

7th July 2017

Dear Parents & Carers,

A busy few weeks...

Even while the hot weather has been getting into full swing and the change of lazy summer days has arisen, we have been as busy as ever here at BFS. The last two weeks alone have seen just under 120 Year 6 students visit us for their Transfer Day, alongside Year 10 Work Experience, Year 7, 8 and 9 Development Days, Interhouse Sport and End of Year exams too.

Teachers have been busy marking exams and preparing gradesheets, and follow up meetings for key students are already underway.

So as you can see, it is still full steam ahead, and it will be right up until we break for the holidays on the afternoon of July 21st, as you'll see from the items below.

Traffic and neighbours

Alas, I need to do one of my occasional reminders regarding our expectations around students being brought to-and-from school by car. Unfortunately we've had concerns flagged up by our neighbours at Bedford College about thoughtless behaviour by one or two BFS parents. This is really upsetting as, not only is it completely unacceptable and unfair on the College, it damages the hard-earned reputation we have developed since we opened.

A reminder that if brought in by car, students should:

- only be dropped off at public spots where it is safe to do so, and not on neighbouring sites;
- never be dropped off directly outside school or when stopped at traffic lights; and
- cross only at pedestrian crossings, on the "green man".

The official dropping-off point in our school Travel Plan is on the Melbourne Street car park. Using this spot means families are not interrupting the flow of traffic or obstructing access to side roads or driveways. It also means students can safely get to school via the (BFS-staffed) crossings.

Summer Showcase – next Wednesday, 12th July 6.30pm

A reminder that next Wednesday sees our **Summer Showcase**, hosted at the Salvation Army's Congress Hall over the river on Commercial Road. It starts at 6.30pm, and tickets for this are available from the main school office NOW! It promises to be another wonderful display of the creative and artistic talents of the students of school – do please come along and show your support for them.

Sports Day – next Thursday, 13th July

Another reminder, this time about next Thursday's Sports Day at the athletics stadium. Students will make their way to-and-from the stadium from BFS, and as before we will bring ALL our students back to school with us so we can keep track of everyone.

We'd love to see families there for the afternoon session – so if you can make it, **we would welcome you from 1pm**. Full details can be found in the letter sent home already about the day, which can be found here: <http://bedfordfreeschool.co.uk/perch/resources/sports-day-2017.pdf>

Celebration Assembly

As usual, we will mark the end of the academic year with our massive Celebration Assembly, held at the Park Inn hotel over the road.

We've an additional logistical challenge for this year, as we have grown in size again since last time, and the hotel has an upper limit to both the number of chairs it has available and the number of people it is allowed in the room in one go! We would absolutely welcome families to join us for the occasion, but there will only be very limited seating available this time around i.e. we cannot guarantee seats and it will probably be standing room only for the majority of guests.

With this in mind, ***please let us know in advance if you are coming along*** in order that we can be prepared. Contact Esther Logan in the usual fashion: info@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk or 01234 332290, to be added to the guest list.

(We've already put our thinking caps on for what we do next year...)

Mixed Emotions

As we approach the end of what is our fifth year as a school, I am constantly aware that it is also going to be the end of my time as Principal here. When I snatch the occasional moment to reflect on this, I am faced with mixed emotions: sadness at leaving a place I love so much, excited for what the future holds for BFS and our Trust, intrigued at how things will develop after I'm gone, and optimistic for the students and staff here and yet to come.

My own daughter visited BFS last week for her Transfer Day. Needless to say I was under strict instructions to avoid her at all costs, but I may have wandered past lessons where she was on a couple of occasions. What struck me about the day itself was how far we'd come as a school since our very first transfer days back in 2012.

Back then we had to hold them elsewhere as the work to get the school site ready was still ongoing. We also had to hold two days, as we had intakes for both Year 7 and Year 9. Aside from Mrs Herron and I, all the other staff joining us that day were still employed by other schools and had needed to request the day off to be there. They were frantic but extremely enjoyable days.

Whizz forward to the Transfer Day last week and the differences could not be more pronounced. Our visitors had a proper school site to visit and enjoy, and the challenge this time was slotting in their lessons around that of a functioning school with other year groups to consider. They were looked after by lots of experienced staff already at the school and fully versed in "The BFS Way" too. It was an enjoyable and very well organised, calm day for all concerned.

As well as new students, we have also had the pleasure of most of the staff joining us in September visiting. They are such an exciting bunch of people, with a range of experiences and backgrounds, but they all have in common a real sense of what working for BFS is about – why we are here and what our mission is. I will leave here knowing that the school is going to be in good hands, not just with the existing staff and new Principal, but the other new staff too.

Have a great weekend,

Mark Lehain.

Key dates for the remainder of the year

10 th July	Sports Award Evening, 6pm (invitation only)
12 th July	Summer Showcase Performance – at the Salvation Army Congress Hall 6.30pm, tickets from the school office
13 th July	BFS Sports Day Bedford Athletics Stadium – (parents welcome from 1pm only)
21 st July	End of year Celebration Assembly – at Park Inn hotel (contact Esther Logan if you wish to attend) End of summer term
24 th August	GCSE results day

Arrangements for the start of the next academic year

1 st & 4 th September	Staff training days
5 th & 6 th September	Year 7 ONLY in school for induction
7 th & 8 th September	Year 7 and Year 11 ONLY in school
11 th September	ALL students back in school, 8.25am

