



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential



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31st March 2023

Head Teacher's Message

Dear Parents/Carers,

We have reached the end of the second term of the year. It is hard to believe that the summer term is just around the corner. I know that many of our young people will be working hard over the Easter break in preparation for forthcoming examinations. However, I hope that everyone manages to get a break of some sort over the coming weeks. A time of rest and relaxation is a good way to recharge the batteries ready for the challenges ahead. On your behalf, I thank all the staff for their work this term in every aspect of the life of the school.

During the last 2 weeks it has been great to celebrate the successes of so many of our young people in the end of term achievement assemblies. Well done to all students who received an award. Students in years 7-9 have also been presented progress awards by Ms Hayford and Ms Kaur. Well done to all those involved.

Sun protection

As we near the summer term it is vitally important that all young people are aware of the dangers of exposure and over exposure to the sun. The school has a sun protection policy, which can be found on the website. There is also a letter with this newsletter which has some links to some useful resources and websites on it.

Staffing news

We say farewell to Ms Brown (Midday supervisor) at the end of term and we wish her all the best in the future. Ms Drewer (Childcare teacher) is also retiring (for a second time!). We are grateful that Ms Drewer has given time up this year to support our year 13 students in the final stages of their qualification. We wish her all the best in her retirement.

Next term

The term starts on Monday 17 April 2023. It will be week A. Please remember that Monday 1 May and Monday 8 May are bank holidays and the school is closed.

Matthew Brown, Head Teacher

Governors Message

Since the last newsletter report from me the yearly cycle of meetings has continued. These consisted of the Finance Audit and Risk Committee, the Staffing Committee, Premises Committee, Curriculum Committee, and finally the termly Full Governing Body meeting. Full agendas were discussed at each, with relevant reports from the Business Manager and the Head Teacher. Members of the Governing Body had the opportunity to ask questions and to contribute to strategy development, The Full Governing Body Committee meeting was particularly important as it received a draft School Improvement Plan which will be a catalyst for the School moving forward and will integrate with the Governing Body's Action Plan. The Head Teacher's report was detailed and informative.

Governor visits have been taking place and will be summarised at the Full Governing Body meeting in the Summer. Other visits to note were to the Careers Fair organised by Mrs Smith, which was again extremely well attended by representatives from local industry, numerous Universities and students. Mrs Smith and her team are to be congratulated on their efforts. Another visit was to conduct a comprehensive risk assessment and to complete Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) returns. The meetings were organised by the School's Business Manager, Mr Morgan. These were wide ranging and informative. Visits to the school will continue in the Summer Term as needed. Finally the termly Book Review competition was judged by governors. Once again the submissions were of a high standard and covered books of many genres, reflecting the wide interests of the school's students.

I am sorry to announce that Mrs Watkins is leaving the Governing Body, with immediate effect. We thank her for her hard work as a governor and her numerous valuable contributions. The work of the Governing Body continues to expand so it is essential that we develop a wide ranging skills set and replace governors who leave. Parents should note that there will be spaces available on the Governing Body next term or for the start of the new school year. If you are interested in becoming a governor and wish to discuss the role please contact Ms Nicola Rogers in the first instance who will pass your enquiry onto myself or the Vice Chair, Ms Janet Phelps.

Finally, as this busy term draws to an end on behalf of the Governing Body I wish parents, carers, students and staff a relaxing break which I hope will prepare you for the Summer Term.

Stuart Fitz-Gerald
Chair of Governors

Easter Revision

Please find attached to this newsletter the Year 11 and Year 13 Revision timetables. Both timetables will also be emailed home to parents separately.

Update from the Data Office

Please be advised that Spring Progress Updates have been issued for all students in Year 7 to 13. Year 13 Pre-Public examination results have also been sent out this week. Please contact the Data Office, after the holidays, if you have not received this information.

Ms Squatrito, Data Manager

School Meal Price Increase

After careful consideration, we are having to increase the cost of school food. This decision has not been taken lightly, and we have been in consultation with our current catering provider Pabulum in order to work out a solution that is cost-effective for everyone. With the significantly higher costs that we are now facing for our gas and electric along with the food and non-food inflationary costs that is tracking at 12%, we are now at the point where we need to look at our prices.

