



# Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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5th September 2023

## Start of Autumn Term Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you had an enjoyable summer and an especially warm welcome to those of you who are new to 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. Your support as parents and carers is vital to us and we know from long experience that giving the school your backing makes a huge difference to our pupils.

In case you were worrying, I want to reassure you that our school building does not have any Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) and so is not affected by problems that have been in the media recently - a great relief to us here, but a huge issue for those affected!

### **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 newcomers are looking forward to working with our staff, pupils and parents/carers. Please see below the full list of our new arrivals, both teaching and non-teaching.

**Miss Nelson** Teacher of PE  
**Ms Reid** Teacher of Science  
**Miss Rollings** Teacher of PE  
**Ms Cameron** Teacher of English  
**Mrs McGilvray** Teacher of Art  
**Miss Pymont** Teacher of Sociology  
**Mrs Awla** Teacher of Biology  
**Mrs Day** Reception/Reprographics  
**Miss Hockley** Finance

We also have some of our existing staff taking on new roles. Mrs Armstrong is now Head of Expressive Arts, Mr Goodall and Mr Webster are now joint Subject Leaders for Computing and Miss Andreone is the new Head of House Hadid.

*"Pupils flourish and support each other to succeed"*



## Uniform

We would like to make all parents and carers aware that in the Autumn term the senior leadership will have a renewed focus on uniform standards. This is something that both the SLT and the staff at the school feel very strongly about. Please be aware that pupils will be issued with sanctions if they do not adhere to uniform rules, this includes sending pupils home if they do not conform to our expectations, for example regarding hair colour, nails, make-up or any other uniform items. School jumpers should not be knotted or tied up at the back. Your support in ensuring that your child attends school appropriately dressed and adhering to our uniform expectations is very much appreciated.

There is an additional page in the planner this year regarding school uniform. Staff will use this page to log any uniform infringements such as skirt length, make-up or shoe style. We will be following up with appropriate sanctions for repeat offenders but would ask you to review this page yourself and remind your child(ren) that meeting our expectations regarding uniform is a key to being part of the school community.

## Cost of living

This time last year I noted in my Newsletter that cost of living pressures were affecting many in our community. That has certainly not changed and I know that financial anxieties are a concern for some. As a school we will always try to support our families as much as we can, though I wish that we were in a position to offer more. Although there have been some welcome developments with regard to teachers' pay over the summer, there remain very significant problems with school funding, both here at Bishop's and nationally.

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: [Free school meals | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

There are significant advantages to receiving free school meals. As well as the daily meal, pupils may also receive assistance in paying for school trips, extra-curricular activities or equipment. As they go up the school they would 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.

## Supporting the school

As stated above, we 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!) 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 Andreone
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 11th September and the timetable will be 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. 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.

## Drop off/pick up

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 as this causes congestion and is particularly dangerous both for our own pupils and for those at Southfield School. Due to the nature of their school, many Southfields pupils have mobility issues and it is incredibly inconsiderate to their needs for parents to block access or cause congestion along Woods Avenue.** There are local car parks in Hatfield Town Centre and quieter streets a short walk from school that will not only avoid causing congestion outside the school, but give your child a valuable opportunity to get a moment of fresh air and exercise at the end of the day. 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. We have been informed by Herts Police that they will be conducting regular patrols.

## 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. Please do check it yourself regularly. By monitoring the planner, we can all 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

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 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.

You may be aware the attendance rates nationally have been flagged by the government as a cause for concern and the aim at Bishop's is for all pupils to have 100% attendance. There is a significant correlation between pupil attendance and achievement. It is not school policy to routinely set remote work for pupils to complete when they are off school as this adds to staff workload and also encourages the idea that working at home is an effective substitute for being at school. There are many lessons from the pandemic, but a crucial one is that there is no substitute for being at school, learning from teachers and peers.

## Communication with the school

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. Our main system for communication is Arbor and we would strongly encourage you to download the Arbor App or log into the Arbor online portal which enables you to update your contact information as well as send messages to the school. Should there be any difficulties with accessing this then please email the school using the admin@ address above.

Pupil timetables are available on Arbor. Please note that some timetable changes may have been made over the summer and so you should check the timetable as of today's date for the most up-to-date and accurate version.

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	-	Miss Lawrence
Head of Year 8	-	Mrs Gillham
Head of Year 9	-	Ms Knott
Head of Year 10	-	Mrs Alliot
Head of Year 11	-	Miss Graves
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 Jackson (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or the core Safeguarding Team of Mrs Mansfield, Mrs Alliot, Ms Knott and Mr Lister (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads - DDSLs). In addition to the core team we have three other staff who are qualified DDSLs: Mr Wood, Miss Graves, Ms Lawrence and Ms Carroll. We also have a specific email address for raising safeguarding concerns: - [safeguarding@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk](mailto: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](mailto:admin@bishophatfield.herts.sch.uk). These will be forwarded to the appropriate member of staff, who will endeavour to give an initial response within 2 working days.
- 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 you may have seen 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 incredibly proud of our pupils' achievements. This was the first year post-Covid that had no adjustments or alterations in place to make allowances for the disruptions that they faced. I am pleased to say that our pupils' hard work and perseverance, 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 once again the vast majority of Year 11s have chosen to stay on into our 6th Form. I am sure you will work with us going forward to secure the same successes for your child(ren).

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 (X) and Instagram, links to which can be found on our website.

Yours sincerely,



Mr A Wood  
Headteacher