



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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Dear Parents / Carers,

First of all, a huge welcome to all our new Year 7 parents and carers; your daughters have settled in very quickly and we look forward to getting to know them and for them to feel truly included in Bishop's life. We are embarking on a new, significant phase of Bishop's by having Co-Headteachers to lead the school. This will be evident in the letterheads and all official school communication; we are sharing the role completely and either one of us can be contacted regarding matters that need resolving at Headteacher level.

As has already been documented in the local press and on our Facebook page, we again celebrated a successful set of A Level, BTEC and GCSE results with our Years 13 and 11 students over the summer. Their continued efforts with their learning, the quality teaching they received and the support of families all worked together to achieve that success and we are sure you will work with us going forward to secure the same for your daughters. Once official figures have been released by the DfE regarding academic performance nationally, we will be able to share with you how we compare with other schools. Our preliminary analysis indicates that we are achieving above average results at all levels and that our students are making beyond expected progress.

Please read through the information in this newsletter carefully; it provides details about the forthcoming year at Bishop's that you may need to refer to later. Please also email us with any response to this newsletter or any subsequent query as your opinions and views are highly valued. We are not always able to respond personally to every piece of feedback but assure you that all points of view are noted and frequently acted upon.

In order to ensure that we continue to communicate effectively and efficiently with you, please let us know of any changes to family circumstances, address, telephone number, email address or emergency contact details by email to the address above. We would also like to remind you of our text facility for informing us if your daughter is absent or late – please text to 07860 002689 giving your daughter's name and form on each day of absence and the reason for the absence.

We are about to launch our new website which we hope you will find easier to navigate and we'd like to draw your attention to some of the important information on there that you may wish to refer to throughout the year:

- The calendar of events for the year
- Homework Policy and Marking Policy
- Curriculum information relating to your daughter's studies
- Home School Agreement
- Privacy Notice

Please also continue to follow us on Facebook and Twitter, links to which can be found on our website.

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



Staff Changes

We have had a small number of staff changes this year following some retirements and promotions. Our staffing is increasing as our school expands. We welcome Miss Robson, Mrs Higgins and Mrs Clark into the Humanities Faculty, Miss Oakman and Mr Griffiths into the Health Faculty, Mr Stevens into the Maths Faculty and Mrs Johns into the Languages Faculty. We have two new Heads of Year – Miss Parkin for Year 7 and Ms Graves for Year 10. Mrs Newman joins the Learning Support Team and Mrs West joins Finance.

We have a new faculty – Expressive Arts – which comprises Art, Design, Drama and Music; this is led by Ms Fairbairn. Leadership changes include the Co-Headship already mentioned and Mr Pandya joining the Senior Leadership Team as Assistant Headteacher in charge of Assessment. Other changes are that Mrs Wilde is now a Learning Support Teacher and Mrs Langston has a more substantive role co-ordinating work-related learning.

We welcome three colleagues on the School Direct Programme – Miss Ekins and Ms Weetman in English and Mr Starling in Music.

We have five Heads of Year who will be your first port of call for pastoral issues, eg lost PE kit, uniform problems, behaviour issues etc. These are:

Head of Year 7 (ext 265)	-	Miss Parkin
Head of Year 8 (ext 263)	-	Miss Lawrence
Head of Year 9 (ext 218)	-	Mrs Alliot
Head of Year 10 (ext 239)	-	Miss Graves
Head of Year 11 (ext 264)	-	Mrs Dayton

They can be contacted on the usual school number and then the extension given above or by email to the school's admin address. As usual, it is preferable if you contact your daughter's **Form Tutor** in the first instance if you have a problem, but the staff listed above may also be able to help deal with difficulties. The Senior Leadership Team is only to be involved if a matter is deemed to be **very serious** and cannot be resolved by the Form Tutor and Head of Year. Any matters concerning Child Protection will be dealt with by Mr Dudley (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or Mrs Jackson (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Communications with Parents / Carers

Please take careful note of the information in the previous section regarding contacting the school with issues. We must emphasise that we have established systems at Bishop's to enable issues to be dealt with at an appropriate level by the appropriate person. Specific curriculum matters are dealt with by the subject teacher in the first instance or by the Head of Faculty if necessary. Pastoral matters are dealt with by the Form Tutor in the first instance and then by the Head of Year as required. If any of these members of staff feel that the matter is more serious, then it will be referred to the relevant person on the Senior Leadership Team whose roles relate more to strategic leadership than day-to-day management. If the SLT becomes over-involved in day-to-day management, we would not have the time to action the improvement strategies that are making Bishop's so successful in terms of pupil progress.

