



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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5th September 2022

Start of Autumn Term Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

First of all, a very warm welcome to 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 all enjoy your time with the school. Whether you are new to Bishop's or an 'old hand', please take the opportunity to get involved and support the school, working with us to provide the best possible experience for everyone. These have been unprecedented and often challenging times, but we have been constantly fortified by the support and encouragement shown from parents, carers - and pupils.

Staff changes

We are pleased to welcome some new staff to the school and to announce some new positions of responsibility. I am incredibly fortunate in having such highly qualified and dedicated staff and I know that our new staff are looking forward to working with our pupils and parents/carers. Please see below the full list of our new arrivals, both teaching and non-teaching.

Ms Banks Subject Leader for Life Skills
Miss Blanchard Science
Ms Burnham PE
Mrs Clegg Maths
Miss Collins Science
Miss Ferguson Sociology
Mrs Frayne Law
Miss Gower Internship
Ms Hussain Science
Miss Knott Head of Year
Dr Lota Science
Mrs Mansfield Deputy Headteacher (English)
Miss Mather Geography
Ms McKinnell Subject Leader for Music
Ms Payne English
Miss Rajdev Business Studies and Maths
Mrs Taylor MFL
Miss Wighton Psychology and Health and Social Care
Mrs Wright Finance Assistant

"This is an OUTSTANDING school" - Ofsted 2016



Please note particularly the appointment of Mrs Mansfield as Deputy Head. Mrs Mansfield comes with a wealth of experience working in schools in Hertfordshire and North London and is our new Designated Safeguarding Lead. She will be writing to you separately to introduce herself to you as parents/carers and will be visiting assemblies this week.

Miss Knott will take over as Head of Year 8 from Ms Lawrence, who will be leaving us in the next few weeks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Lawrence for her contribution to the school, both as a Head of Year and also in leading on our Mental Health initiatives in recent years. Her work has been very highly valued.

We also have some of our current staff who have taken on new roles within the school. Mrs Langston joins the Senior Leadership Team as Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Assessment and Pupil Progress. She is joined on the SLT by Ms Asante-Ansong, who becomes an Associate Assistant Headteacher. She remains as Head of Science but will also be working on how we can further develop the Bishop's 360 at school (for more information about the Bishop's 360, please see our website here: [Curriculum Statement](#)). Mrs Starling is the new Head of the Mathematics and Computing Faculty, Miss Andreone is the Subject Leader for Religious Studies and Mrs Ruffhead remains Head of Humanities but also has responsibility for Geography and Social Sciences. Miss Maisey continues in her role as Subject Leader for History and also becomes our Equality and Diversity Lead. We also have two new Heads of House: Miss Mizon for House Parr and Miss Esterhuizen for House Hadid. We also welcome a new Chef to the school canteen, Mr James Bachelor.

Cost of living

I recognise that many in the school community will be very concerned at the recent rises in the cost of living and in particular in energy bills. I know that this will be having a significant effect on many of you and as a school we will always try to support our families as much as we can. I wish that we were in a position to offer more support, however the impact on our school budget of the rising costs is going to be very significant. There is no cap on energy bills for schools and despite eye-watering rises in our costs, no additional government funding has as yet been made available.

It is worth reminding you that anyone who thinks they may be eligible for Free School Meals should enquire into this by visiting the HCC site here: www.hertsdirect.org/freeschoolmeals.

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 **any two items** at lunchtime and this amount will be automatically loaded onto their WisePay account prior to lunchtime so they can pay using the thumb reader. This ensures that confidentiality is maintained. They can choose to purchase a main meal at lunchtime as well as a sandwich or baguette for eating after school if they wish. Please note that FSM is only available at lunchtime.

Lunch Loan facility – any pupil who has forgotten their 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.

There is a range of support available locally for families who are concerned about their finances and this page from Welwyn Hatfield Council is particularly useful [Help with the cost of living – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council](#).

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 noted above, there is currently huge pressure on our budget and even the smallest of contributions can make a big difference to an individual child. I am very grateful to those of you who are already making regular or one-off contributions. Please see the [Supporting The School](#) section of our website under *Parents* for ideas for how you can help the school.

