



Blackfen School for Girls

Raising aspirations - releasing potential



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www.blackfenschoolforgirls.co.uk

20th September 2024

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

It seems strange to be writing 'welcome back after the summer' as we are already well into the 'swing of things' for the autumn term. I do hope you had a wonderful summer and that your family is settled into the routine of school.

Our new year 7 and year 12 cohort have settled in brilliantly-I've been so impressed to have year 7s directing me around the building and finding rooms! Our Heads of Year and Student Support Officers are available for you if you have any worries about your daughter/son or your child needs support. You can contact them via reception (admin) and via the website.

Over the first week of school, we held our annual police talks for all year groups. We would like to thank PC Whitcombe, our Safer Schools Police Officer, for his clear messages to our students about vaping, responsible use of social media, and how to stay safe. These themes will continue in our curriculum and the assembly programme throughout the year.

You have hopefully noticed our new website which we worked on over the summer break. We hope that the important information about school is now easier to find. We've added a parents' advice hub too. This is a new area of the website where you can get some advice and guidance about issues that can affect family life-for example mental health, social media and online safety or special educational needs. We are gradually building up the resources there. We hope you find it useful.

Well done to all our students for settling back into school so well. It's been very pleasing to see strong attendance, much improved standards of uniform and to see students working so hard in lessons. Thank you to our parents and carers, who are supporting the school in making this happen. We are looking forward to welcoming year 11 and year 13 parents into school this week, and year 10 and 12 parents the following week. Our very popular open evening for the 2025 entry is next Thursday for year 6 families. Thanks to the year 8s, 10s and 12s who will be helping at that important event. We will also be welcoming Bexley Voice for our parents of SEN students in October.

It's been a busy start to the year, but an excellent one!

With my thanks for parents' continued support,

Carrie Senior

Carrie Senior
Headteacher

Parking and local roads

The school has had several complaints about parking of parents/carers in areas around the school. The main complaints are:

- Parking illegally on double yellow lines (including zig zag lines)
- Parking over local residents drop kerbs
- Large vehicles mounting the pavements (particularly in the side roads) restricting access for pedestrians
- Vehicles tailgating other vehicles into the main school car park to collect their children after school (with the exception of arrangements in place for our vulnerable students)

Our local residents have been encouraged to report any of these behaviours to Bexley council using the following link:

<https://www.bexley.gov.uk/services/parking-transport-and-streets/incorrect-parking/report-incorrect-parking>

As a further deterrent and to support our local residents, we have contacted the local enforcement team at Bexley to carry out adhoc inspections over the coming weeks/months and enforce where necessary.

The surrounding roads are extremely busy during peak times and we would therefore suggest to all parents/carers that you look to park in roads further afield, in order to ensure the safety of all members of the school community.

We thank you all for your continued support and hope you understand the importance of parking responsibly to keep our children safe.

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Bexley LGBT+ Think Tank

In June, our students were invited to attend the Bexley LGBT+ Think Tank which took place at Beths Grammar School. A record number of 8 students requested to attend and a good time was had by all. Our group of attendees consisted of students who are part of the LGBT+ community and allies, many of whom also attend our LGBT+ Club.

As June is Pride Month, the meeting had a party theme, and attendees were treated to cakes, soft drinks, and even a home-made berry crumble. Party hats were worn, cakes and biscuits decorated, we played games and had a silly quiz. In short, it was great fun, and we can't wait to attend the next one. Thank you to all those students and staff at Beths Grammar School for hosting us.

Blackfen has been part of the Think Tank initiative for 2 years, and it gives our students an opportunity to network with other young people from the borough who are part of the LGBT+ community, but also gives them a safe space in which to discuss issues that directly affect them. The Think Tank initiative is run in co-operation with the Bexley Council Youth Mental Health Team, Bexley Police, and several schools in the borough.

School Council

Applications for the School Council have now closed. Our current School Council are in the process of contacting all applicants and arranging interviews. Letters will be in form trays, so please keep checking your form tray or ask your form tutor if you haven't received one but did apply.

Canteen Changes

We are writing to inform you of an important update regarding our catering services in the main dining hall. As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability and in response to government directives, we are transitioning from disposable catering items to reusable options.

Communication and Information

We have previously communicated this change through a letter sent home and an article posted on our school website at the beginning of the term. We encourage you to review these resources for further details and to discuss this transition with your child to help them make informed decisions about their catering choices.

Why the Change?

This shift aligns with the government's broader initiative to create zero-carbon environments in schools by 2030. Our school, as part of this vision, is taking proactive steps to reduce our environmental footprint and inspire both students and staff to engage in sustainable practices. By adopting reusable catering items, we aim to significantly cut down on waste and foster a culture of environmental responsibility within our school community.

Student Choices

To ensure that all students can still enjoy their meals comfortably, we have two alternative catering facilities that offer convenient grab-and-go options. These facilities provide flexibility and allow students to choose how they wish to enjoy their meals.

If your child chooses to use disposable items every day in the canteen, the cost of this equates to 25p per meal. This cost equates to £1.25 per week and £47.50 over the school year. This fee will help cover the additional costs associated with disposable items and encourage students to opt for more sustainable choices. The school spends around £10,000 a year on disposable catering items where this money can be put to better use around the school.

Pupils who are entitled to a Free School Meal will of course continue to have this entitlement in full and we urge parents and guardians to explain the initiative and encourage them to use the reusable items that will in turn reduce the school's carbon footprint.

Looking Forward

We believe that starting small with this initiative is both attainable and impactful. By involving everyone in our school community, we can make meaningful progress towards our sustainability goals. We hope to inspire our students to embrace these changes and take pride in contributing to a greener future.

