

28th September 2015

Dear Parents & Carers,

Getting into the swing of things...

We are already in to week four of a seven week half-term. It has been by some way the smoothest start to a year so far, and we have been delighted with the way students have responded to us as we raised the bar even higher in terms of routines and discipline.

Upcoming evenings for Years 7, 8, 10 and 11

A reminder of the following evening events (for every year group except Year 9):

Thursday 1st October – THIS THURSDAY - Year 10 & Year 11 Information Evenings –

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|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Ampthill Eagles & Cardington Dolphins | – 6pm |
| Kempston Bees & London Tigers | – 7pm |

Thursday 8th October - Year 7 Progress Evening & Year 8 Information Evening

- Year 7 – Progress Evening – appointments with tutors from 530pm
- Year 8 – “Surviving the tricky Year 8”
 - o Ampthill Eagles & Cardington Dolphins – 6pm
 - o Kempston Bees & London Tigers – 7pm

Open Morning

This Saturday, 3rd October, 10.00am – 12.00pm

Many, many thanks to all those students who helped us out with last week’s Open Evening – it was a real success, with lots of families visiting to find out more about BFS. I think it is fair to say that having some good GCSE results has caused lots more people to consider us for their child!

We have our Open Morning this Saturday – and **if you haven’t looked around the school for a while, I would strongly encourage you to come in and take a peek**. Both in terms of the condition of our site & the teaching that goes on day-to-day, we have really made a leap forward thanks to the hard work of the staff here.

If you know of any family that are still to decide on a secondary or upper school for their child, please encourage them to get in touch with us. We still have some spaces in some year groups – although following last week’s Open Evening, there are far fewer than before.

We have had the usual flurry of applications to Year 8 as parents have realised that we don’t have a Year 9 entry point – so in particular, if friends have Year 8 children and are not sure about the upper school options available to them, please pass on our details as their children could join us in Year 8 now.

RELAY scheme

On to a more serious topic now. As of September 2015 BFS is participating in the RELAY Scheme in partnership with Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police.

The RELAY Scheme is a school notification service for where incidents of domestic abuse have been reported in the previous 24 hours to Bedfordshire Police from households where children reside.

If children on roll at BFS live at the address of an incident, we will be notified so that we can put in place appropriate support mechanisms for them. The RELAY Scheme is coordinated by the Safeguarding Leads at our school and is facilitated by the Early Help Service at Bedford Borough. The Scheme will be implemented within the majority of schools in Bedford Borough.

We have signed up to this programme because as a school we feel it vital that we work alongside our partner organisations to support both the victims of domestic abuse in our community and their children. If you would like more information about the Scheme or support that can be offered around Domestic Abuse please speak with Mrs Herron

Update on other developments

Planning permission: we have submitted the planning application for our rooftop extension to Bedford Borough and, following some last minute requests for design alterations, it should be ready to go the Planning Committee for approval in October. Those of you who remember the joys of planning back in 2012 will appreciate that both the School and the Department for Education have been watching the progress of our application this time around with a very close eye. We do not anticipate any problems gaining approval – but watch this space for updates! (All being well, building work will commence later this year and be completed before the summer holidays next year.)

Sporting fixtures: we have hit the ground running this year, with lots of fixtures already played and lots more to come before half term. A big thanks to Mr Cox and the PE team for organising these. If you would like to have real-time updates on how we get on, you can find these via the PE team's Twitter page at https://twitter.com/BFS_sport (You don't have to be on Twitter to see this.)

Performing Arts: I chaired a meeting of the Performing Arts staff last week, and it has left me even more enthusiastic about their plans for the year. After the success of Honk! last term, I am delighted that they are already planning for another musical for this year (although I am, for now, sworn to secrecy as to which one it is...) At a time when many other schools are reducing their provision for the Arts, I am proud that here at BFS we are going in the other direction. Both in terms of timetabled provision and extra-curricular activities, I think it is fair to say that BFS now has amongst the best art, music and drama set-up locally.

Oxbridge preparation: having gone from a local state school to Cambridge University myself, I know how much difference that the help from my teachers made to getting me there. I have always been passionate that BFS identifies potential Oxbridge candidates and supports them in developing the wider knowledge and experience that will give them the edge when they apply to university when at sixth form. Having had a good sized group of students leave us this summer with Oxbridge-enabling grades, I am keen for us to ramp up the provision for our very brightest, and I will oversee this personally. It's at an early stage – for now I have a couple of trips lined up to Cambridge and Oxford – but I will be in touch again soon to outline things in more detail.

And finally...

It has been a particularly interesting few weeks to be a Head Teacher – almost every weekend I have opened the Beds on Sunday and been saddened as I have read about the various difficulties experienced in other local schools. I always say to people that we are far from perfect but strive to get better all the time, and I am constantly grateful that BFS families are really good at giving us feedback both on what we do well and what we can do better. With this in mind I look forward to seeing you all at the forthcoming information and open events – use these as a chance to let us know how you think your child is getting on & what else we can do to support them and you.

All the best,

Mark Lehain.

Key dates for this term

1 st October	Year 10 – “Getting your child (and you!) through GCSEs” evening Year 11 – “Getting your child (and you!) through Year 11” evening
3 rd October	Open Morning – 10.00am – noon
8 th October	Year 7 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm with form tutors; Year 8 – “Surviving the tricky Year 8” information evening School finishes at 3.30pm
22 nd October	Year 10 – trip to Oxford University (details to go out soon)
23 rd October	School finishes for half term – 4.15pm as usual; no HW club this day
2 nd November	School opens again – 8.25am as usual
5 th November	Year 9 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm School finishes at 3.30pm
w/c 16 th November	Year 11 GCSE Mock Exams Week
3 rd December	Year 8 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm School finishes at 3.30pm
10 th December	Year 11 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm School finishes at 3.30pm
16 th December	Christmas Dinner at school
17 th December	Christmas Assembly at St. Paul’s Church – details to follow
18 th December	End of term – school finished 3.15pm
5 th January	Start of Spring Term – 8.25am as usual
14 th January	Year 10 Progress Evening – 5.30pm – 8.30pm School finishes at 3.30pm