



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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2nd September 2021

Start of Autumn Term Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

I must start by welcoming those of you who are new to the school. I very much hope that you and your children quickly become part of the Bishop's community and that you enjoy your journey with us. I would encourage you as parents/carers to take the opportunity to get involved and support the school when you can and to work with us to provide the best possible experience for our pupils. As we all know, these have been unprecedented times, but I and my staff have been constantly fortified by the support and encouragement shown from parents, carers - and pupils!

There are a number of updates in this newsletter, including the key elements of our updated Risk Assessment relating to Covid-19 protective measures. Please do read it carefully to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding - I recommend saving it in a safe place for future reference, but a copy is also available on the school website.

Covid-19 Protective Measures

The Department for Education published new guidance for schools at the end of last term and this has been updated a few times over the summer holidays. Although many of the 'requirements' placed on schools have been removed, the DfE has left it open to schools to put in place measures that are deemed appropriate for that setting. Due to the fact that case numbers locally are quite high (and are rising) we have decided to keep some things in place at least for the first part of term. These will be reviewed by the end of the month once the impact of pupils returning to school has become clearer. We also have contingency plans in place should we be required to take further action by public health authorities. The full Risk Assessment can be read on the Parents> Coronavirus page of the school website.

The last 18 months have shown me that it is impossible to keep everyone happy regarding Covid protective measures. Some people would like us to do much more, whilst others would like us to remove all restrictions. As far as possible, we want everyone to feel comfortable at school and hope that you will appreciate our attempts to balance all views. The priority must always be the safety of all. One aspect that I should point out to everyone is that being fully vaccinated does not completely prevent infection, though it does dramatically reduce the severity of symptoms. If someone tests positive for Covid they

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



must still isolate for 10 days, whether they are a child or a fully vaccinated adult. This is obviously highly disruptive to the child's education and potentially to the running of the school if large numbers of staff have to isolate. We are therefore very keen to minimise the infection risk at school.

Key measures:

- Anyone with Covid symptoms (high temperature, new and continuous cough, loss of sense of taste or smell) must stay at home and book a PCR test through the NHS <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. NB - children may display other symptoms in addition to the above and we recommend taking a LFD test in these cases.
- Anyone testing positive for Covid-19 must self-isolate at home for 10 days as advised by Test and Trace - you must notify the school of this.
- Pupils and staff are requested to take LFD tests at home twice per week until further notice - these will be provided by the school. Positive results should be reported to school through our attendance number and a PCR test booked to confirm the result.
- Close contacts of a positive case do not need to self-isolate if they are aged under 18 years 6 months and/or have been fully vaccinated (14 days have passed since their 2nd jab).
- Pupils are encouraged to sanitise on arrival at school and at the start of each lesson (sanitiser will be available in classrooms and around the school).
- Rooms will be ventilated as far as possible. All our classrooms are fitted with CO2 monitors and our ventilation system should provide high standards of ventilation throughout the day. CO2 monitoring should allow us to maintain a comfortable temperature.
- Pupils and staff are requested to wear a mask in corridors and communal areas (but not in classrooms). They can also wear a mask in classrooms but staff may ask them to be removed where they become a barrier to learning. Any pupil may request an exemption from this.
- The one-way system will remain in place and pupils will not be required to queue in corridors outside classrooms - these measures have greatly reduced congestion and overcrowding around the school.

Please read the full risk assessment for more detail. We are constantly reviewing these measures in the light of government guidance and please remember that we are obligated to follow official guidance, whether we agree with it or not.

Start/end of the school day

We will not be having a staggered finish to the school day. School will therefore end at 3.00 pm and enrichment clubs at 3.50 pm. A reminder that parents/carers should not use the drop off zone to collect pupils at the end of the school day. This blocks the entrance to the school and creates a block on traffic using Woods Avenue. It has been disappointing to see some parents/carers ignore this request as waiting in the drop-off zone has prevented access for those with medical needs. Please also avoid using the area of Woods Avenue immediately outside school for pick up. There are local car parks in Hatfield Town Centre and quieter streets a short walk from school that will avoid causing congestion outside the school, which is not only inconvenient but potentially dangerous. We would also ask that you show consideration for local residents and not block local roads, in particular Oaklands Wood cul de sac which is for residents only parking.

Uniform

So that we can have a very positive start to the school year and focus immediately on teaching and learning, I would appreciate you taking the time with your child to ensure the following:

- full, correct school uniform is worn, with skirt at the correct length
- proper school shoes are worn as laid out in the uniform guidelines (no canvass, boots or trainer-style shoes)
- hair all one natural colour including braids and extensions. Hair should not be shaved.
- no nail varnish, gel nails or make-up
- jewellery should not be worn apart from a wrist watch and one pair of small gold or silver stud earrings, one on each ear lobe – no other piercings or jewellery are allowed.
- **NO** smart watches are allowed - they will be confiscated until the end of term.
- if wearing ankle socks, then these are ANKLE socks and not trainer socks – the difference is that they should clearly have a cuff that goes about 8cm up the leg and not just be confined within the shoe
- Only plain navy blue or black scarves can be worn for religious purposes. Under scarves worn beneath head scarves should also be plain blue or black. Head scarves should be worn properly and not loosely draped.

