

4th September 2014

Dear Parents & Carers,

Welcome (back) to Bedford Free School!

To those families joining us this week: a big welcome to you. And to those of returning students: welcome back. Our school family has grown again – we now have nearly 500 students!

It is the start of the year and I do not wish to inundate you with information, so I will keep today's newsletter brief:

- Homework Club & Golden Time
- Upcoming Open Events
- Conduct to-and-from school
- Key dates

Homework Club & Golden Time this week

Homework Club will start again from Monday 8th September. It will run until 6pm Monday – Thursday, and until 5pm on Friday.

You will know that students can earn an early leave on Fridays if they keep sufficient lesson credits during the week – what we call "Golden Time". As it is the start of term, all students will be leaving school tomorrow at 3.15pm (unless they have managed to get themselves into detention!)

Open events

A couple of really important dates for you:

Open Evening, Thursday September 25th, 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Open Morning, Saturday 4th October, 10am – 12pm

As usual many of our students will be helping us with these, and in the next week or so your child may be coming home with permission slips for this.

Many schools focus these kind of events simply at prospective students and their families. **We do things differently at BFS**, and make these events a general celebration of everything that we have achieved since we opened, **so you are all invited to come along and see what we're up to!**

Please note: **we will close school at 3.15pm on the 25th**, to allow for everyone to prepare the school for the evening

Please do spread the word to prospective families too. **If you have any friends whose children have just started Year 6, please remind them that this autumn is their one chance to apply to BFS**, as we no longer have an admission point in Year 9. Given the school system in Bedford, it is a bit tricky getting our message to Year 6 students in their middle schools, so your help in publicising this would be gratefully received!

In a similar vein, if you know of families whose child is in year 7 and they are looking at their options, **we still have places for year 7.**

Conduct to-and-from school

As always, we need to ensure that all our students make their way to-and-from school in a safe and sensible fashion. We will continue to staff the pedestrian crossings near the school, and I would like to remind everyone of a few key things:

- when student wear our uniform they are the school's responsibility and must conduct themselves in an exemplary fashion
- if students travel by car then they must NOT ever be dropped off outside the school premises – the official drop off point is the Melbourne Street car park (behind Kidsworld)
- if students come by bike they MUST have reflectors and lights by the time we reach October
- students are NOT allowed in Farm Foods or the St Mary's Street Post Office before or after school.

We have only ever had literally a couple of concerns raised about our students' conduct since the school opened – which is brilliant. Our distinctive uniform makes spotting our students easy – and business and shopkeepers in the area have been asked regularly to pass back any feedback to me. I am grateful for your support with this.

Key dates for this term

25 th September	Open Evening – 6.30pm – 8.30pm; school finishes at 3.15pm; no HW club that day
4 th October	Open Morning – 10am – noon
9 th October	Year 7 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
24 th October	School finishes for half term – 4.15pm as usual; no HW club this day
3 rd November	School opens again – 8.25am as usual
w/c 17 th November	Year 11 GCSE Mock Exams Week
20 th November	Year 9 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
4 th December	Year 8 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
11 th December	Year 11 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
18 th December	Year 10 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
19 th December	End of term – school finished 3.15pm

We are of course also planning other events, and as soon as these are confirmed I will let you know when and where they are.

In the meantime, it is lovely to have everyone back safely with us, and I know I can speak on behalf of the whole of Team BFS and say that we are really looking forward to working with you all over the coming year.

All the best,

Mark Lehain.