



BEDFORD
FREE SCHOOL

www.bedfordfreeschool.co.uk

20th October 2022

Dear Parents / Carers & Pupils,

Parking

Following a personal visit from Mayor Dave Hodgson (regarding this matter), I promised him that I would prioritise a reminder about parking in the next newsletter. The school has also been contacted by local residents including parents of pupils at the school to complain about this. Ten years ago, the school opening was strongly contested mainly due to concerns over drop off/pick up on a busy roundabout. In order to make sure all our pupils and the surrounding community and traffic was kept safe an agreed parking plan was put into place.

Every single parent/carer and pupil signs the Home School Agreement, part of which states:

- *I will only drop my child off in the designated travel plan place of Melbourne Street car park, (and absolutely NOT outside school)*

I implore you to model a good sense of community mindedness to your children and abide by the agreed plan for the good of our pupils and the wider community.

Attendance

Attending school every day is so important. A recent Department for Education (DfE) study concluded that: *“The higher the percentage of sessions missed the lower the level of attainment. Among pupils with no missed sessions, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent”.*

Someone who is persistently absent has an attendance percentage lower than 90%. When considering attendance percentage:

- 90% attendance = 1/2 a day a week missed
- 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed every school year
- 90% attendance = 1/2 a school year missed every 5 years

On average, if attendance drops to 90% students see an entire grade drop in each of their GCSE subjects! This is why we use this as our guide:

100% - 98% No concern
98%-95% Monitor carefully
95% - 90% Concern; at risk of underachievement
90% -85% Severe risk of underachievement
85% Very probable underachievement

..and why we expect all pupil’s attendance percentage to be in the green band.

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RESPECT • HONESTY • HIGH EXPECTATIONS



Another reminder of the parent section of the Home School Agreement:

- I will not plan for family holidays or other extended absences during term time.
- I will make certain that my child attends school every day, except in cases of illness or another legitimate reason.

Encourage your child to be resilient and 'push through' if they are feeling under the weather. Thank you to those families who already do this; you are setting your child up for success, good life habits and employability.

Paracetamol

After half term the school will no longer hold paracetamol in Student Reception. You may send your child in with two pills for the day if you think they may need them. They may keep them in their bag and take them as necessary. Pupils should NOT have more than two pills on them and may not give them to someone else.

Communicating with school

"Parental support is eight times more important in determining a child's academic success than social background. The more parents are (positively) engaged in the education of their children, the more likely their children are to succeed in the education system. Research consistently shows that parental engagement is one of the key factors in securing higher student achievement". DfE, 2011

The section below of the Home School Agreement is 'Parent-School Communication'. You have signed to say:

- I will communicate with the school in a timely and polite manner, in line with the School's values
- I will read all reports carefully, attend all parent meetings and check and sign my child's Achievement Card each week

Please be reassured that we always want the best for your children and will achieve this working alongside and in harmony with you. Please remember this when you are talking to staff. You will get the best from them if all conversations remain civil and all parties operate with the knowledge that there is a shared common purpose: to garner success for your child. As a response to feedback about school communication we are looking to employ another receptionist to help with answering the phones. If you are interested in this job keep an eye on the website.

To alleviate the very high number of incoming phone calls, please put plans in place so that your child knows exactly what to do if they are leaving school later than usual. For example, pupils with a sibling in school should both know what to do and where to go if the other gets a correction or has an intervention. Sometimes it is very difficult or even totally impossible to get messages to pupils in the time frame that some parents expect.

Free School Meals

If you do not currently claim free school meals and think that your child may be entitled to them, please do apply via the Bedford Borough website: <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/schools-education-and-childcare/education-welfare/free-school-meals/apply-free-school-meals> or see the attachment.

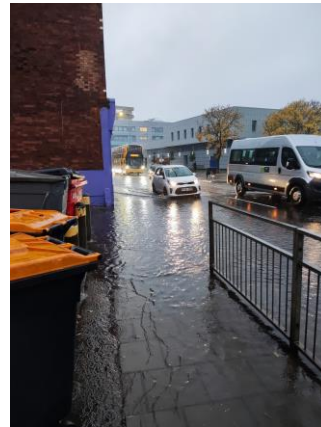
Complete a paper **free school meal application form** (Word) or apply for free school meals online: /

If you are not contacted by the school or the free school meals administrator within three weeks of the application you can assume your application is unsuccessful.

[Apply for free school meals](#)

School closure Thursday 20th October

I am devastated to have had to close the school today for only the second time in the whole of the school's history. I had to make a swift judgement call but I can assure you it was not a decision I took lightly. Access into the school was totally blocked by flooding and unless pupils were wearing waders every single one of them would have wet trousers and feet for the whole day and ruined shoes. As I write now, staff are walking around the school in spare school PE kit and socks (and no shoes!) I apologise for any inconvenience caused and hope that your child has successfully accessed and carried out the work placed on Satchel One by their teachers.



Please remember that tomorrow (Friday 21st October) is a teacher training day. I hope your child has a very restful half term break. I hope your child has a very restful half term break. We look forward to seeing them back refreshed and 'raring to go' on Monday 31st October.

Kindest Regards

Jane Herron
Principal

Please see key dates below

Bedford Free School – Key Dates 2022-2023

Autumn Term

Fri 21st October 2022	Staff (Trust) training day (school closed to pupils)
Mon 24th – Fri 28th October 2022	HALF TERM (school is closed)
Mon 7 th November – Fri 11 th November 2022	Year 11 Mock Exams
Thurs 1 st December 2022	Year 11 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 2 nd December 2022	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Thurs 15 th December 2022	Christmas Lunch
Fri 16 th December 2022	Christmas Assembly
Mon 19th December 2022-Mon 2nd January 2023	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Spring Term

Mon 2nd January 2023	Bank Holiday (School is closed)
Tues 3rd January 2023	Staff training day (school closed for pupils)
Weds 4 th January 2023	Pupils back to school
Thurs 12 th January 2023	Year 10 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 13 th January 2023	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Thurs 26 th January 2023	Year 9 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 27 th January 2023	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Thurs 2 nd February 2023	Year 8 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 3 rd February 2023	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Mon 13th – Fri 17th February 2023	HALF TERM
Mon 20 th – Fri 24 th February 2023	Year 11 Mock Exams
Thurs 23 rd February 2023	Year 7 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 24 th February 2023	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Thurs 9 th March 2023	Year 9 GCSE & Options Evening (normal finish time – 4pm)
Thurs 16 th March 2023	Year 11 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 17 th March 2023	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Mon 3rd April – Fri 14th April 2023	EASTER HOLIDAYS

Summer term

Mon 17 th April 2023	Staff training day (school closed for pupils)
Tues 18 th April 2023	Pupils back to school
Mon 1st May 2023	BANK HOLIDAY (School is closed)
Thurs 4 th May 2023	Year 10 Information Evening (normal finish time – 4pm)
Thurs 11 th May 2023	Year 8 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 12 th May 2023	School starts later – gate closes at 8.55am
Mon 29th May – Fri 2nd June 2023	HALF TERM
Mon 5 th June 2023	Pupils back to school
26 th June – 30 th June 2023	Year 10 Mock Exams
Mon 3 rd July – Fri 7 th July 2023	Activities Week/Year 10 Work Experience
Mon 17 th July 2023	Sports Day (tbc)
Tues 18 th July 2023	Year 10 Progress Evening/next steps event (school finishes at 3.30pm)
Fri 21 st July 2023	BFS End of Year Celebration Assembly
24th July – xx September 2023	SUMMER HOLIDAYS