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 | Miss Esterhuizen |
| House Parr | Miss Mizon |
| House Seacole | Miss Maisey |

Pupils can win House Points for positive behaviour such as attending Enrichment clubs, 100% attendance, 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 Franklin.

Extra-Curricular Activities / Enrichment Programme

Our full enrichment programme will begin on Monday 12th September and the timetable is posted on the website [Introduction To Enrichment](#). Our enrichment programme really is unrivalled and a very special part of Bishop's - I am yet to find a school that offers such a wide range of activities. 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.

School day timings

A reminder that we have slightly amended the timings of the school day. The new timings are as follows:

| | |
|--|--|
| 8.00 am | Library opens. Homework club starts. |
| *8.35 a.m. | Warning bell |
| *8.40 a.m. | Registration followed by Assembly/Tutorial Time. |
| *9.00 a.m. | Period 1 begins. |
| 9:50 a.m. | Period 2 begins. |
| *10.40 - 11.00 a.m. | Break. |
| *10.55 a.m. | Warning bell. |
| *11.00 a.m. | Period 3 begins. |
| 11.50 a.m. | Period 4 begins. |
| *12:40 p.m. | End of morning school. |
| 12.40 pm – *12.50pm – 1 st lunch queue | |
| 12.50 pm - 2 nd lunch queue | |
| *1.15 p.m. | Warning bell. |
| *1.20 p.m. | Period 5 begins. |
| 2.10 p.m. | Period 6 begins |
| *3.00 p.m. | End of lessons. |
| All pupils should return to their Form Rooms to collect what they need to go home. Those staying for enrichment activities, detention etc. must take all their books from the Form Room first and not return there afterwards. | |
| 3:00 – *3.50 p.m. Enrichment Activities (except Tuesdays). Homework Club (daily). Pupils must leave their form rooms by 3.15 pm. | |
| 4.00 pm | Library closes. |
| Please note: pupils who have to wait for buses or lifts from parents should come to the Dining Hall or wait outside. The Library is also open until 4.00 p.m. where homework can be completed and there is a Homework Club in Room 113 until 3.50 pm. | |
| *a bell will sound at these times | |

Please also remember 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 both for Bishop’s pupils and for those in our neighbouring schools. 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.

Pupil Planners

The pupil planner/homework diary should 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.

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.

All parents and carers should have received a text message on Friday with their new individual absence number which is to be used if you need to report your child's absence. A letter went out on Friday explaining this new system so please check that you received this, or go to our website for a copy. If you did not receive this text then please call the school office as we may not have your up-to-date mobile number.

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 pupil 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 appointments can only take place in school hours but whenever possible please do try to make appointments outside school hours or during the holidays. Your child should always attend for as much of the school day as possible, even if that means being picked up part way through the day or returning after an appointment.

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 [Letters Home – Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School](#) .

We have established systems at Bishop's to enable issues to be dealt with at an appropriate level by the appropriate person. Subject matters should be 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 | - | Miss Lawrence/Miss Knott |
| Head of Year 9 | - | Mrs Alliot |
| Head of Year 10 | - | Miss Graves |
| Head of Year 11 | - | Mrs Dayton |
| Head/ Assistant Head of 6th Form | - | Mrs James / Mr Kench |

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 or Head of Year. Any matters concerning Child Protection will be dealt with by Mrs Mansfield (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or the core Safeguarding Team of Mrs Jackson, Mrs Alliot and Mrs Dayton (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads - DDSLs). In addition to the core team we have four other staff who are qualified DDSLs: Mr Wood, Miss Graves, Mr Lister and Mr Nichol . We also have a specific email address for raising safeguarding concerns: - safeguarding@bishophatfield.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@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk. These will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, who will endeavour to respond within 48 hours.
- Parents/carers should not expect emails to be read or responded to out of school hours. They should also not expect to be put through immediately to specific staff by phone as they are often busy or teaching.
- 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. Unfortunately, I have on rare occasions had to contact parents/carers about the nature of their communication with the school. The Governing Body has made it very clear that our staff should be protected against any abusive, disrespectful or malicious communication, up to and including banning parents/carers from any form of contact should this be deemed necessary.

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 Year 13 and 11 students over the summer. 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 some truly outstanding

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 the vast majority 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