

14th September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

I'm writing to welcome you to the new academic year!

I hope you had a fantastic summer holiday.

Examination results

We have had the best ever GCSE results, with improvements in almost every subject from our fantastic results last summer. We're really proud of our departing Year 11 pupils and congratulate them on their hard work. We know that they will stay in touch as part of the BFS family. We look forward to seeing them all on the 8th November at their Awards Evening.

It has been brilliant to welcome our new cohort of Year 7 pupils into this family, and start to get to know their families. They have begun life at BFS so very well, and have taken to our routines superbly.

In fact, I hesitate to write this too quickly, but the whole school has started really well. The pupils have begun the year determined to do everything possible to maximise their performance and I'm feeling optimistic! Lessons have been phenomenal. Electives are just getting under way, and the feedback from staff is very positive.

New staff

We have welcomed the following new staff to the school this year:

Ms Cocker - maths teacher
Ms Fulham - geography teacher
Ms Haskins - receptionist
Ms Merola - second in English
Mr Wallwork - science teacher
Ms Worthington - PE teacher

I have informally spoken to all of these teachers and they have said that they have been welcomed by the pupils. It has been interesting to listen to their take on our pupils, our systems and our expectation that 100% of pupils are learning for 100% of the time.

Homework

Please find as a separate attachment to this newsletter the new homework timetable for this year. We expect homework to be completed every night, started in prep. For some year 7s, this means their homework may be completed when they arrive home. In older years, I would like to remind parents and pupils that I am fond of the saying "*if they say they have nothing to do, they are not telling the truth*". There is always self-quizzing, further revision and reading that can be conducted in order to commit learning into long-term memory.



Calendar

Please find attached to this newsletter a copy of the calendar for the year. I would like to emphasise the training day on **11th January**. This is so that all BFS staff can participate in the Advantage Schools training day where we have some of the best cognitive scientists in the world coming to speak to us - there are four of them and we are also going to spend Saturday 12th January with them!

It has been on the calendar for some time, but a reminder that on **1st October** we also have a staff training day.

Consideration for our neighbours

A reminder that our designated drop-off and pick-up point according to our travel plan is Melbourne Street carpark. As always, colleagues at BFS will go the extra mile to supervise the crossings and ensure that pupils are safe. Please do not drop off outside BFS or on any other side-streets or at Bedford College - it may not feel like it because it is 'just you' but this quickly becomes inconvenient and inconsiderate to our neighbours - many of whom have asked me to issue this reminder - and we ask that all parents and carers model this consideration for others to our pupils.

Open Evening and Open Morning

The BFS open evening is on Wednesday 19th September from 5.30pm to 8pm, with talks from myself and others at 6pm, repeated at 7pm.

The open morning is on Saturday 29th September from 10am.

Parents who wish to see the school in action can contact the school for a personal tour.

Please do pass this on to friends and relatives who are looking for a year 7 place. You will also have received permission slips from your children asking if they can participate in open evening and open morning. We are so proud of those that take part and represent their school. We have been oversubscribed for some time, and with our excellent examination results and pupils acting as such brilliant ambassadors, I hope this will continue going forward.

Parents' Forum

We started these last year in order to gather feedback from parents in order to accelerate our journey to being a world-class school. I would like to introduce them again this term. It is fairly busy this term but I have scheduled Thursday 22nd November 2018 from 7-8pm. We will have refreshments available and hope to see you there.

Finally, if there is anything you wish to discuss, you have any concerns, or if you want to see the school for yourself, please let me know. The best way to contact me is by email on slock@bedfordfreeschool.co.uk and I will, as with all BFS staff, respond within 48 hours every time.

Key dates

A list of key dates is attached. I'd like to draw your attention to the 4th October, when

- Year 7 families will be invited in for the 'settling in' evening
- Year 10 families will be invited in for the 'welcome to GCSE' evening
- Year 11 families will be invited in for the 'getting the best from Year 11' information evening

If you have children in more than one of these year groups we will of course ensure you are fully up-to-date with all information.

Uniform and equipment

Thank you for sending your sons and daughters back to school looking so smart and ensuring that they are fully equipped. This helps to maintain standards and of course aids efficient learning as students have all they need to get on with their lessons. Just in case you need it throughout the school year I attach the uniform and equipment list for your perusal.

Have a fantastic term.

Best wishes,

Stuart Lock
Executive Principal

Bedford Free School – Key Dates

19 th September 2018	Open Evening 5.30pm - 8.00pm
29 th September 2018	Saturday Open Morning 10.00am – 12.00pm
1 st October 2018	Staff Training Day (school closed)
4 th October 2018	Year 7 Meet the tutor evening (more details to follow) Year 10 'Welcome to GCSE' presentation and information Year 11 'Getting the best from Year 11' presentation and information evening
22 nd – 26 th October 2018	Half term holiday
8 th November 2018	Class of 2018 Graduation Ceremony (by invitation - presentation of certificates, details to follow)
12 th – 16 th November 2018	Year 11 Mock Exam week
22 nd November 2018	Parent Forum - 7-8pm
30 th November 2018	Year 11 Progress Evening & Next steps event (school finishes at 3.20pm, details to follow)
28 th & 29 th November 2018	School Musical
6 th December 2018	Year 7 Snowdon Parents Briefing – 6.30pm & 7.30pm
6 th December 2018	Year 11 Progress Evening & Next Steps Event
13 th December 2018	Christmas lunch (details to follow)
14 th December 2018	Christmas Assembly at St Paul's Bedford
17 th Dec 2018 – 1 st Jan 2019	Christmas Holidays
2 nd January 2019	Back to school
10 th January 2019	Year 10 Progress Evening
11 th January 2019	Staff Training Day (school closed)
24 th January 2019	Year 9 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
31 st January 2019	Year 8 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
7 th February 2019	Year 7 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
11 th – 15 th February 2019	Half term holiday
7 th March 2019	Year 11 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
19 th March 2019	Easter Concert (details to follow)
21 st March 2019	Year 9 Options Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
27 th March 2019	BFS Show: Romeo & Juliet
8 th – 22 nd April 2019	Easter Holidays
23 rd April 2019	Back to School
2 nd May 2019	Year 10 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
6 th May 2019	May Day Bank Holiday (school is closed)
9 th May 2019	Year 8 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
16 th May 2019	Year 7 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
27 th – 31 st May 2019	Half term holidays
24 th – 28 th June 2019	Year 10 work experience + Year 7, 8, 9 Activities Week
27 th June 2019	Year 6 transfer day
4 th July 2019	Year 10 Progress Evening (school finishes at 3.20pm)
5 th July 2019	Sports Awards evening (provisional)
10 th July 2019	Summer Showcase
11 th July 2019	Sports Day (provisional)

19 th July 2019	End of Year Celebration Assembly
22 nd July – 5 th September 2019	Summer Holidays
9 th September 2019	Back to school

*Please note that all dates are subject to change/added to and we will notify you as soon as any changes are made.