



Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School

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BHGS is a company limited by guarantee Company number: 07831507 Charity number: EW01517



Friday 16th February 2024

February 2024 - Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers,

I must start this Newsletter by thanking everyone involved in the Gym and Dance Showcase for producing two fantastic evenings last week. It was such a pleasure to see so many pupils involved, from Year 7 through to Year 13 - and what a display of creativity and energy! I know how hard everyone worked to bring the showcase together and a special thank you to the staff involved. Events such as these would not take place without the commitment and dedication of our staff who give up their own time to provide such fantastic opportunities for our pupils. I still have some of the backing tracks going around in my head; and my feet are still tapping along!

Many of you follow our social media accounts so will be well aware of the number of extra-curricular trips and activities that have taken place already this term. We will be sending out our regular half-termly update and once again it shows just how much is going on at school. It has also been lovely to see parents and carers helping out at some of these events: offering to be an extra pair of hands on a trip; offering experience and expertise at careers events; working with the Parents' Association, the list goes on. We always welcome offers of support and thank you to everyone who has contributed in this way.

I also want to thank those of you who have made a financial contribution to the school. School budgets are under huge pressure currently and unfortunately ours is no exception. Our funding does not keep pace with inflation and it is increasingly difficult to continue to provide the quality of provision on current funding levels. There are many ways that you can support us financially and you can view these on the supporting the school page of our website: [Support Us](#)

I am particularly grateful to those parents/carers who have supported us either with a regular standing order or by a one-off payment. The form for doing this can be found here (every contribution goes towards school activities that benefit all our pupils): [Gift Aid Form](#)

Year 11 into Sixth Form

I want to thank our Year 11s for how well they approached their Sixth Form interviews recently. We use these interviews to discuss each pupil's plans for after they finish their GCSEs and to make sure that we support them with the advice and guidance that they need. Bishop's is a seven-year journey and all the staff involved reported back on how impressed they were with our pupils' ability to reflect on their journey so far and look forward to the next 2 years in our Sixth Form. It was lovely to hear pupils speak so positively about their experiences at Bishop's and to share their excitement about the opportunities that our Sixth Form will offer them next year.

"Pupils flourish and support each other to succeed"



On the afternoon of Thursday 15th February we took all of Year 11 out onto the field to take part in what has become our annual Bishop's Warriors event. As their GCSEs approach this can be a stressful time for Year 11 and getting them all outside and taking part in some fun and challenging activities was a great way to help them to switch off and enjoy themselves. The 'Tunnel of Terror' and the waterslide seemed to be particular favourites!

Department for Education Results Data

The Department for Education has recently published its updated data on the 2023 examination results, including for A Levels. This Newsletter clearly shows that Bishop's is not an 'exam factory' and that we place as much importance on developing the whole person as on academic attainment. However, it is great to see the published results confirm that Bishop's is among the top attaining schools not just in Hertfordshire but in England.

At A Level:

- Bishop's is in the **top 6% of schools in the country** for Best 3 A Levels
- Bishop's is in the **top 10% of schools in the country** for A Level Average Points Score

Bishop's is also 8th in Hertfordshire state schools for Best 3 A Levels. The schools above us all 'select out' their 6th Forms by putting in place high entry requirements. We are proud of the inclusive nature of our Sixth Form and to achieve these results whilst retaining a genuinely comprehensive ethos is especially pleasing.

At Key Stage 4:

- Bishop's is in the **top 5% of schools in the country** for pupil progress (Progress 8)
- Bishop's is in the **top 12% of schools in the country** for attainment at GCSE

We are especially pleased to be placed 4th in the whole of Hertfordshire for pupil progress. Exam results are certainly not everything but they can open doors for our pupils and these outcomes are a testament to the hard work of the students, the skill and dedication of their teachers and of course the support given at home.

Lockers

A reminder that all pupils in Years 7-11 should have a functioning padlock on their locker and they should let their form tutor know the code. Pupils should not disclose their code to anyone else, or leave their locker unlocked. If something goes missing from a locker that has not been padlocked then there really is very little we can do about it. We are fortunate to have an open door policy at school. We do not lock classrooms and trust the community to respect this. However, keeping your own belongings safe is each individual's responsibility and whilst we may be able to investigate when items get lost or go missing there is often little we can do if they have not been kept safely.

