

24th October 2014

Dear Parents & Carers,

Eight long weeks...

My apologies for the relatively long gap between the last newsletter and this one. However, it has been an extremely busy half term, with lots of developments at the school – and overwhelmingly positive ones too.

Before I run through those though, a few updates & notices from us:

Lost property

A hardy perennial this one. **We have a HUGE pile of unnamed uniform, bags and other equipment in our Lost Property** at the moment. We will be giving it away to local charities on Friday 7th November – so if your child has misplaced anything, please encourage them to actually come and check before then.

Contact details

Earlier this week you may have had a somewhat mysterious text message and email from us about checking that we have your contact details correct and set up properly on our communications system... This was a somewhat premature misfire!

To check we have everything we need to contact families, and that it is properly set up so we can use them for emails & texts, we will send out messages on the first day back after half term (Monday 3rd November). If you do **NOT** receive these, please let us know & we will investigate.

Car parks next door

I'm afraid I have had some more complaints from our neighbours regarding parents dropping off and picking up students from the FiveSite/Peking Palace car park next door. We have been passed registration numbers of the vehicles in question and are trying to identify the families concerned. In the meantime, please refrain from doing this as it doesn't help the reputation of your child's school!

Tracking student progress & Progress Evenings

Year 11s have already had their first grade sheet of the year – and all other year groups will get one in the month after half term. **Please take a look at the date section at the end of this newsletter & mark in your diaries the relevant Progress Evening for your child** – we expect 100% attendance for these.

Friends of Bedford Free School - AGM, 3rd November – 7pm

A heads up that the AGM for the Friends is at 7pm on the first day back. **We'd love to see new faces** – all are welcome to come along and contribute ideas for supporting the school in this way.

Places still available for Year 7 students

As has been the case in previous years, **we are delighted to be receiving a steady stream of applications for Year 7**. I say this all the time, but if you have any friends who are considering making the move to us, or who think they may have missed the boat, please tell them to get in touch sooner rather than later so that they don't miss out.

We had very successful Open Events earlier this month, and hosted twenty-five prospective students for a Taster Day last week. I have been delighted at the warm welcome the primary schools in the Borough have given us this year & look forward to buoyant numbers going into next September and beyond.

Developments this term

It has been a real time of progress for the school. **We now have all five year groups, are over-subscribed in three of these, and filling up nicely in Year 7**. Many schools are struggling to fill up – and it is testimony to the hard work by the staff here – and the amazing support that we receive from families – that we are doing so well in terms of numbers.

Also, as a result of careful management of resources by our Business Manager **Mrs Edge**, we are in an extremely strong financial position too. Many local schools have been in the unfortunate position of having to make redundancies – in the past week we have made two outstanding *additional* appointments, in maths and English. **We intend to rework the curriculum and timetable from Christmas to give students even more maths and English time.**

Reading – getting our students to read better, and to read even more – is the top priority this school year, and I am delighted at how **we have been able to expand the provision of additional support and**

interventions for students for those who need it. We are looking at rolling this out to even more students after half term and over the rest of the year.

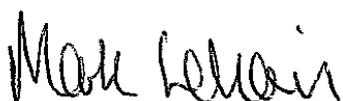
On the extra-curricular front things have gone from strength-to-strength as well. We have been running a record fifty-five electives this term – for the first time including First Aid and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme.

Numbers partaking in the Combined Cadet Force, which we offer through Bedford Modern School, have rocketed. With the growing number of talented musicians in school, **Miss Goodship** has grown the school orchestra into something much more fitting of a school with our ambitions and appreciation of the Arts.

We have also seen, under the leadership **of Mr Cox**, a transformation in the number and variety of sports fixtures. It is no exaggeration to say we have had more fixtures this past few weeks than the whole of the first two years – with many more planned for the rest of the year.

So whilst we are very much a work in progress, I hope you can see from the above that we are making great strides towards achieving our ambitions to be one of the best schools in the country & transform our students' lives.

Have a fantastic half term break,



Mark Lehain.

Key dates for this term

3 rd November	School opens again – 8.25am as usual
17 th November	Battle of the Bard – at Bedford Modern School
w/c 17 th November	Year 11 GCSE Mock Exams Week
20 th November	Year 9 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
25 th November	Year 7 – 10 Mass Choir event
28 th – 30 th November	French Trip
4 th December	Year 8 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
8 th December	Winter Spectacular – end of term showcase event at the theatre in the Trinity Arts & Leisure complex (former Bedford High)
11 th December	Year 11 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
16 th December	Year 7 Harry Potter Trip
17 th December	Whole School Christmas Assembly – St Paul's Church (all invited, details to follow)
18 th December	Christmas lunch in school!
18 th December	Year 10 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm
19 th December	End of term – school finished 3.15pm