We do assure you that the girls' academic progress, safety and welfare are of paramount importance to us and are confident that we have teams and individuals in place to address all the girls' needs and provide answers to parents/carers.

Car Parking and the Drop-off Zone

Following a number of complaints from the public and a unpleasant incident in the drop-off zone, I would like to stress the importance of the following -

- **No parking** is permitted in the drop-off zone – the double yellow lines apply as on the public highway; parents/carers should **not** arrive early and wait as this is **not** a parking area – you will be asked to move on
- When picking up, do not enter the area until you know your daughter is ready – again, this is NOT a waiting area – if you arrive early, you should wait on the road or in one of the nearby car parks until the time you have agreed with your daughter that she should be waiting; please do NOT block local residents' driveways
- **Only** the defined hatched area should be used for dropping off and picking up girls
- At the end of the day, due to the fact we have Reg's Coaches waiting to pick up a number of girls and we also frequently have other coaches collecting girls for fixtures or returning them after a trip, parents/carers CANNOT access the drop-off/pick-up zone until **3.30pm**.

Group / Set changes

We monitor the girls' progress in all their subjects very carefully right from the start of Year 7. From time to time we need to move the girls to different groups/sets based on their progress so that they are best supported to extend their learning and achieve their potential. We do not stream but band more loosely by ability in some subjects.

In Year 7, girls are in bands for Maths, Computing and Science and any movement from group to group tends to occur at the end of each term. In Years 8 and 9 the banding continues in Maths, Computing and Science; additionally in Year 9, the girls will be further banded in English, Humanities (Geography, History and RS) and Languages.

When girls move into Key Stage 4 and GCSE study, the banding continues for English, Maths and Science but not for option subjects as girls naturally choose subjects that they enjoy and can achieve well in and in many cases, there will only be one group for a particular subject, eg Music.

Girls know their classes when they receive their timetables at the start of the year and whenever a change of band / set occurs we tell parents / carers and urge you to contact us if you have any queries about this.

Open Evening

This will be held for prospective pupils and their parents/carers on **Tuesday 2nd October**. A separate letter will be sent out informing you of early closure details on this date.

Extra-Curricular Activities / Enrichment Programme

We are running a full programme of clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school and girls have received information about the different activities that they can take part in and will have the chance to try some out this week. All girls are expected to participate in at least one activity and we know that many girls will choose more than one; we hope that the girls will be actively involved in every session as we know that this enhances their well-being and overall enjoyment of school (and they get house points)!

Our House System

We are delighted to report that the House system introduced last year is proving to be a huge success with the girls and that it has encouraged participation in many house activities and competitions. Each pupil and staff member belongs to a House and will be competing throughout the year to win the Bishop's House Cup. Positions of responsibility within the Houses are as follows:

House Name	Head of House	Sixth Form House Captain
House Austen	Miss Grossman	Charley Wren
House Franklin	Dr Bune	Amy Pymont
House Hadid	Mr Kench / Mr Underwood	Chloe Bate
House Parr	Miss Hallauer	Jeny Thakkar
House Seacole	Miss Maisey	Georgie Newberry

Pupils can win House points for positive behaviour such as attending Enrichment clubs, 100% attendance, collecting Merits and Excellents and winning House competitions. Every pupil who attends an Enrichment club receives a silver token (worth one House Point) to place in her House perspex collector by the pupil entrance of the school. Pupils who represent the school in performances or fixtures will receive a gold token (worth five House Points). Pupils can also lose House points for negative behaviour such as homework referrals, lateness to school and detentions.