This is also an opportunity to remind you that pupils should not bring any items of high value to school. This includes expensive watches or mobile phones which can get lost or damaged. The school's insurance does not cover any losses and we strongly advise against giving your child any items of high value to bring to school.

Pick up/Drop off

It is frustrating to once again have to write to remind you to please avoid using the road in front of the school to pick up your child at the end of the day. Cars waiting in this area cause an obstruction and there have been a number of recent near misses due to cars blocking access or making it impossible for cars coming out of school to see what is coming along Woods Avenue. The yellow markers are there for a reason and we should not have to wait for traffic wardens to patrol the area in

order for everyone to drive safely. There are many quiet places a short walk from school where parents who need to collect their children can wait safely. Please do not park in front of the entrance gate. We keep this gate closed at 3pm as we know from experience that opening it causes more congestion and it needs to be kept clear so that those who need to access school, for example for medical reasons, can do so safely.

There have been a few examples recently of people driving into the school using the **exit** gate. **This is exceptionally dangerous and likely to cause an accident.**

Attendance & Punctuality

Our whole school attendance figure is currently just over 93% which I pleased to say is well above the national average. You are probably aware that the Department for Education has made improving pupil attendance a significant priority nationally and we work with the Local Authority Attendance Team to improve attendance at Bishop's.

As we reach the halfway point of the year it is worth noting that even **93%** attendance would mean that a pupil has:

- **missed 7 days of school**
- **missed 42 lessons**

Inevitably this has an impact on learning. Our target is for all pupils to have at least 95% attendance and we welcome your support in achieving this. Many of our pupils have 100% attendance which is fantastic. The Department for Education is clear that ultimately it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school. Please note that it is not our policy to routinely set work online for pupils who are absent.

Since the start of term we have been issuing lunchtime detentions for pupils who arrive late to school without a valid reason. This has led to significant improvement in overall punctuality so thank you for your support with this. Please note that we also sanction pupils who arrive late to lessons during the school day.

House Competition

The latest totals for the House Competition are as follows:

Austen	16541 House Points
Franklin	15644 House Points
Hadid	15710 House Points
Parr	14375 House Points
Seacole	15416 House Points

There has been a lot of movement recently and a reminder that pupils pick up points for attending enrichment activities so do encourage your child to attend these and to join in with our regular House Competitions.

Energy Drinks

Pupils should not bring high caffeine 'energy drinks' to school. These drinks are not recommended for ages 16 and under and we also recommend that Sixth-Formers do not purchase them. A number of supermarkets have voluntary bans on the sale of these drinks to young people due to the health risks they pose and we would advise against pupils drinking them in or out of school.

Herts Young Persons Advisory Group

There is an exciting opportunity for pupils to join the Herts YPAG. This group meets with researchers at the University of Hertfordshire to discuss issues relating to young people in Hertfordshire and nationally. If you think your child would benefit from being part of this group then you can find out more information here: <https://generationr.org.uk/joinhertsyag/>

Free School Meals

I would encourage every parent and carer who thinks that their child might be eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) to contact HCC to find out. There are significant advantages to receiving FSM. 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. Even temporary eligibility can bring these benefits. Pupils receiving FSM may select any two menu items regardless of price, for instance a main meal and a dessert or fruit pot. All meals are processed using the thumb scanner which ensures that confidentiality is maintained. Further information can be found on [Free school meals | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

Tuesday 27th February - Early Closure for Year 7, 8 and 10

A reminder that there is an early closure for these year groups on 27th February due to our Year 9 Options Afternoon. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 10 will be dismissed at 12.40 pm. There will be lunches available for pupils in receipt of Free School Meals. Year 11 will remain in school for a Mathematics mock paper. Sixth Form lessons continue as normal and Year 9 will be dismissed from 2.45 pm. Reg's Coach will depart at 12.50 pm and there will be no coach at 3.15 pm.

Please send any comments or queries you may have regarding anything in this newsletter via our admin@ email. I am not always able to respond to each individual comment, but can assure that I do always take the time to consider the points made and take action where appropriate.

Thank you as always for the support that you give to your child(ren) and to the school. It is the positive partnership between school and home that creates the best environment for our pupils to succeed. We know that parenting brings its challenges, especially in the teenage years, but also know that by working together we can overcome any bumps along the road that may try to trip our pupils up.

Yours sincerely,



Mr A Wood
Headteacher