodland under-storey to make space for an orchard.

Once completed, these works will not only facilitate the Land Based Studies BTEC but, given the knowledge and skills of members within the team, provide the foundation for a highly productive and accessible garden.

Works are also continuing (albeit more slowly), on the Sensory Play Trail, which will be sited near the outdoor classroom in the original Rural Skills area and provide a natural and physical way for students to explore, exercise and self-regulate.



"Hi, I am Daisy, one of the two new Rural Skills Teaching Assistants at Bidwell Brook. This term we have been busy re-shaping the allotment in order to maximise the use of it in the future. We have installed new raised beds, compost bays, fencing and we are fitting for a new poly-tunnel and fruit cage. I am so excited to start rural skills sessions in September and I can't wait to work with the children outside. I am very keen to do lots of growing and practical hands-on sessions but ultimately ensuring the children are enjoying learning outdoors and connecting with nature".



**HOPE Programme** - Are you a parent caring for an under 4 year old? Are you experiencing stress, anxiety, low mood and feeling isolated? Would you like to learn about some self-management techniques and connect with other parents? ....then why not give the HOPE Programme a go!

This virtual HOPE programme is specifically aimed at parents with children under the age of 4. The 8 week course starts at the end of June and will be running every Tuesday from 10.30 am – 12 noon. For more information and to register please contact:

Briony: [b.enright@nhs.net](mailto:b.enright@nhs.net) / 07554993842 or Elaine: [elaine@teigncvs.org.uk](mailto:elaine@teigncvs.org.uk) / 07557334597

**Passwords** – As a parent, you may well have a number of logins and passwords provided to you to access various online apps. School has provided you with a login and password so you can access online learning for Jotter and teachers have access to this information, just in case you lose your login details. Please therefore do not use this password for any other personal logins you may use.

**Holidays Abroad** – If you are considering taking a holiday abroad this summer, please factor in and allow time to quarantine upon your return to the UK. Check the Government website for the latest travel restrictions. The Autumn term for pupils starts on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2021.



**Get a GCSE qualification for free with Learn Devon** - Learn Devon, Devon County Council's adult education service, is offering free maths and English GCSE qualification courses to Devon adults starting this September. Completing the qualification takes 10 months with exams scheduled for May and June 2022. A GCSE qualification can help learners improve their job prospects and achieve a promotion, enter into higher education or training or enable them to help their children with homework. Find out more on [Learn Devon's website](#).

**Cygnets - Message from Babcock Cygnets Course Leaders** - We are delighted to continue our offer of the Cygnets - Parent Autism Awareness - programme online. The programme is for parents and carers of Devon school children aged between 7 and 18 pre or post diagnosis. We are excited to announce that we have negotiated and agreed access for families whose children are currently on the autism assessment pathway, in addition to families of children and young people who have received an autism diagnosis. The sessions will be online on Monday mornings for 6 weeks during July and August. If you would like to know more, please contact Daisy Binnie at Bidwell Brook or Gill Allen at Ellen Tinkham, or email [LDP-LearnerSupport@babcockinternational.com](mailto:LDP-LearnerSupport@babcockinternational.com) to book a place.

**Bidwell Brook School Playground** – We continue to raise much needed funds to build a new playground for the 140 students with special needs at our school. We've received a couple of charitable donations and have £11k left to find so we can complete Phase One of the playground before our learners return in September. Please can you help or know someone who can? Phase One includes surfacing and play equipment such as a multi-use swing, spinner, wheelchair roundabout and wheelchair trampoline.

If you would like to put on a fundraising event, or share this in your community, please do share our GoFundMe link. We are happy to provide you with posters and more information to share as part of your fundraising activity <https://gofund.me/61c91c14>

**Arts Week @ Bidwell Brook** - Next week, we will be celebrating Arts Week. We have a Dance Workshop taking place, an artist visiting to work outside with selected students on a Mosaic project plus Taiko Drumming sessions. We look forward to showing you some great photos from Arts Week in the next Family newsletter.



**Diversity Week** – Across this week, all classes have been focusing on diversity in our society; being proud of who we are and celebrating everyone's differences. Today was **Rainbow Friday** and our pupils enjoyed celebrating their learning by dressing up and coming into school wearing brightly coloured clothing to represent colours from the Progress Pride Flag.

We'll send out some images to all families next week.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jacqui Warne'.

**Jacqui Warne**  
Executive Head