



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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July 2019

Dear Parents / Carers

As yet another academic year draws to an end, we reflect on this year's successes of which there have been many - we do hope that you check our website regularly to keep up-to-date with the events that show your daughters' achievements; there is a wealth of information on the website and it should be checked before raising any queries with the school. After much fierce competition throughout the year and a very close result, AUSTEN was the winning house overall this year. When we look at the thousands of house points that each house earns through your daughters' efforts, it just shows how each individual girl shows her commitment to the school community; interestingly, some pupils visiting us for the day from another school commented that Bishop's really feels like a family!

This newsletter gives some important information, including a Parent Governor vacancy so please read through it carefully.

End of Summer Term 2019 arrangements

Girls will receive instructions from their Form Tutors regarding clearing out lockers; we really don't want half-eaten sandwiches getting progressively mouldy over the summer. PE kits, coats and bags should all be taken home. Any unclaimed lost property or anything left in school will be taken to a charity shop.

Friday 19th July

There will be a later start to the school day to accommodate all staff and girls who will be returning from trips abroad. All girls should be in their form rooms by **9.45am**. Girls can arrive before this time and go straight to their form rooms. The morning will comprise tutor time, clearing up and celebratory assemblies. Girls should be in full uniform on this day. Girls will be dismissed at 12.30pm.

Start of Autumn Term 2019 arrangements

Monday 2nd September

Staff INSET Day – no pupil attendance.

Tuesday 3rd September

New Year 7 in from 10.00am to 2.00pm

Years 12 and 13 enrolment / induction 8.35 am to 12.30 pm

Wednesday 4th September

8.30am - Whole school in, normal timetable, assemblies

Timetables for all pupils will be sent home via InTouch by this date so that girls know what resources to bring in for Wednesday and parents/carers can see the spread of subjects across the week.

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



Discovery Week - 15th - 18th July 2019

Please keep an eye on the school's website and Facebook page for news and photos of all the girls' activities during Discovery Week.

Term Dates 2019/2020 and 2020/2021

Please check the updated Term Dates schedule attached to this letter. 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 refuse to authorise holidays taken in term time (in line with instructions from the Department for Education). 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.

Uniform

Please ensure that you have checked all the information regarding uniform before making any new purchases. We still have issues with girls wearing trainer socks instead of proper ankle socks which should have a clear cuff showing above shoes. Also, a number of trainer style fabric shoes have appeared which are not acceptable as school shoes. Girls infringing any of the uniform rules will be sent home to change. Please also ensure that nail varnish has been removed before the start of the new academic year and if you are allowing your daughter to have any new piercings, these should be done at the start of the summer holidays to give the six week healing period as any studs etc, apart from one in each lower ear lobe, must be removed before the start of term.

Smart watches

It has come to our attention that a number of girls are wearing smart watches and using them inappropriately to communicate with friends in other classes during lessons. Such watches are banned by exam boards as they could lead to malpractice. Consequently, smart watches will not be allowed in school at all and will be confiscated to be returned to the parent/carer only if girls are seen with them.

Communication with the school

The School Office will be closed over the summer except for some key dates around the exams' results weeks. Emails will be checked intermittently but it may not always be able to provide parents/carers with a swift response as the member of staff may be away.

We'd like to remind you that all curriculum related issues need to go to the subject teacher in the first instance and may be escalated to the Head of Faculty. All pastoral issues should go to the Form Tutor and may then need to go to the Head of Year. Staff answering phone calls from parents/carers have been instructed to obtain as many details as possible so that the call or message can be passed on to the appropriate person. Only when these matters remain unresolved will members of the Senior Leadership Team become involved. If there is any subsequent need to complain more formally then the correct procedure is outlined (with relevant forms) in the Complaints Procedure on our website; failure to use this may delay a resolution to the issue.

We continue to experience occasional thoughtless or insensitive behaviour towards staff members which is unacceptable. Every school has a duty of care to staff, just as it does to pupils. This includes ensuring

staff feel safe and valued at work as well as a responsibility to ensure that the staff's workload is manageable and does not unreasonably intrude into their private life.

