



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

Headteacher: Mr A Wood BA (Oxon), PGCE, MBA, NPQH

Woods Avenue, Hatfield, Herts AL10 8NL T: 01707 275331

Email: admin@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk Website: www.bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk

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Newsletter - March 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

I have used my end of term assemblies to talk to all of our pupils about the importance of having regard for ourselves, and also for others. This is a key part of the character development element of the Bishop's 360. Balancing the need to look after ourselves with showing consideration for others can be difficult at times, but I do see this happening frequently at our school, with pupils and staff demonstrating how caring and thoughtful they are. Of course there are hiccups, and teenagers inevitably struggle to regulate their emotions at times, but the friendliness of our school as a community is something that visitors regularly comment on - and something that I know you as parents and carers value.

I want to also reference in this newsletter the tragic case of headteacher Ruth Perry, whom I'm sure many of you will have read about in the news. Ms Perry took her own life shortly after the result of an Ofsted inspection that took place in her school. Ms Perry's family have been very clear that they feel that her mental health was severely affected by the stress she was under, particularly after a negative Ofsted outcome. This has given me considerable pause for reflection on our own Ofsted experience. I have always been clear to our governors, staff, pupils and parents/carers that we should not be driven by Ofsted and that our goal is not to please them. However, I am aware that we use Ofsted logos and the outcome of our inspections to promote the school. I am increasingly uncomfortable with doing this as I feel we are reinforcing an inspection system that I do not believe benefits pupils, leads to punitive judgements and puts unnecessary pressure on schools and those who work in them. There is a statutory requirement for schools to publicise their Ofsted reports, but we will be reviewing the extent to which we use Ofsted 'branding' in our website and communications. This is a gradual process and will take a little time to work through but you may spot some initial changes in this newsletter. I would be very interested to hear parent/carer views on this.

Enrichment

Next term's enrichment programme has been published and as ever there is an enormous range of exciting clubs and activities for your child to get involved with. There is a very clear correlation between participation in enrichment and pupils' enjoyment of school, so please do encourage your

"Pupils flourish, and support each other to succeed"



child to sign up to at least one activity. Our clubs give pupils opportunities to gain experiences beyond the classroom and help them to develop friendships as well as to develop their interests.

House Competition

Attendance at enrichment also earns House Points for pupils and the current competition is hotting up nicely. The current overall points totals are as follows:

Austen	17183 House Points
Franklin	16763 House Points
Hadid	17169 House Points
Parr	15855 House Points
Seacole	15196 House Points

A very special well done to the following pupils who have the highest number of House Points in their year group:

Year 7	Siena-Maria Musso-Hall 7Au
Year 8	Babara Idowu 8Au
Year 9	Polly Chambers 9Pa
Year 10	Libby Porter 10Au
Year 11	Marinela Covaci 11Au
Year 12	Esme Wallace 12Fr
Year 13	Jo North 13Fr

Home-School Agreement

As we pass the midpoint of the year it is timely to remind all parents, carers and pupils that on joining the school you subscribed to our Home-School Agreement - a copy of which can be found on our website here: [Home School Agreement – Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School](#). This agreement demonstrates our commitment to you and to our pupils. I know that for many of you, one of your reasons for choosing Bishop's was because of the high expectations we have of our pupils and the clear rules we follow. It is disappointing that a few pupils and parents recently have questioned our rules and seem to think that they can pick and choose which ones they have to follow. By enrolling in our school all pupils are subject to all of our rules (regardless of whether they signed the Home-School Agreement) and can expect to be sanctioned accordingly. If pupils or parents cannot subscribe to our rules then it is probably time to consider looking for a different school; one that more closely aligns with their own values.

We review our school policies and Actions and Consequences document [Actions & Consequences 2022-23](#) regularly and include School Council in our discussions to ensure that we hear our pupils' voices. Once settled, we expect everyone to abide by the rules, whether they agree with them or not.

Uniform/jewellery

Can I please ask you to ensure that over the Easter break you make sure that your child is ready to meet our uniform expectations when they return to school. This means: a skirt of appropriate length; no nose or additional ear piercings (only single plain stud earrings are permitted); appropriate school shoes (no trainers or boots); hair that is of a natural colour. Pupils should not be wearing makeup, eyelash extensions, or any form of nail adornments. Jewellery, including bracelets and necklaces, should not be worn.

We will be sending pupils home and/or isolating them from lessons where they do not comply with these simple expectations. Jewellery will be confiscated and returned at the end of half term.

We very much appreciate your support in enforcing these uniform expectations as they are an important part of what it means to be a Bishop's pupil. Please do not ask for exceptions to be made, or listen to your child when they say that 'everyone else does it' - it is not true. In fact they are making themselves stand out by not following these expectations, and for all the wrong reasons.

Vaping

This week Dr Bune has delivered assemblies to each year group on the health risks of vaping. Vaping is a growing issue for schools nationally, with vaping products deliberately marketed to make them attractive to young people. There is growing concern among UK medical professionals over the risk to young people's health. Please could we ask that you talk to your child about the assemblies they have had this week. We have also reminded pupils that they risk a suspension if they are either found to be vaping (or be in the company of someone else vaping) or in the possession of a vape in school, as is made clear in our Actions & Consequences.

