

Friday 17th May 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been another busy, productive and positive week on many fronts across our Academy and I wanted to update you on some key areas of feedback, as well as provide you with key updates as we head into the final week of the half term.

I had the pleasure this week of meeting some members of our Parent Forum and a small number of parents / carers at our Meet the Principal and Leadership Team meeting. In both meetings, I had the opportunity to speak about our Trust vision, my approach to leadership to drive BHA forward and our joint responsibility of improving the reputation of our Academy in our community and across the city. Most importantly, however, I had the chance to address some queries and misconceptions.

Standards & Expectations:

I would like to thank the overwhelming majority of parents who are supporting our positive focus on uniform standards across our Academy. There has been a significant decrease in pupils wearing jewellery and the vast majority of pupils are wearing their correct uniform with a sense of pride. As previously stated, when warm weather graces us, we review the wearing of jumpers and as of Monday 20th May, and for the remainder of the Summer Term, jumpers will be optional.

A discussion point in our Parent Forum focussed on our rules, standards and expectations, so I want to take the opportunity to address some misconceptions and assure parents of our approach.

Behaviour and disruption to learning is a well-publicised national challenge and although there is not one prescribed approach, the most impactful remedy which successful schools adopt includes the following key principles: taught habits, strong routines, consistent social norms and clear consequences for misbehaviour. Evidence based research states that all pupils should be held to high standards of behaviour and this is crucial in providing a safe learning environment which maximises learning time and minimises negative challenging behaviour when staff uphold our rules.

A current challenge is pupils who are defiant and not following reasonable instructions from staff. This is unacceptable and we have trained staff this week on clear strategies to support this challenge, as well as sharing with pupils our expectations and their personal responsibility in Academic Review. As parents, we understand the importance of teaching our children the meaning of the word 'no' and I appreciate your support in upholding this as there is a challenge across society with some young people understanding the difference between what they want to do and what they are permitted to do.

Communication:

The Parent Forum made me aware of a social media page and how this has been used as a tool for a small minority of parents / carers to share concerns / negative experiences they may have had. I stated in both meetings that my approach is to work in partnership with parents / carers and that, as I've stated before, as a parent myself, I have high standards and expectations of and for our children.

To support our positive drive to raise our standards and our reputation, I ask all parents / carers to share loud and proud our positive work, but if you do have any concerns to contact us directly, as opposed to using social media, and work positively with us to find a solution. We may not always agree on an outcome, and we will follow our Academy policies to uphold a safe learning environment, but we will always work respectfully and positively with families to ensure your child can thrive at BHA.

Please note, however, as our staff are working throughout the day, they may not be available when you contact and any communication from parents / carers will be acknowledged and responded to within 48 hours, asides from serious matters of safeguarding / child protection, which will be followed up as a matter of urgency. May I remind you, our office staff are here to help you, as well as other visitors to our Academy, and it is a busy office environment. I ask all parents / carers to be patient and respectful at all times and I must make clear that any incidents of verbal abuse of our staff will not be tolerated.

Toilet access / Drinking water:

We operate a fair and structured system to allow pupils access to toilets throughout the day which is common in many schools across the country, whilst encouraging pupils to access the toilets during break and lunch so they do not miss out on valuable learning time. In lessons, teachers will use their professional judgement and we will contact home for any pupils who are regularly looking to exit lessons to use the bathroom to discuss any potential medical concerns or if it is just the pupil taking the opportunity to avoid the challenge of learning.

We have a number of water fountains around the Academy which pupils are allowed to access before the start of the Academy day, during break / lunch and at the end of the day. If these are busy, we have cold water taps in our toilets which are also drinking water taps like at home and this ensures that pupils have access to water at appropriate times. These are being labelled appropriately to easily identify.

Year 11:

Our Y11 pupils have made such a strong start to their GCSE exams. Pupils have navigated their way through the first two weeks of examinations brilliantly and I am proud of their mature response to stressful situations. Please continue to support them at home by encouraging them to revise, it is such a short time in their lives but has a huge impact on their future! We continue to have our usual timetabled lessons and intervention sessions planned throughout next week, until Thursday 23rd May, so please ensure your child continues to attend and takes full advantage of the support from staff.

DATE	START	LENGTH	EXAM
Monday 20th May	08:30	2:30	English Lit: Prose & Poetry
Tuesday 21st May	13:00	1:30	Computer Science
Wednesday 22nd May	08:30	1:45	Science and Physics
Thursday 23rd May	08:30	1:45	Eng Lang: 20th Century Lit
Thursday 23rd May	13:00	1:20	ICT: Onscreen exam

Senior Pupil Leadership Team:

I am delighted to share with you that following a final round of interviews, we have selected our six pupils to represent BHA as our Senior Pupil Leaders All pupils interviewed had a strong sense of community, that consciously strove towards realising our motto of 'Aspire to Be More' and it was a difficult decision to make Our chosen super six, however, shone brightly and all are fantastic role models who I look forward to working with in this exciting role over the next year!



Summer Show:

On Thursday 23rd May at 6pm, the Performing Arts Department warmly invites you to join them in celebrating the talents of our pupils from the performing arts department. The evening will begin at 6pm and tickets can be purchased on ParentPay for £2.50 which includes a refreshment during the interval. We would like as many of our school community as possible to join us for what will be a fantastic evening of music, drama performances and entertainment.

Feedback from the community - Parking on Birches Head Road:

I ask parents and carers not to park on Birches Head Road, it is making access for residents very difficult, and it is also hazardous for our pupils with so many moving cars. Please park on the top car park of the school site or consider whether your child can walk to the academy to avoid congestion.

Dates to remember

Thursday 23rd May 2024: Year 11 Study Leave begins

Thursday 23rd May 2024: Summer Show

Friday 14th June: Visit from MP Jonathan Gullis

Friday 21st June 2024: Year 11 Leavers Assembly

Thursday 27th June 2024: Year 11 Prom

Friday 28th June 2024: Examination contingency day

Thursday 11th July: Awards Evening

I thank you for your continued support and I welcome your feedback and working in partnership as we move forward together as Team BHA and deliver on our school vision.

Please do contact us if you need this information in any other language or format, or if you have any questions or concerns. You can contact the office by email on info@bircheshead.org.uk.

Yours faithfully,

Mr P Masher
Principal