

23<sup>rd</sup> September 2016

Dear Parents & Carers,

### **Getting on with the day job**

I said in my first newsletter that we'd split the start-of-year messages across a second one, so as to avoid overloading people with information at the start of term.

Since then, we've had a very successful Open Evening – the busiest we can remember. It is lovely to see that with more secondary school choices than ever we seem to be even more popular with local families. A massive **"thank you" to all the staff and students who ran the night** – they did a sterling job & showed BFS off at its best.

### **Interested in becoming a BFS governor?**

I am always telling people how proud I am of the way that BFS was opened as a proper partnership between local teachers and parents, and the input of parent governors has been instrumental in making the school the success that it has been to date.

As part of reviewing how it functions, especially as we start work on other projects, **the school Trust would like to "top up" the number of parents on the governing body.**

All parents and carers are invited to express their interest, and **we are particularly interested in hearing from people who have skills and experience in education/schools, finance, and project management.** If you think you might be up for getting involved in the school in this way, please get in touch with me in the first instance, so I can talk you through the role in more detail.

There are a small number of vacancies on our Trust at the moment, and **there will be elections later this term for people to fill those reserved specifically for parent governors**, so even if you are not sure about the role at the moment, please feel free to drop me a line – don't feel you have to commit to anything at this stage.

### **The "RELAY" scheme**

On to a more serious topic now. Since September 2015, BFS has participated in the RELAY Scheme in partnership with Bedford Borough Council and Bedfordshire Police.

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

If incident is reported at an address where BFS students live, we are notified so that we can put in place appropriate support mechanisms for them when they come into school. 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 is implemented within the majority of schools in Bedford Borough.**

We signed up to this programme because we feel it vital to 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 please speak with Mrs Herron.

## **Reminder: upcoming events for students & their families**

I'll repeat here the sessions we will be holding on 6<sup>th</sup> October in the evening:

- **Year 7** Parents Evening
- **Year 10** - "How to survive the GCSE years" – for students & their families
- **Year 11** - "Making the most of Y11" – for **selected** students & their families

(Letters about these will be out with students from Monday.)

## **Reflection on the first two full weeks...**

I am typing this as our students are busy with their Friday afternoon electives, and so it seems like an appropriate moment to reflect on the term so far. (I should point out here that we have 50 – yes, **FIFTY** – different clubs and electives running this term!)

We've now had two full weeks of lessons, and it has genuinely felt like the smoothest start to an academic year yet. Students (and staff) have adjusted to the changes we have made to the school day and processes, and **things are now settling down into a smooth routine.**

Numbers are at their highest ever – we have 509 on roll today and a few more due to be admitted in the next week or so – and it seems like the tweaks and changes that we've made, combined with our ongoing insistence upon high standards of attitude around the site, are ensuring that students feel calm, safe and happy.

I know it is still early in the term (and I'm sure the pleasant weather is contributing too), but I am certain that the hard work and efforts of staff, students, and their families are a major factor in how positive the 16/17 academic year has started. **Thank you to everyone for their part in this.**

Have a great weekend!

**Mark Lehain.**

## Key dates for 2016-2017

1 <sup>st</sup> October	Open Morning, 10am – noon, friends & family welcome to visit!
6 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 7 – Parents Evening Year 10 – “How to survive the GCSE years” – for Y10 students & their families Year 11 – “making the most of Y11” – for <b>selected</b> Y11 students & their families (details to follow soon for all of these)
24 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> October	Half term holiday
3 <sup>rd</sup> November	Year 9 Progress Evening
10 <sup>th</sup> November	GCSE Awards Evening – for those who sat GCSEs this summer, details to follow
w/c 14 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 11 - mock exams week
1 <sup>st</sup> December	Year 8 Progress Evening
8 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 11 – Progress Evening
16 <sup>th</sup> December	Last day of autumn term
3 <sup>rd</sup> January	Staff training day
4 <sup>th</sup> January	Students return for spring term
12 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 10 Progress Evening
13 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> February	Half term holiday
31 <sup>st</sup> March	Last day of spring term
18 <sup>th</sup> April	Start of summer term
29 <sup>th</sup> May – 2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Half term holiday
21 <sup>st</sup> July	End of summer term