Years 7 to 11

Overall, the costs per food item (including the main meal and the main meal and dessert) will increase by 15p, with a few items Bagels, Pasta, and Fruit Pot rising by 25p. This increase will take effect after the Easter break starting on the 17th April 2023.

The school had a small increase on some items in September 2022 due to a shortage in these food items and before that, the price increase was held for 2 years.

We pride ourselves in providing healthy school meals, cooked on the premises with a three-weekly rolling menu detailing each day's main course and dessert. We also offer a vegetarian option, jacket potato, or pasta option as the main course along with many other options. These menus are available on the school website.

Years 12 & 13

These students receive an adult offering where they can purchase Coffee, Confectionery, Crisps, and well-known brands of cold drinks along with a variety of Sandwiches, Paninis, Pizza, and Grazing & Fruit Pots all with vegetarian options.

These costs have also risen by £0.15p with the exception to this is Confectionery, Crisps, and cold drinks that remain the same price.

The government funding for Free School Meals remains at £2.45 per meal, the school will be absorbing the additional £0.15p.

If you are unsure if your young person is entitled to receive a Free School Meal or if they are and not currently taking up the offer and you would like them to please send an email to admin@blackfen.bexley.sch.uk for the attention of Mrs. Stannett where it will be checked.

All queries and requests are confidential and we will always work with families to ensure that a solution is found and that we can continue to ensure all children have access to a meal.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Mr Gary Morgan, School Business Manager

Bexley Book Quiz teams 2023 Year 7 Book Club trip

On Tuesday 14th March 5 members of Year 7 Book Club went to the annual Bexley Book Quiz hosted by Townley Grammar School. Although we didn't win we had a great time and showed an incredible amount of teamwork and effort (and even got chocolate!)



Congratulations to the winners Chis and Sid Grammar School. We look forward to taking part again next year.

Penny Y9 and Maddi R7

Jack Petchey

In November 2022, thirty Year 10 students were invited to spend a workshop day, receiving training from Speakers' Trust on oracy and presentation skills. From that group, six students then received further mentoring in order to develop a three minute speech which they could deliver off by heart. We were lucky enough this year to have two students represent Blackfen at the Bexley Regional Finals on 20th March 2023. Madiha (B1) delivered a humorous and exceedingly well crafted speech entitled 'Splat, splat, splat', her polished performance thoroughly entertaining the audience, whilst Maya (Y5) spoke about the dangers of plastics in the ocean from a refreshingly new perspective of a sardine -her excellent delivery and persuasive techniques earning her third place! Many congratulations to all the students for their hard work, engagement and persistence in making this year's Jack Petchey event such a success.



Additionally, a further thirty Year 10 students were selected to receive a day's oracy workshop 20th March in order to help prepare for their speaking and listening exams. We would like to thank Ore Ogungbayi for her wonderful energy and continued work with helping Blackfen students improve their confidence and presentation skills.

Ms Norwood
Teacher of English and Literacy Coordinator

Careers and Work Experience

Year 10 Work Experience 10th – 21st July 2023

The majority of our students have now secured their placements for work experience in July. Many exciting placements have been secured (including IT, veterinary, police, law and dentistry 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 been offered a placement but still need confirmation or for the employer to complete the form please chase them up. Students who have not secured a placement will attend school during the Work Experience period attending Year 9 lessons in school uniform.**

Many students are also completing a virtual work experience placement as due to the pattern of hybrid working many companies are still working from home. If this appeals to your child please ask them to come to Room 106 and speak to me regarding places.

Finally, all students will be provided with a work experience pack in June with the full details of their placement, which we recommend students to contact before they start in July.

Careers Guidance support to students in Year 10

Our careers adviser Liz Wynn Owen from CER has started individual interviews with Year 10 students in preparation of Year 11 and post 16 choices. These interviews will continue until the end of summer term.

Mrs K Smith

Work Experience and Business/Community Links Coordinator

Student Welfare News

Student Support Office - Being a good friend!

At Blackfen School we are in a unique position of having Student Support Officers for each of the 5 communities.