The school have made some significant advances towards becoming net zero with the school now having 90% LED lighting, up to date heating systems, purchasing of recycled stationary and janitorial products.

Thank you for your continued support as we make these important strides towards a more sustainable school environment. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Gary Morgan
Business Manager

Elevate

Dear Parents,

We're excited to announce that Elevate Education will be hosting a free webinar for our parents on **time management** on October 1st.

Elevate works with our students, delivering high-impact workshops on study skills, motivation, wellbeing, and exam preparation. By tuning into their webinar series, you'll learn **how you can help support your child at home by reinforcing the skills they're learning at school.**

Sign up for the session below to learn how you can help your child to **balance their priorities and stay on top of their workload.**

How You Can Help Your Child Manage Their Time

Tuesday 1st October 6:00-7:00pm (GMT)

[Click here to register for free](#)

Here's what Elevate will be covering on the night:

- ✔ **Align expectations on homework** with your child
- ✔ Help your child **balance their schoolwork and social life**
- ✔ Set up a **weekly planner tool** with your child

We hope to see you there!

Work Experience Successes!



The Year 10 work experience programme in July 2024 was one of the most successful our students have ever completed! Feedback from employers was excellent with many of our students receiving offers of apprenticeships at the end of Year 11, summer holiday temporary work and part-time Saturday jobs.

Work experience is essential to advance in any career path because it teaches you about yourself and you gain skills in the process. Relevant work experience prepares you for more senior and advanced positions in your career path. It's an opportunity for you to test out your career ideas, improve your skills and show your commitment and enthusiasm.

Work Experience at The Red House – National Trust

One of our students completed work experience with The Red House which is a local National Trust property.



It was a pleasure to have Aniyah here for the week. She was enthusiastic, conscientious and worked well on the various tasks given to her. I wish her every success for the future. - **The Red House.**

More success!

Scarlet completed a successful placement with **Royal Park Primary School** working with SEN children. They commented 'thank you so much for supporting us. We look forward to seeing you as a staff member in the future!'

Libby completed a successful placement at **Enchanted Wood Pre-school**. They commented 'she has demonstrated exceptional skills and commitment during her time here. Her performance has been nothing short of fantastic. She has managed to establish meaningful connections with both the children and the staff in her room, which is a testament to her interpersonal skills and professional demeanour. I would be more than delighted to consider Libby for an apprenticeship. I firmly believe that she would be a valuable addition to our team.'

Scarlett has been a pleasure to work with this week and has shown a variety of skills which would be well suited to a career in local government. – **Bexley Council**.

Beth has been eager to learn the different elements that make up the company and has integrated herself into an open plan office well speaking to the different departments. All have commented how pleasant and polite Beth is. She has been on time every day and from feedback doing very well – **Caterham Motor Sport**.

Katie excelled in her nursery work experience placement that she continued to volunteer with them after her placement and attended the nursery family day during the summer holidays – **Bubbles Nursery**.

Feedback from Lolade – Year 11 to prospective work experience students:

I spent my two weeks work experience in the hospitality field in a caravan holiday park and I was lucky enough to have one week online, focusing on preparing self-assessment tax returns for the 2023 to 2024 tax year. This involved learning how to calculate income, expenses, and taxable profit, as well as understanding how taxes are used to fund public services and I spent another week gaining hands on experience, meeting guests, making sure they were comfortable in their holiday homes and socializing with other caravan workers.

If you are wondering how to find work experience you can start by asking family or friends, encourage your daughter to speak to the careers department if you have any questions, visit local businesses and most importantly look online.

I really advise for all of you to encourage your daughters to think deeply about where they would like to do work experience and to send emails out as soon as possible so that a spot at a good company is secured for their one-week placement.

Well done to all our Year 11 students who completed successful work experience placements!

Mrs Kellie Smith
Careers Adviser

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Events Scheduled so far

DATE	EVENT
Wednesday 25 September 2024	Year 10 & 12 Information Evening
Wednesday 25 September 2024	Years 7 – 11 Flu Immunisations
Thursday 26 September 2024	Open Evening for Year 6 students 5.30pm – 8.00pm
Monday 30 September 2024	Year 6 Open Morning 9.00am start
Tuesday 1 October 2024	Year 6 Open Morning 9.00am start
Thursday 3 October 2024	Year 7 (Preparing for Success) Parent/Student meetings with Form Tutor 3.00pm – 4.00pm
Wednesday 9 October 2024	Year 6 Open Morning 9.00am start
Thursday 10 October 2024	Year 6 Open Morning 9.00am start
Thursday 17 October 2024	Year 6 Open Morning 9.00am start
Thursday 17 October 2024	NYC Parent Information evening 5.00pm - 6.00pm
Monday 28 October – Friday 1 November 2024	Half term (normal finish time)
Monday 4 – Thursday 7 November 2024	Paris trip (selected students)
Monday 11 – Sunday 18 November 2024	Year 11 RS trip to Rome (Selected students)
Thursday 21 November 2024	6th Form Open Evening Blackfen Students 5.00pm – 6.00pm Hurstmere Students 5.45pm – 6.45pm External Students 6.30pm – 7.30pm
Monday 25 November 2024	School INSET day
Thursday 5 December 2024	Year 8/10 Ski trip Parent Information Evening 5.00pm – 6.00pm
Sunday 8 – Friday 13 December 2024	Year 10 trip to NYC (selected students)
Thursday 12 December 2024	Year 13 Parents' Evening 4.00pm – 6.30pm
Tuesday 17 December 2024	Winter Showcase
Friday 20 December 2024	Students' last day (finish at 12.15pm)
Monday 30 December – Friday 3 January 2025	Xmas Holidays
Monday 6 January 2025	Students return to school