With your co-operation and support, this should all lead to a smooth start to the year; we're sure that you don't want calls from the school on the first day asking you to collect your child because they are breaking these fundamental rules. Inappropriate jewellery will be confiscated and returned at the end of term.

A reminder too that mobile phones should be switched off and put in lockers at the start of the day. Any pupil caught with a phone, whether on or off, during the school day including at break or lunchtime will have the phone confiscated for two days. This includes over the weekend if confiscated on a Friday. If a pupil needs to contact home urgently during the school day then they should speak to their Head of Year or go to Reception to request that they make a call. Our approach to mobile phones is very well known and understood by all pupils and I would ask for your support in enforcing this at school. We know that pupils can feel very reliant on their phones out of school but there will be no exceptions made to confiscation so please do not request that the phone is returned - it is always worth remembering that not so long ago we all managed to live quite happily without them!

Staff changes

We are pleased to welcome some new staff to the school and to announce some new positions of responsibility. Our staffing is increasing as the school expands and we also have some staff on maternity leave this year. In the Health Faculty Mr Brown is joining us as a teacher of Health and Social Care while Miss Esterhuizen and Miss Greig both join the PE Department. Miss Waters will take responsibility for BTEC courses in Miss Redpath's absence whilst Mr Pandya will act as Head of Health while she is on maternity leave. Dr Burgess joins the Science Faculty, Miss Mizon joins us permanently in MFL and Miss Pascal and Ms Stanciu join the Humanities Faculty as teachers of Business Studies and Religious Studies

respectively. Mr Paton joins us as a teacher of Media Studies and we are delighted to welcome Mrs Starling back as a teacher of Mathematics.

Dr Bune has become the new Subject Leader for Biology and is also our Literacy Coordinator, whilst Mr Short has become our new Subject Leader for Physics. Miss Ekins is the new Subject Leader for Drama and Mr Goodall the new Subject Leader for Computing. Mrs Langston has become Subject Leader for Geography and is also taking on responsibility for Enrichment and Trips during Mrs Jackson's maternity leave. Mrs Higgins is our new Subject Leader for Careers. During Mrs Neal's maternity leave Mrs Ruffhead will take on her responsibilities as Subject Leader for RS whilst continuing as Head of Humanities with responsibility for Social Sciences.

I would also like to give a warm welcome to Mr Wayne Charleton who is our new Executive Chef, working for Culinera who are our new catering provider. Culinera has an excellent local reputation and were selected by our Governors during the tender process for their good quality fresh food. Please see their webpage for the new menus and tariff <https://www.bhgs.culinera.co.uk/>. There is also a contact form and we would encourage you to use this if you have any concerns about allergens.

Money

All payments to the school should be made using WisePay as it is safer and quicker. 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 out. We discourage girls from carrying cash with them.

Please note that there is no longer a cash loader machine for pupils to use to top up their WisePay account and top-ups must now be done via the WisePay link on the school website or Culinera webpage. Sixth Formers have the option to pay with a card.

Lunch Loan facility – any pupil who has forgotten her lunch or who has insufficient funds on their account may come to the Finance Office for a lunch loan. The loan will be added to their cashless catering account in the form of an overdraft facility and will be for a maximum of £3.00. 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

We encourage every parent and carer who thinks that their child might be eligible for Free School Meals to contact HCC. 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. Pupils receiving free school meals have a choice of two items for £2.40 and this amount will be automatically loaded onto their

account prior to lunchtime so they can pay using the thumb reader. This ensures that confidentiality is maintained. Further information can be found on www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals.

Pupil Planners

The pupil planner/homework diary must be used to record all homework and important notes and dates to ensure pupils are organised and well prepared for learning. It should also be checked and signed by yourself and your child's Form Tutor every week. By monitoring the homework diary regularly, we can get a good indication how well pupils are coping with the additional workload of the new academic year and put in any support as appropriate. Although homework is often also posted on Google Classroom, all pupils should stay in the habit of writing down the work set for each subject every day.

Extra-Curricular Activities / Enrichment Programme

Our full enrichment programme will begin on Monday 13th September and the timetable and booklet will be sent home and posted on the website over the coming days. As ever, attendance at enrichment clubs will be rewarded by House Points and these will be allocated on Go4Schools. I would strongly encourage all pupils to attend at least one enrichment activity each week (many of our pupils attend every day). We know that participating not only gives pupils a chance to pursue their interests but helps them to develop new friendships, relax and build their confidence.

