



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential



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21st December 2023



Head Teacher's Message



"Peace on Earth, good will toward all people."

This message of Christmas is a very simple one but this message is as important as ever as we reflect on events in 2023 and look forward with hope to 2024.

*I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!
(Longfellow, HW – 1807-1882 – Christmas 1863)*

Christmas is a time of hope, joy, love and peace and a time to think about others. I wish you and your family a happy, relaxing, peaceful and joyous Christmas and New Year. Blessings, love and peace to you and your family this Christmas.



Staffing news

At the end of this term we say farewell to Mr Moodie in technology, Ms Mahoney in PE, Mr Ward in geography and Mr Kirby in economics/history. We thank them for their work and we wish them all the best in the future

Future dates

The Spring term starts on Monday 8 January 2024 at the later time of 10.30 for students. It will be Week B when we return.

Best wishes

Matthew Brown, Head Teacher

Governors Message

As the Autumn term draws to a close the School can reflect once again on a busy and successful one. There have been numerous activities which have celebrated achievements by students, including annual performance events, showcasing the talent of the School's students.

Many of you will have heard that Mr Brown will be retiring as Head Teacher at Easter. In this regard an advertisement will shortly be placed calling for applications, with interviews taking place in February. Mr Brown's efforts as Headteacher have been outstanding and we want to ensure a candidate of equal calibre is appointed. Much thought has therefore been expended on careful planning of the process. A full update will be issued after the Christmas vacation

The Governing Body have been busy too with various committee meetings and visits. The closing meeting for the term was the Full Governing Body meeting which took place last Thursday. This was well attended, with a full agenda being discussed, including the Head Teacher's Report and consideration of the minutes of the various Governing Body sub-Committees which have met this term. The Governing Body welcomed the appointment of Mr Brad Tanner as a Parent Governor and Ms Gough, Faculty Leader of Science, as a Staff Governor. We are sad to announce that Mr Trevor Perrin is retiring as an Appointed Governor. We wish to thank Mr Perrin for his hard work over the many years he has been a governor. His wise counselling on all aspects of governance, and in particular on finance, will be greatly missed. We were also sad to hear of the retirement of Mr Vince Murphy as Head Caretaker. His work too has been outstanding keeping the School safe and in excellent repair. We wish them both long and happy retirements.

On behalf of the Governing Body I would like to take this opportunity to wish students, parents, carers and staff a relaxing festive break and a prosperous New Year.

Stuart Fitz-Gerald
Chair of Governors

Behaviour Update

Uniform Check - 8th January onwards – Reminder

A reminder to all parent that we have made the decision to return to our 'no extensions' policy from **8 January 2024** to ensure there are no grey areas in uniform policy.

All students will be checked on arrival at school on 8th January and those in incorrect uniform that cannot be easily rectified will be taken out of lessons until uniform is correct.

If you require financial support with any aspect of uniform purchase, please do get in touch with your child's SSO in the first instance.

The key elements of our Uniform Policy are as follows:

- Black backpacks/rucksacks (for Year 7)
- Shoes to be leather or leather-look; black, flat, plain and sensible
- No trainers (black plimsolls will be provided where required)
- Coats to be plain black or navy
- No phones or headphones
- Skirts to be unrolled and untailored

- Make up to be discreet
- One small pair of stud earrings
- One religious symbol may be worn discreetly under blouse
- **Nails – no polish, no extensions**
- **Lashes – no lash extensions**
- Hair – to be colours that can be found in natural hair

Items not conforming to criteria above will be confiscated and taken to school office.

Ms Makepeace, Deputy Headteacher

SEN Coffee Morning with Bexley Voice on Friday 19th January, 9.30 am to 11.30 am.

We would like to invite interested parents / carers to this event. You will be able to learn about:

- Bexley Voice and how they support parents / carers
- SEN Support and EHC Plans
- Local and National SEND organisations
- The Bexley Local Offer

We will also give a short talk about SEN at Blackfen, followed by an opportunity to ask questions and talk with each other.

If you would like to attend please email our SEN Manager, Ms Mackay by Friday 12th January, at: smc@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk

Mrs McCauley, SENDCo

Reminders

Signing in and out :

Just a reminder that if students come into school late for any reason they **MUST** sign in at the attendance room, 1B. The only exception is if their name has been taken at late gate.

To sign out, parents/carers must contact the school to advise us and students should go to reception and sign out there.