The House which finishes the year with the highest number of House points will be rewarded with the House Cup, their House name on the school plaque and a day of celebration for pupils and staff in their House at the end of the Summer Term. Last year's winner was House Parr.

School Trips

During the year we run a number of school trips which are designed to enhance the curriculum and allow the girls to experience the reality of what we are teaching. These visits are extremely valuable and are usually followed up with work in the classroom. It is possible that a trip may be to a place where your daughter has already been but where this is the case, it will have a different emphasis and slant and connect to the work she is currently doing, which will be very different say, from a primary school trip.

It is very important that we receive your responses via email with voluntary contributions (paid via WisePay) quickly so that we can confirm if a trip will go ahead. We expect all pupils to take advantage of these opportunities that we create; learning outside the classroom is invariably a learning memory that is maintained for life.

Money

We are strongly recommending that all payments to the school should be made using WisePay as it is safer and quicker. Most parents are already using this system. If you require further information on this please contact the school's Finance Office (option 2 on the school's automated phone system). On the rare occasion when payment may be made in cash, pupils should not give it to Form Tutors or leave it for someone else to hand in but wait to see one of the Finance staff and then ask for a receipt (usually before school starts, at break or from 1pm). Without

this receipt we cannot be held responsible if the money is mislaid or stolen. All valuables should be secured in lockers and not left in bags in corridors. We discourage girls from carrying cash with them.

Overdraft / Loan facility – any pupil who has forgotten her lunch or lunch money should come to the Finance Office for a loan. The loan will be added to her cashless catering account in the form of an overdraft facility and will be for a maximum of £2.40, which is sufficient for the hot meal and pudding of the day. Loans cannot be used for drinks as water is available through our water dispensers around the school. The loan must be repaid by topping up the pupil's cashless catering account which will be locked until the loan is repaid.

Free School Meals

I'd like to encourage every parent and carer who thinks that his/her daughter might be eligible for Free School Meals to contact HCC to find out if she is. There are significant advantages to receiving free school meals in that once on the list, pupils may receive assistance in paying for school trips, qualify for a bursary to help towards their Sixth Form studies and then meet the criteria for a grant towards university education. Girls receiving free school meals have the value of the main meal (currently £2.40) automatically deducted from the cost of purchases made at lunchtime. This ensures that confidentiality is maintained. Further information can be found on www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals

Attendance

Please let us know by texting the school on 07860 002689 **before 9am** on **each** day of your daughter's absence that she will not be coming to school on that day and the reason why. This includes occasions when we have sent a girl home because she has become ill during the school day – we still need confirmation of the illness by text if the absence continues. We do ask for your co-operation in this matter as it is part of our continuing target to maintain and further improve levels of attendance. There is no doubt that there is a strong link between high attendance and achievement and I know you will all want your daughters to achieve at the highest level. Administrative staff will text/phone the homes of any absentees for whom we have not had an explanation on every day of absence. Please read the section below which outlines a change which has come into effect this September 2018; this relates to the issuing of penalty notices to parents/carers whose daughter's attendance falls below a certain level. We urge you to read this carefully.

I would also like to emphasise that **permission** must be sought from the school for any leave of absence, eg. Dance exams, representing the county at a sports event etc. I cannot stress enough that continuity of education is crucial in determining your daughter's success and any interruption to her education can create gaps in knowledge which are often difficult to fill. I enclose this and next year's term dates with this letter and urge you to note these carefully when booking holidays. Whilst I understand that in some cases (and I assure you that each case is considered individually) it is necessary to take a girl out of school for a family event, we continue to disapprove of and, in line with guidance from the Department for Education, refuse to authorise holidays taken in term time. Time lost from the learning environment cannot be made up and returning after a one week holiday absence can cause upset to a girl who discovers her class has moved on in a particular topic or subject area.

To put the attendance situation in context, any girl whose attendance drops to 90% will have missed 19 days of school in one year, that is, 114 lessons! This can make a REAL difference to success in qualifications. We are rewarding pupils whose attendance is 100% in any month with a merit and their names are entered into a prize draw held monthly where two winners per year group receive a W H Smith achievement voucher.