Recent statistics from the Department for Education show that over 50% of teachers leave the profession within 5 years of training and those leaving the profession cite workload and not feeling valued as the top 2 reasons for leaving. We work hard to recruit and retain the best staff but we need your help to make every member of staff in our school feel valued, appreciated and respected, with a manageable workload that does not intrude on their family life.

Email and social media are fast and efficient means of communication which offer many advantages. However, communicating in this way also presents some challenges, not least the temptation to respond in haste or the expectation of an almost instantaneous reply. Our first priority is to deliver the best possible teaching and learning to your daughters. This requires time consuming planning and assessment before and after every teaching day. Whilst we value communication with parents, too much communication risks distracting teachers from their primary focus; teaching. Our staff work long hours, often far in excess of what they are paid for. We would never wish to discourage parents from communicating with staff, however we do ask you to take a minute and consider the tone and implications of your messages.

All communication needs to be polite and respectful. Too often, hastily sent emails cause great hurt or offence. Critical comments about activities that staff volunteer to do, entirely out of goodwill, are particularly hurtful and may result in staff being reluctant to continue to go the extra mile. An ill-crafted email or posting is always hurtful and destructive. All members of the school community should follow some simple principles in their communications with or about the school:

- All communication should be courteous and respectful; personal, abusive or offensive messages are never acceptable.
- Emails should never be sent to individual members of staff unless previously agreed but to the school admin address admin@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk. These will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, who will endeavour to respond within 48 hours.
- Parents should not expect emails to be read or responded to out of school hours.
- Written communication should be limited to what is important; emails should not be too long or too frequent.
- Parents should not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media.

All members of the school community are responsible for maintaining these standards by challenging inappropriate postings and/or bringing them to the attention of the Headteachers. Where the Headteachers are aware that email or social media is being misused, they will not hesitate to request to see the messages and, where necessary, request that comments are deleted and 'group chats' are closed down. In the event of illegal, defamatory or discriminatory content, Headteachers will report it to the appropriate authority, which may result in prosecution.

Parent/Carer conduct in school

Very occasionally, the behaviour of a very few parents results in staff or pupils feeling upset or unsafe. This is never acceptable. Schools are private property and parents are invited into them with the expectation that they will be courteous and respectful, whatever the circumstances. Where a parent intimidates others by their behaviour or attitude, or is causing a nuisance or disruption, the privilege of

visiting the school may be limited or withdrawn; in some circumstances this may result in a ban from the premises. Where necessary, the school will not hesitate to report incidents to the police.

Thank you for your help in making our school a place staff and pupils want to work and in which everyone can learn and work to the best of their ability.

Reg's Coaches

Following the results of the survey put out to all parents/carers whose daughters use Reg's Coaches, from the start of the new school year in September, the pick-up time for Reg's Coaches at the end of the school day will change to 4.10pm. This will enable more girls to participate in enrichment activities and also provide transport for some girls whose lessons go beyond the end of the normal school day.

Girls are also always able to attend Homework Club after school to use any waiting time productively.

Parents/Carers wishing to book a place for their daughter on this facility should contact Reg's Coaches (details available on the Contact Us section on the school website); regular bookings can be made and, dependent on spaces available, girls can sometimes pay on the day. Reg's have offered to run other services if there is sufficient demand and we would encourage parents to contact them directly on 01438 822000 to express their interest.

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 will have been 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, Geography, History and Languages to enable them to make progress at a suitable pace.

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 in and in many cases, there will only be one group for a particular subject, eg GCSE 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.

Parent Governor Vacancy

There is one vacancy for a parent governor on the school's governing body. Governors make extremely valuable contributions in determining school policy. All parents are eligible and we appreciate the varied input they offer, from support in making financial decisions to interviewing candidates for posts within school. If you would like to stand for election please complete and return form at the end of this letter to

the school office by 9.00am on Monday 16th September 2019. Details regarding the role of a Governor have also been sent out with this as a separate PDF.

You will need to ask another parent/carer of a pupil at the school to sign the form. Please be aware that regulations require everyone elected or appointed to a governing body to undergo a pre-appointment check which will include a criminal background check. This is to ensure the safety of the pupils. If you are elected and you subsequently decline to undergo such a check, you will disqualify yourself.