This is to keep them safe in school.

Mrs McGee, Attendance Officer

Year 11 Parents Evening

The appointments for the above opened to parents this week and will stay open until 10th January. The school office is not staffed over the Christmas holiday therefore, should you have any queries on this, please contact the school office on Monday morning 8th January.

School Office

Winter Showcase 2023

a Great Success

Tuesday 12th December 2023, the Performance Space was lit up for a night of dance, drama, and music, across all the year groups at Blackfen School for Girls.

Preparation for the show began weeks in advance, with students, teachers, and volunteers collaborating tirelessly. There was a fantastic Art Exhibition of students' work organised by Kellie Russell, and refreshments provided by staff and students in the DT department arranged by Amanda Kowalik.

Embracing diversity, we showcased work from soloists, duets, small groups and our elite Dance Company. There were traditional dances, modern renditions, and this year welcomed our first bands to the stage in a few years, as well as a two-part Christmas play written by Dannielle Davies. The lighting and sound were created and operated by our very own students, overseen by Hollie Magrowski, along with her crutches.

The audience's response was overwhelming. There was laughter, applause, and moments of pride, as families and friends watched the performances. The memories created will continue to inspire us to strive for greatness, nurturing a culture of excellence and inclusivity within our school community.

As we bid farewell to this year's Winter Showcase, we carry forward the spirit of teamwork, celebration of talent and diversity, warm wishes for Christmas 2023 and the new year ahead. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of the Expressive Arts Faculty.

See you at the next one.

Sonia Linaker and Nina Jarman





Sociology & Psychology News

Lower school: Recently Miss Smith helped to run a session on Forensic Psychology and Offender Profiling with year 10 for Challenge Day. Students learnt what Offender Profiling is, how it was developed, and some of the problems with it. It is hoped that this will have sparked an interest in the Social Sciences with the lower years, and help them to start thinking about what they might like to do after their GCSE's, or future careers.

Year 13 students have been busy working hard on their Pre-Public Exams. This is a reminder to students about the amount of work they need to do in preparation for success and the importance of a growth mind-set! Students have been using their PLC's (Personal Learning Checklist), and practice exam papers to support their revision. It has been lovely to see how hard some of the students are working and how much they care about their studies. Although we know students have found it stressful, this is really important practice for their final exams and will all be worth it in the end. Plus, it has been lovely reading some of their papers and seeing them develop as A' level students. For those who were disappointed with their marks, we hope they will use their Growth Mindset to review their current practice/level of work and learn from their mistakes.

Year 12 Sociology students have been learning about Class and Education with Miss Smith and how we can create more equality within the education system. What can governments do to reduce the gap between middle class and poorer students, and how effective these policies are in making education fairer? With Miss Purbrick they have been looking at different research methods and trying to apply these to studying the education system and Sociology in general.

Year 12 Psychology students have been learning about research methods with Miss Smith, a topic I'm sure they are keen to finish, as it has been quite a slog! However, this will pay off when they start to apply their knowledge of research methods to actual psychological research. With Miss Purbrick students have been doing Attachment, how/why do young children make attachments and what are the consequences of these for future relationships? With Miss Reid students have been looking at social psychology including research into obedience. This has practical application to events such as the Second World War, and compliance within the COVID pandemic. Students have also been looking at whether people would behave the same nowadays, if this research were to be repeated?

We wish all our lovely students a happy and restful Christmas, have fun, but remember to do some independent study too! Remember to use our department library and TEAMS pages for additional reading/research.

Ms Smith, SL for Sociology/Psychology

Blackfen Chess Club

Blackfen held its first Chess Tournament of the school year on Tuesday 19th December and we have a new Champion Iris in B6. The students have been progressing and improving week on week during the weekly chess club, so it was always going to be an interesting battle for the prestigious Blackfen chess title. There was some really close matches but Iris held her nerve and won all five of her matches to become the new Blackfen Chess Champion.

Congratulations to Iris and to all the students who took part.

Mr Love, FL for English

COMPUTING AND ICT DEPARTMENT NEWS

In November, our Y7 students and eighteen Y8 students were involved in two national computing competitions.



210 Y7 Blackfen students took part in the UK BEBRAS national online competition during one of their computing lessons.

The competition introduces students to computational thinking, a problem-solving method used in computer programming. Students are presented with challenges they need to solve, in increasing levels of difficulty, competing against students in their own age group.