I do understand that some medical practitioners make this difficult, but all appointments with dentists / orthodontists / optometrists / doctors should be made outside school hours or during the holidays, whenever possible. We would also encourage a return to school after appointments made during the day.

Attendance and the Education Related Penalty Notices Regulations 2007

As I am sure you are aware, as a school we are working hard to improve our attendance in order to meet government expectations of an Outstanding School. We can, of course only do this with your continued support in making sure that your daughter is in school during school term time and should she have cause to be absent from school, you providing us with adequate and satisfactory reasons for non-attendance as per our Attendance Policy (revised Summer Term 2018).

In light of the above, can I please draw your attention to the fact that if your daughter does accumulate 15 or more unauthorised absence sessions (**one day is equivalent to 2 sessions**) a fixed penalty notice / fine could be issued.

This notice would require you to pay a penalty of £60 within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each parent is liable to pay a separate penalty and penalty notices are issued for each pupil to whom the absence relates.

Payment of any fine enables you to discharge your liability for the offence for the period in question of failing to ensure your daughter's regular attendance in school (Section 444, The Education Act 1996).

Failure to pay the penalty would mean you are liable to prosecution, by summons to appear before the local Magistrates' Court. On conviction you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000 per parent. This is a criminal offence which carries a criminal record. The Local Authority, who instigate these proceedings, will also ask for costs of £125 to be awarded against you.

Parent/Carer Volunteering in school

We are always interested to hear of parents/carers who may be able to spare a couple of hours to help us. The school library is always glad to have help from parents. If you have an hour or two to spare on a regular basis and would like to help with a number of routine tasks, the librarians would be pleased to hear from you; please email the librarians, Mrs Roth and Mrs Allcock at Library@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk including your name and a daytime contact telephone number. If you have any other suggestions for how you can be of help, please email the main admin address at the top of this letter.

Uniform

The girls have made a very good start to the year, complying with our strong uniform policy and we will continue to monitor this carefully.

If your daughter has outgrown or no longer requires her uniform, eg new Year 12 students, then the Parents' Association would welcome any additions to their current stock, especially skirts which are very low in stock currently. This can be brought to reception at the school.

Supporting the school

We appreciate the support that many parents and carers have given the school in recent years. If you feel able to support us by volunteering your time - for instance to help in the library, to organise a fundraising event or to serve refreshments at an event, we would be delighted to hear from you. We would also welcome any parents who wish to sign up to small regular donations to our School Fund as we are currently saving up to buy a school minibus.

One simple way to support us is to register for easyfundraising and use this for your online shopping. It is very easy to use and every time you make a purchase from a retailer such as M&S or Tesco, the school benefits from a donation from the supplier. There are no hidden charges. For more information, please see www.easyfundraising.org.uk.

I look forward to another successful and exciting year with all your daughters achieving their best!

Yours sincerely



Ms T Nickson

Mr A Wood

Headteachers

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2018-2019

AUTUMN TERM 2018

Monday 3rd September to Friday 21st December 2018
Half-Term: Monday 29th October to Friday 2nd November
INSET Day 1 – Monday 3rd September (no pupil attendance)
INSET Day 2 – Friday 5th October (no pupil attendance)
OCCASIONAL Day – Friday 30th November (no pupil attendance)

SPRING TERM 2019

Monday 7th January to Friday 5th April 2019
Half-Term: Monday 18th February to Friday 22nd February

SUMMER TERM 2019

Tuesday 23rd April to Tuesday 23rd July 2019
Half-Term: Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May
INSET Day 3 – Monday 22nd July (no pupil attendance)
INSET Day 4 – Tuesday 23rd July (no pupil attendance)
INSET Day 5 – Wednesday 24th July (no pupil attendance)

PROVISIONAL SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2019-2020

AUTUMN TERM 2019

Monday 2nd September to Friday 20th December 2019
Half-Term: Monday 28th October to Friday 1st November

SPRING TERM 2020

Monday 6th January to Friday 3rd April 2020
Half-Term: Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February

SUMMER TERM 2020

Monday 20th April to Tuesday 21st July 2020
Half-Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May

We still need to set 5 INSET days and 1 Occasional Day within these dates when pupils will not be required to be in school.