We are there to help if your child is having significant friendship issues and can help them to make friends and support them through this process. For example, we may put certain children together in a pair with a view to a potential friendship or suggest that certain students join a particular club. We can also help them to learn how to deal with peer pressure and emotional problems which may be stopping them from joining a group of friends.

Even students who were socially confident in their earlier years may experience friendship problems at secondary school. When young people move up to secondary school, their primary school friends might move to different schools which can interrupt the stability of their friendships.

They may or may not make some initial friendships at the beginning of their new school life. But 90% of the time there will be significant “reshuffling” in these friendships and friendships groups. Friendships seem to eventually settle down and become more stable at around age 14-16. Friendships evolve. Some end, and others change. Certain friends may become more important at some points during adolescence, whilst other friendships fade a little.



Teenagers will have disagreements. It is perfectly natural. However some teenagers get into repeating patterns of conflict. They need to have some insight into their own role in conflict. They also need to develop the skills to manage conflict effectively.

Remember it's good to talk, If your friend has made you feel bad:

- try to think about why they might have acted the way they did
- ask if they're ok - they might have felt worried about something, and taken it out on you
- be assertive - this can make it easier to say how you feel.

If you've made a friend feel bad:

- be prepared to say sorry
- give them time
- ask another friend or maybe even a teacher to explain how you feel to them.

If you need advice, you can talk to your Student Support Officer in Room 2.

Remember:

It's not okay for someone to make you feel bad.

Acts of kindness **can make the world a happier place for everyone.** They can boost feelings of confidence, being in control, happiness and optimism. They may also encourage others to repeat the good deeds they've experienced themselves – contributing to a more positive community.

Remember don't let anyone feel left out.....be a good friend!


Mrs K Smith

Part-time Red Student Support Officer

The Shine Course

The popular and free Shine Course returns this April 27th- 15th June at Blackfen Community Library. This is a very popular course that many of our students have attended and enjoyed.

Please sign up for your free space.



A fun and interactive 7 week personal development course for girls ages 11-15. Through fun activities, the sessions will help to develop a strong sense of personal identity, confidence, purpose for the future and the chance to make new friends.

Delicious drinks and snacks will be provided with free gifts each week.

Every Thursday during term time
27th April - 15th June
5.00 - 6.30pm

At Rooted Coffee House
Blackfen Community Library
7-9 Blackfen Parade
DA15 9LU

Book in for free at
https://shine_course.eventbrite.co.uk
or email
rhiannon@blackfencommunitylibrary.org

THE SHINE COURSE
BLACKFENCOMMUNITYLIBRARY.ORG

SHINECOURSE

Mrs Latif

Wellbeing & Emotional support Officer.

Dates for your Diary

Events scheduled so far

Please note the Year 10 Parents Information evening scheduled for March has been postponed until next term.

Date	Event
Friday 31st March 2023	Spring Term Ends – Students leave 12.15pm
3rd – 14th April 2023	Easter Holidays
Monday 17 th April 2023	Year 9 HPV2 Vaccinations
Thursday 27 th April 2023	Year 7 Parents Evening
Saturday 29 th April 2023	D of E Practice Walks
Monday 1st May 2023	Bank Holiday
Wednesday 3 rd May 2023	Year 8 HPV1 and Year 9 HPV2 catchups
Thursday 4 th May 2023	Governors Premises Meeting
Monday 8 th May 2023	Bank Holiday
Thursday 11 th May 2023	Year 8 Parents Evening Governors Curriculum Meeting
Thursday 18 th May 2023	Governors Finance Audit & Risk Meeting
29th May – 2nd June 2023	Half Term
Wednesday 7 th June 2023	Catchup Vaccination Day
Thursday 8 th June 2023	Governors Staffing Meeting
Thursday 22 nd June 2023	Governors Finance Audit & Risk Meeting
Thursday 29 th June 2023	Challenge Day 3
Friday 30 th June 2022	Induction Day Year 12
Tuesday 4 th July 2023	Year 6 Induction Day/Evening
Monday 17 th & Tuesday 18 th July 2023	Discover Days
10 th – 14 th July 2023	Celebration Presentations
10 th – 21 st July 2023	Year 10 Work Experience
Wednesday 19 th July 2023	Summer Term Finishes students leave early
Thursday 20th & Friday 21st July 2023	INSET Days