Arbor Parent Portal and App

We have launched our Arbor parent portal and App and would ask you to take a few minutes to register for this if you haven't already done so. As well as enabling you to update your personal contact details and view your child's attendance, the app will enable you to easily access and read school communications. [Arbor-Parent-Portal-and-App-2023](#)

Free School Meals

We know that many families have suffered financial difficulties in recent times. You may be eligible to apply for Free School Meals (FSM) for your child(ren). You can check your eligibility here [Free school meals](#) and we strongly encourage parents/carers to apply if they are eligible. The funding is allocated to a pupil's WisePay lunch account and so they simply use their thumb to pay for lunch, alongside everyone else. Even if this is only required for a short period of time it is still worth

applying as this will trigger Pupil Premium funding to the school which can be used to subsidise things like school trips and visits, books and equipment and uniform. Please contact the school if you need help with an application.

School Catering

Aspens, our new caterers, started after half term and the overall feedback has been very positive. Indeed one of the main complaints now is that the queue can take too long as the canteen is better value and so more popular! Aspens have advised us that the chicken they purchase is halal and that they are increasing their range of vegetarian and vegan options in response to demand. As the Summer Term commences it is worth reminding you that our outdoor Lunch Box is open at break and lunchtime for pupils to buy a range of light snacks.

Changes to the school calendar

As you may know, there is an additional Bank Holiday on Monday 8th May in celebration of the coronation of King Charles III. School will be closed on this date.

We will also have an additional early closure on Wednesday 12th July This has been authorised by the Governing Body to give staff time to work on key school improvement planning for next year. We have timed this to avoid having an impact on exam classes and school will finish at lunchtime on this day. I have included the key term dates for the remainder of this term and for next year at the bottom of the newsletter. Please refer to the calendar on the school website for details on other upcoming school events.

Parent Governor Vacancy

There is currently a vacancy for a parent governor on the school's Governing Body which is also known as the Board of Trustees. 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, you will need to complete and **return the form at the end of this letter to the school office by 9.00am on Monday 17th April 2023** or email to admin@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk. Details of the application process are attached separately. Please do email the school if you have any questions about this.

Training to Teach

Are you interested in training to teach? Do you know anyone who is? We work with the Alban Federation to support trainee teachers, either through placements here or in other schools around Hertfordshire. Teaching remains one of the most rewarding and exciting professions and now more than ever we need people to join us in helping the next generation to learn and achieve their potential. You can find out more from this link <https://albanfederation.com/> or please do contact us directly at Bishop's if you would like to know more about the application process.

Goodbyes

We have a few goodbyes to say this term. Ms Dalziel is retiring from her role as Exams Officer. She has worked at the school for nearly 10 years and in that time has supported many hundreds of pupils through their exams, ensuring that everything is in place for them. She will be greatly missed by staff and pupils for the warm and caring way that she has approached her work. I am pleased to announce that Mrs Jennifer Cameron has already taken up the vacant post of Exams Officer and many of you will already have received communication from her about exam-related matters. Mrs Clegg and Ms Collins are leaving their roles in the Mathematics & Computing and Science Faculties respectively. Ms Collins has kindly agreed to continue to work with her Year 13 Biology group for the last few weeks after Easter before they go on study leave, but will not be teaching her other groups. Ms Banks from the Health Faculty is leaving us to seek a new career path in personal training and Ms Gower is leaving the Learning Support Faculty to pursue new interests. Although they have not been with us long I would like to thank all these staff for the contributions they have made to the school and for their hard work and commitment to Bishop's.

End of term/start of term

Term finishes on Friday 31st March at the usual time of 3 pm. We return on Monday 17th April with the usual 8.35 am start time.

I know that our staff are looking forward to a well-deserved break after rising to all the challenges of the term and I am sure you will join me in thanking them for their efforts.

As ever, if you have any feedback please do email the school admin address; I am not always able to reply to each response individually, but all comments are noted and acted upon where appropriate.

Best wishes to you and your family for the Easter break. I know that many of you celebrate religious festivals at this time of year and would like to wish everyone the very best in their celebrations.

Mr A Wood
Headteacher

School Term and Holiday Dates

Summer Term 2023

Tuesday 17th April 2023 – Friday 21st July 2023

Monday 1 st May	Bank Holiday
Monday 8 th May	Bank Holiday
Tuesday 27 th June	INSET Day
Wednesday 12 th July	Early closure (lessons finish at lunchtime)

Half term: *Monday 29th May - Friday 2nd June 2023*

Other date:

Secondary transfer day (Year 6 into 7): Thursday 13th July 2023

(school will continue as normal for all year groups)

AUTUMN TERM 2023

Friday 1st September to Wednesday 20th December 2023

Half-Term: Monday 23rd October to Friday 27th October

INSET Day – Friday 1st September (no pupil attendance)

Monday 4th September & Tuesday 5th September - 6th Form and Year 7 induction only - details tbc

Teaching for all years will start on Wednesday 6th September

INSET Day – Monday 9th October (no pupil attendance)

INSET Day – Friday 20th October (no pupil attendance - disaggregated for staff)

OCCASIONAL Day – Friday 24th November (no pupil or staff attendance)

SPRING TERM 2024

Thursday 4th January to Thursday 28th March 2024

Half-Term: Monday 19th February to Friday 23rd February

INSET Day – Friday 16th February (no pupil attendance)

SUMMER TERM 2024

Monday 15th April to Tuesday 23rd July 2024

Half-Term: Monday 27th May to Friday 31st May

INSET Days – Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd July (no pupil attendance - disaggregated for staff)