This year 117,467 students aged 10-12 took part in the competition across the UK. All our students did very well and completed all the challenges and one of our students, Sophie R, from G2, received a gold certificate for being within the top 10% of results nationally. There were also 58 Distinction and 51 Merit awards.



Also in November, 18 of our Y8 students from 8A, 8B, 8E and 8F took part in a 10 days' long online computing national competition run by the National Cyber Security Centre which aims to inspire girls interested in technology to consider careers in the cybersecurity field. In England the participants must be in Year 8.

The students competed in teams of up to four, in their own time in the evening and during one weekend. A computing room was also made available to those who wished to meet together during school lunchtimes.

Our volunteers demonstrated resilience and independence in learning and should be very proud of their accomplishments, both as individuals and as team members. In order to solve as many

challenges as possible within the 10 days of the competition, they had to teach themselves cryptography, logic, artificial intelligence, networking and cybersecurity, using online resources. The challenges were set by National Cyber Security Centre specialists and ranged from beginners to advanced.

Blackfen registered 7 teams in total. Three of our teams were very close in achievement. However, the top Blackfen team achieved 1890 points. It was made up of Swaraa A (G3), Ellie B (P7) and Winnie L (B8) who completed 50 challenges from all the categories, at both beginners and intermediate level. Two of our students, Malia M (B6) and Alice K (B9) achieved 1165 and 1015 points respectively and Alice solved 20 challenges in all categories, from beginners to advanced level. Sia D (G8) ended up being the only member of her team to participate and solved 20 challenges by herself.

All participants received their own certificate from the National Cyber Security Centre. Well done to them! They did us all proud!

The RAMs were Swaraa A (G3), Ellie B (P7), Winnie L (B8)

The URLs were Naomi G (G4), Alina H (P7), Alice K (B7)

The Cyber-bytes were Millie G (B5), Malia M (B6), Charlotte U (B6)

The MIDLs were Lillie D (Y1), Mia D (B5), Dhisha H (P3), Isabele Z (Y8)

The Motherboards was Sia D (G8)

The CPUs were Anacilla A (B9) and Nora-Angela J (R8)

The Booleans were Simran A (G5) and Anusha S (P4)

Ms Auvinet, SL of ICT & Computing

Careers and Work Experience 2023

The 2023 Work Experience fortnight in July was a great success with students a credit to themselves and to Blackfen. I hope that the students found their Work Experience beneficial and can build upon the skills that they learned.

All students that complete Work Experience receive a certificate which is presented at an achievement assembly. It was a difficult decision deciding on whom to award prizes to for outstanding Work Experience as many of our students received excellent feedback from their employers. The following students that received excellent feedback in all employability areas such as problem solving, team working, communication, business awareness and self-management were awarded a commendation certificate and earned community points:

Ruby-Rose	Y9	Ray	Y8
Saniya	Y4	Aaliyah	P6
Phoebe	R8	Kajana	B7
Mia	G6	Isabel	G8
Ellie	G3	Lacey	G9
Jessica	P4	Ellie Rose	G7
Millicent	R7	Aicha	Y9

Millicent	Y3	Maya	Y5
Amber	P1	Gabriela	G7
Annie	R2	Mariya	B4
Lok Hei Andrea	P5	Verity	Y1
Mia	Y1	Lucy	B4
Charanpreet	Y2	Sara	B1
Lea	R1	Harleen	P8
Emma	P2	Poppy	Y2
Ava	Y1	Lily Rose	R6
Ava	Y1	Meda	P7
Gabriella	Y9	Sukran	Y4
Millie	G6	Layla	Y9
Lara	P6	Jessica	Y7
Ruby	G7	Kimberley	B6
Maiya	R2	Anna	B5
Alexandra	Y2	Maisie	G4
Talia	R4	Paige	B1
Leila	R9	Poppy	G6
Phoebe	G9	Hope	B7
Ella	R9	Amber	G1
Madison	P5	Amy	P9
Holly	B2	Lacey	R6
Tianne	G5	Ruby	R5



The standard of Work Experience feedback was extremely high this year but after careful consideration I am delighted to announce that the winner of outstanding completion of Work Experience was **Ava in Yellow 1**. Ava completed 2 separate one week placements as a journalist at a Press Agency and at a local primary school. During her placement at the Press Agency one of Ava's tasks was to write articles for national newspapers and she was lucky enough to have one of them published in a daily tabloid!