Group / Set changes

We monitor the pupils' progress in all their subjects very carefully right from the start of Year 7. From time to time we need to move pupils 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, pupils 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 and MFL. In some other subjects the 5 forms will be broken up into 6 smaller mixed-ability groups.

When pupils move into Key Stage 4 and GCSE study, the banding continues for English, Maths and Science but not for option subjects as pupils 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.

Our House System

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

House Austen	Mrs Higgins
House Franklin	Dr Bune
House Hadid	Mr Kench / Mrs Johns
House Parr	Miss Hallauer
House Seacole	Miss Maisey

Pupils can win House Points for positive behaviour such as attending Enrichment clubs, 100% attendance, excellent academic work and effort and winning House competitions. Pupils who represent the school in performances or fixtures will receive 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 honours board and a celebration event for pupils and staff in their House at the end of the Summer Term. Last year's winner was House Seacole.

Attendance

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 Admin address above. I would also like to remind you of our text facility for informing us if your child is absent or late – please text to 07860 095596 giving your child's name and form on each day of absence and the reason for the absence.

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. Whilst we 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. 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.

Supporting the school

I very much 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 (or large!) regular donations to our School Fund as we are currently saving up to improve our learning resources and environment. Even the smallest of contributions can make a huge difference to an individual child and I am very grateful to those of you

who are already making regular or one-off contributions. Please see the *Support Us* section of our website under *Parents* for ideas for how you can support the school.

Communication with the school

This is a particularly lengthy newsletter at the start of the year and I assure you that I do try to balance keeping you up-to-date with developments against not overloading you with information. In case you have missed any communications, copies of all our letters home can be found on the school website - click on the updates at the top of the home page or go to Parents > Letters Home.

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:

Head of Year 7	-	Mr Nicholl
Head of Year 8	-	Mrs Allott
Head of Year 9	-	Miss Lawrence
Head of Year 10	-	Mrs Dayton
Head of Year 11	-	Miss Graves
Head/ Assistant Head of 6th Form	-	Mrs James / Mr Kench / Miss McLeman

The Senior Leadership Team is only to be involved if a matter is deemed to be **very serious** and cannot be resolved by the Subject Teacher, Head of Faculty, Form Tutor and Head of Year. Any matters concerning Child Protection will be dealt with by Mr Dudley (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or Mrs Alliot, Mrs Dayton, Miss Lawrence or Mr Wood (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads). Contact for Safeguarding issues should be through this email address - safeguarding@bishopatfield.herts.sch.uk

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

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 not be sent to individual members of staff unless previously agreed but to the school admin address admin@bishopatfield.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 (and pupils) 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 communication and/or bringing them to the attention of the school. Where email or social media is being misused, we 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, we will report this to the appropriate authority.

Exam results

Finally, as has already been documented in the local press and on our social media pages, we again celebrated a very successful set of A Level, BTEC and GCSE results with our Years 13 and 11 students over the summer. We had a unique set of circumstances surrounding exams this year but I am pleased to say that our pupils' continued efforts with their learning, the quality teaching they received and the support of families all worked together to achieve impressive outcomes. It is wonderful to see the exciting destinations that our Year 13 leavers are going on to next year and we are delighted that a record number of Year 11s have chosen to stay on into our 6th Form, which is the largest it has ever been. I am sure you will work with us going forward to secure the same successes for your child(ren). We know that the partnership between home and school is vital to pupil achievement.

Please email the school with any response to this newsletter or any subsequent query as your opinions and views are highly valued. I am 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. Please also continue to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, links to which can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A Wood
Headteacher

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES 2021-2022

AUTUMN TERM 2021

Wednesday 1st September to Friday 17th December 2021*

Half-Term: Monday 25th October to Friday 29th October

Inset Day 1 – Wednesday 1st September 2021 (no pupil attendance)

Inset Day 2 – Friday 8th October 2021 (no pupil attendance)

Inset Day 3 – Friday 22nd October 2021 (no pupil attendance)

Occasional Day – Monday 29th November (no pupil attendance)

*Covid testing on Thursday 2/9/21

* 6th Form Induction Friday 3/9/21. 6th Form teaching starts Monday 6/9/21

* Year 7 Induction Friday 3/9/21 and Monday 6/9/21

* Teaching for Years 7-13 from Tuesday 7/9/21

SPRING TERM 2022

Tuesday 4th January to Friday 1st April 2022

Half-Term: Monday 14th February to Friday 18th February

Inset Day 4 – Tuesday 8th February 2022 (no pupil attendance)

SUMMER TERM 2022

Tuesday 19th April to Friday 22nd July 2022

Half-Term: Monday 30th May to Friday 3rd June

Inset Day 5 – Tuesday 28th June 2022