Please give brief details about yourself (not more than 80 words) on the form. If an election is needed these details will be copied and sent to all parents/carers with the ballot papers. Please note that the 80 word limit will be strictly enforced. Any statement with more than 80 words will be returned to the candidate for amendment. If the number of nominations is the same as or less than the number of vacancies, then the people nominated will be deemed elected unopposed. If there are not enough nominations, the governing body has the duty to appoint parent governors to fill the remaining vacancies.

The governing body has determined that the term of office for a parent governor is four years. If you are elected you may serve the full term of office even if your child leaves the school before your term of office finishes. The governing body has also decided that all governors will be members of the Academy Trust and be involved in all strategic decision making at this level.

If an election is necessary we will send you a ballot paper during the week commencing 16th September 2019. Only parents/carers of children registered at the school are entitled to stand or vote in the election. A parent/carer who is paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in a school year or is an elected member of the LA may not stand for election. Each parent/carer will be sent one ballot paper regardless of how many children they have at the school, and each parent/carer will have one vote per vacancy. The ballot will be secret and you will be notified of the result as soon as possible afterwards.

In most cases it will be obvious whether you are a parent/carer. For the purpose of the election of a parent governor, a parent is:

- someone who has parental responsibility* or
- someone who looks after the child on a day-to-day basis (but does not have “parental responsibility”).

*A person has ‘parental responsibility’ if

- a. she is the child’s natural mother; **or**
- b. he is the child’s natural father and either was married to the mother on the day of the child’s birth or subsequently or has entered into a legal parental responsibility agreement with the mother or has been granted a residence order from the court directing the child will live with him or registered or re-registered the child's birth after 1 December 2003; **or**
- c. the child lives with that person as the result of a court order. If you have any questions about whether you are eligible to stand or vote in the election or about anything else in this letter, please contact me.

We look forward to receiving your nominations.

Retirement

I am sure you will all join with us to wish Mrs Hones a happy retirement after 29 years' service to the school; her connection with the school goes back much further as she was one its founding pupils back in 1960! She led the Modern Foreign Languages Faculty until 3 years ago when she started her part-time role and results in Languages have continued to be among the best nationally. Her experience and expertise will be missed.

All comments and queries on this newsletter should be sent **via email please**.

We wish you all a restful summer break.

Yours sincerely

Ms T Nickson & Mr A Wood
Co-Headteachers



GOVERNOR NOMINATION FORM

Your name

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr)

Address

Name of child

I have a child at the school and hereby nominate myself for election as a governor. I understand that if elected I will have to undergo a pre-appointment check. Biographical details (80 words maximum) for circulation with the voting paper are given below.

Signature

Seconded* by:

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr)

Address

Name of child

Signature

*The seconder must be a parent/carer of a pupil at the school.

Biographical details (80 words maximum):

Your completed nomination form must be returned to the school office by:

Date: Monday 16th September 2019 Time: 9.00am

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
INSET Day 1 – Monday 2nd September (no pupil attendance)
INSET Day 2 – Friday 4th October (no pupil attendance)
OCCASIONAL Day – Friday 29th November (no pupil attendance)

SPRING TERM 2020

Monday 6th January to Friday 3rd April 2020
Half-Term: Monday 17th February to Friday 21st February
INSET Day 3 – Friday 14th February (no pupil attendance)

SUMMER TERM 2020

Monday 20th April to Tuesday 21st July 2020
Half-Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May
INSET Day 4 – Monday 20th July (no pupil attendance)
INSET Day 5 – Tuesday 21st July (no pupil attendance)
**NB - Early May Bank Holiday will be Friday 8th May 2020
to mark the 75th anniversary of VE Day**

PROVISIONAL

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2020-2021

AUTUMN TERM 2020

Tuesday 1st September to Friday 18th December 2020
Half-Term: Monday 26th October to Friday 30th October

SPRING TERM 2021

Monday 4th January to Thursday 1st April 2021
Half-Term: Monday 15th February to Friday 19th February

SUMMER TERM 2021

Monday 19th April to Wednesday 21st July 2021
Half-Term: Monday 31st May to Friday 4th June

NB - INSET days to be confirmed