Ava received excellent feedback in all 13 areas of the employer's feedback form and comments included *'The staff lucky enough to work with Ava were bowled over at her efficiency, dedication and proactiveness, all staff were thoroughly impressed.'*

Well done Ava!

We also have three runners up awards this year; they are **Annie in Red 2, Kiera in Red 4 and Phoebe in Red 8.**

Congratulations to them and well done all our students who completed their Work Experience!



Year 9 Careers Interviews

As part of the Year 9 KS4 options process all Year 9 students will be invited to attend a small group interview with Liz Wynn-Owen our Careers Advisor from CER Services.

These informal interviews will take place throughout January – March. It will be very beneficial for your child to attend their interview as it will give them the opportunity to discuss their future career options thus enabling them to make the right choices.

Your child was issued with the 'Year 9 preparation for Key Stage Course Selection booklet' during a community session in December. The booklet will help them to reflect and think through the selection process, with sections of the booklet to be completed together with your child. The booklet should be completed at home and community time and your child should bring it to their small group careers interview and their final Key Stage 4 course selection meeting with Blackfen School's Leadership Team on Wednesday 13th March.

The Key Stage 4 course selection is a guided process of which family support is essential and to ensure that your child has the best possible choice of training, study and employment at the end of Year 11 we ask you to take time with your child to complete pages 2-10 and page 21 of the booklet. Once you have completed these pages please sign to confirm on page 1 of the booklet.

Save the date! Annual Careers Forum Tuesday 5th March 2024

We will be holding our Annual Careers Forum on Tuesday 5th March from 4.30pm until 7.00pm. We would like to see as many students attend as we expect this evening to be interesting and informative with many representatives attending. Further details to follow.



More information on Careers and Work Experience, including the school Careers Policy, is available on the school website under Policies and Curriculum.

Work Experience - 8th – 19th July 2024

Only 9 weeks left until completed placement forms must be returned!

Year 10 Work Experience is moving along slowly but surely with many students already successfully securing their placement. Placements are quite limited this year so I would ask students to make every effort to find their own placement. Feedback received shows that employers really appreciate receiving letters, emails, phone calls or visits from students as it shows great initiative. Why not spend some time over the Christmas holidays compiling your letters to send out?

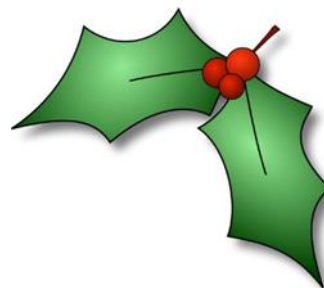


Many exciting placements have already been secured and I would like to thank all the Year 10 students and their parents/carers for the work they have put in to secure these placements.

If you have already found a placement and still need to arrange for the placement form to be completed please ensure that it is returned to Room 106 by **Monday 19th February**. If you have not secured a placement yet why not spend some time over the Christmas holidays contacting employers or chasing up contacts you have already made to secure a placement?

Please remember that if you have not secured a placement you will have to attend year 9 lessons in full school uniform during the work experience period.

I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to working with students in the New Year.



**Mrs Smith, Work Experience and Business/Community Links
Coordinator**

Essential Cinema Club

Dark Christmas Screenings

Thursday 11th January

'Gremlins' (1987)

With Xmas behind us, let's take a backhand swipe at December jollity with two memorably subversive dark festive movies.

The first is Gremlins.

From director, Joe Dante, this hit 1984 social commentary takes a massive comic swing at capitalist greed and white imperialism while telling a more child-friendly tale of an adorable oriental creature corrupted and tarnished by falling into the wrong hands.

There's lots of fun to be had watching the gremlins turn rogue and vandalise an entire town, while the film gleefully satirises greed, consumerism and White American privilege.



Thursday 25th February

'The Nightmare before Christmas' (1993)

What might, could or even should happen when the elfin world of Christmas is hijacked by the goblin world of Halloween?

Visionary director, Tim Burton of Batman, Edward Scissorhands and Wednesday fame asks us these questions while immersing us in his wonderfully realised dark fantasy world of stop-motion animation, where our protagonist, Jack Skellington becomes increasingly bored with his regular 'same-old' routine in Halloween Town with its motley crew of ghosts, vampires and zombies, and seeks pastures new.

On reaching the physical boundaries of Halloween Town, Jack accidentally stumbles upon Christmas Town, and captivated by the idea of exchanging gifts and surprises, decides to reinvent Christmas spirit in the style of Halloween Town.

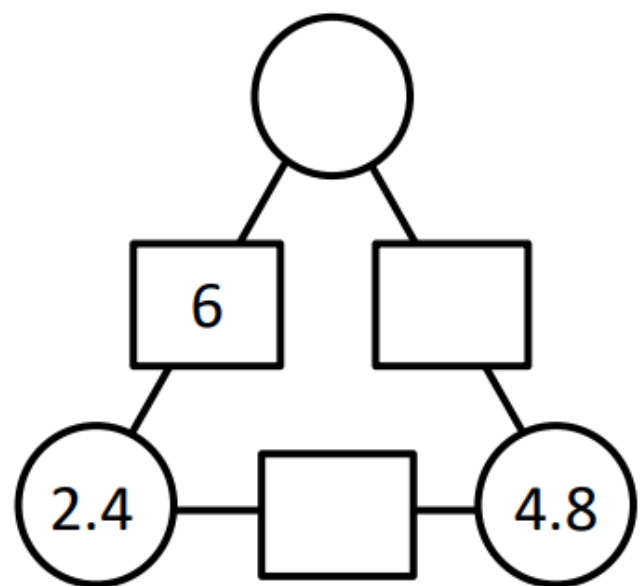
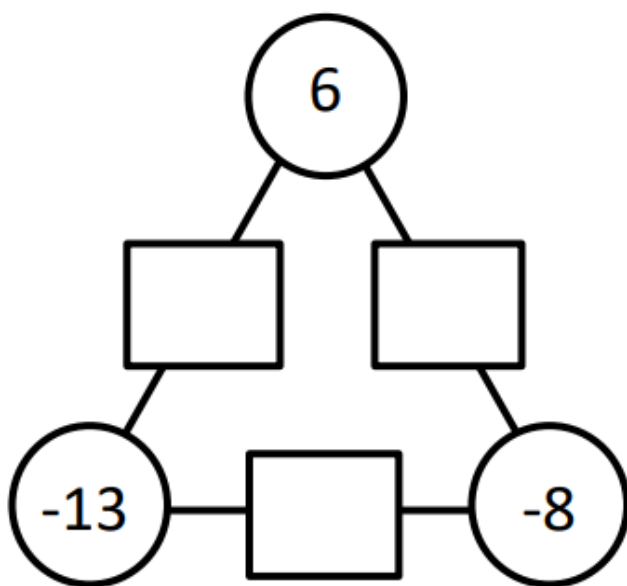
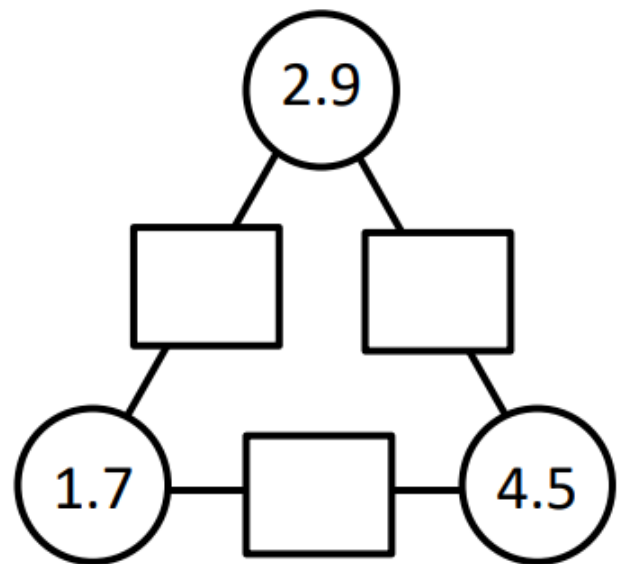
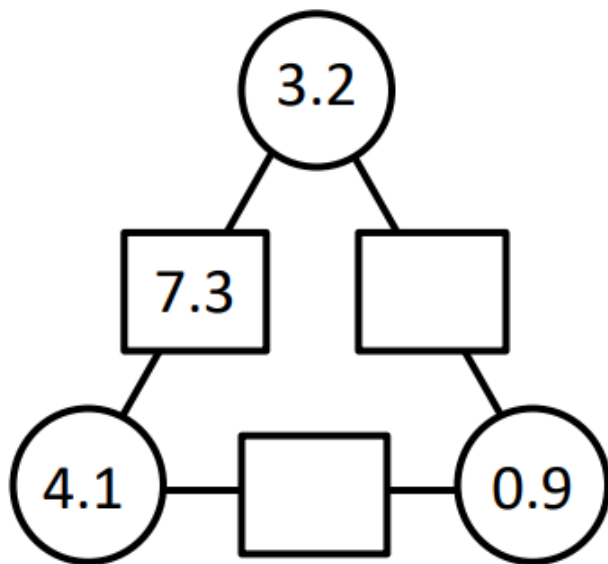


Mr Valente
Teacher of English

NUMERACY CORNER

Welcome to the Numeracy Corner Puzzle feature.
Each newsletter will contain a Numeracy Puzzle for you to challenge each other to complete.
The answers will be published in the following newsletter. We hope you enjoy them.

ARITHMOGON TRIANGLE PUZZLE



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Events scheduled so far

DATE	EVENT
Friday 22nd December 2023 – Friday 5th January 2024	Christmas Holiday
Monday 8 th January 2024	Spring Term starts 10.30 for students
Wednesday 10 th January 2024	Year 10 D of E Parent Information evening
Thursday 11 th January 2024	Year 11 Parents Evening
Monday 15 th January 2024	Year 10 Citizenship trip to Supreme Court
Thursday 18 th January 2024	Citizenship Fair
29 th January to 3 rd February 2024	New York Trip (year 11 Citizenship / year 12/13 Politics)
5 th February to 9 th February 2024	Year 13 Trip to Berlin & Krakow
Thursday 8 th February 2024	Year 9 Information Evening (KS4 Course Selection)
Monday 12th to Friday 15th February 2024	Half Term
Tuesday 20 th February 2024	Challenge Day 2 Year 7 Tower of London Trip
Friday 23 rd February 2024	Year 9 DTP Immunisations
Tuesday 27 th & Wednesday 28 th February 2024	Year 11 Hastings Trips
Tuesday 5 th March 2024	Careers Forum
Thursday 7 th March 2024	Year 11 PFS Year 12 'Next Steps' Parents Information Evening
Thursday 14 th March 2024	Year 10 Parents Evening
Friday 15 th March 2024	Year 10 Dance Workshop
16 th to 23 rd March 2024	Year 9/10 Ski Trip
18 th – 21 st March 2024	Achievement Assemblies
Tuesday 19 th March 2024	Year 13 Trip to Westfield Shopping Centre
Tuesday 26 th March 2024	Year 10 Resilience Event Year 9 DTP Immunisation catch ups
Thursday 28 th March 2024	End of Term – early finish
Friday 29th March 2024	Bank Holiday
Monday 1st April – Friday 12th April 2024	Easter Holidays
Monday 15 th April 2024	Summer Term starts
Wednesday 24 th April 2024	D of E Practice
Thursday 25 th April 2024	Year 7 Parents Evening
Monday 29 th April 2024	Year 8 HPV Immunisations Year 10/11 Citizen Trip to Royal Courts of Justice
Wednesday 1 st May 2024	Year 10 Drama Theatre Trip
Monday 6th May 2024	Bank Holiday
Thursday 9 th May 2024	Year 8 Parents Evening
Thursday 9 th & Friday 10 th May	D of E Bronze Final Expedition
Thursday 16 th & Friday 17 th May 2024	D of E Bronze Final Expedition

Thursday 16th May 2024	Year 12 Parents Evening
Monday 27th to Friday 31st May 2024	Half Term
Wednesday 26 th June 2024	Year 8 HPV immunisation catchups
Thursday 27 th June 2024	Challenge Day 3
Friday 28 th June 2024	Year 12 Induction Day
Tuesday 2 nd July 2024	Year 6 Induction Day Year 6 Parents Induction Evening
Monday 8 th July 2024	Year 8/9 immunisation catchups
Monday 8 th – Friday 12 th July 2024	Celebration Presentations
8 th – 19 th July 2024	Year 10 Work Experience
Tuesday 16 th July 2024	Sports Day
Wednesday 17 th & Thursday 18 th July 2024	Discover Days
Friday 19 th July 2024	Last Day of Term – early finish