

July 2021

Dear Parents / Carers

Firstly, I would like to thank you for your support during this academic year. Students have shown enormous resilience with bubbles, zones, ventilation, and changes to the school day due to the pandemic; they have worked with us and understood the need to keep everyone safe. I would like to thank them for this as well as the care and kindness they have shown each other. Our school values of respect, effort, a positive attitude, and perseverance (REAP) have shone through.

The following provides you with more details regarding our plans for September; if there are any changes due to the coronavirus then we will contact you before the start of term. If you have any general queries, please do not hesitate to contact us. *I would like to encourage you to share this letter with your child, so they are aware of what to expect.*

Diary Dates

Thursday, 2 September	Staff Training Day
Friday, 3 September	Year 7 and 12 back into school
Monday, 6 September	All students welcomed back into school
Thursday, 23 September	Open Evening for Year 5 and 6 parents - Year 5 presentation 5.30 pm, tour at 5.50 pm. Year 6 presentation 6.00 pm, tour at 6.20 pm.
Friday, 24 September	Staff Training Day
Tuesday, 12 October	Meet the Tutor Evening (Year 7 parents/carers only)

The School Day

We have reviewed the management of our school day over the last year and have decided to retain an element of staggered breaks and lunchtimes; external zones will also be used but only for students to gather for morning and afternoon registrations. The end of the day will remain slightly staggered which will help younger students to exit the site safely as well as assist traffic management in our car parks. Current parents/carers will know we have been escorting students to and from lessons all year. Although this has helped our 'step count', we will thankfully not need to do this in September; students will be able to move freely across the site.

Timings are as follows:

08.40	Students must be in their external zone with their tutor group ready to move off with tutors at 08.40 . Year 7 Outside the Hub Year 8 Road outside Reception nearest nursing home Year 9 Outside The McCarthy Room (back of Block 5) towards food technology rooms Year 10 Basketball Court Year 11 Outside Reception
08.45	Registration
08.55	Period 1
09.55	Period 2 including a 20-minute break for Yr 7, 8 & 9 at 9.55 am and Yr 10, 11, 12 & 13 at 11.00
11.20	Period 3
12.20	Period 4 including a 40-minute lunch break for Yr 7, 8 & 9 at 12.20 pm and Yr 10, 11, 12 & 13 at 13.20
14.00	Assembly/Tutor
14.30	Period 5
15.20	End of day for Year 7
15.25	End of day for Year 8
15.30	End of day for Years 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13

Attendance, Equipment and Uniform

- Students will be expected to fully attend school and be punctual on arrival. Students must be in their zone by 8.40 am so at the latest must be on the main part of the site by 8.35 am (ie through the gates by Block 1).
- Please ensure your child has the right equipment for school as we need to avoid sharing such items. Students are advised to not overload their bags, they just need to make sure they have the right equipment and books. Lockers will be able to be accessed during breaks and lunches.
- Support is available for pupil premium students, please email Mr Dan Johnson on djohnson@blandfordschool.org.uk if you need assistance.
- Uniform - all students are asked to be in line with our uniform policy. Our changing rooms will once again be in use in September so proper school uniform will be worn every day of the week.

- Students are advised to wear an unseen layer under their uniform if it is cold and wear a coat to school as we move through the seasons. No hoodies should be worn.
- Students in our Sixth Form should adhere to the sixth form dress code; in particular ensuring that jeans are not ripped, there are no bare-midriiffs and hair is a natural colour.

Behaviour

Expectations and standards are high. If students misbehave in class, they will receive a formal warning and if they continue to misbehave, they will be removed from class and spoken to by a member of SLT. All students who are removed will receive an immediate lunchtime detention. If there are further concerns, then after school detentions will be issued. Parents/carers are asked to support these as part of the Home School Agreement.

Buses

Current guidance (July 2021) is for students to wear face coverings on bus transport. This may change for September, we would advise all students to have a face covering in their school bag should they require one then. On arrival at school their face coverings must be put into a plastic bag and stored in their school bag; students are then asked to sanitise their hands.

Catering and drinks during the day

- Our caterers are planning to provide a full catering service in September. Students may of course bring in a packed lunch if they prefer.
- Students are asked to bring in an adequately sized water bottle and use our water fountains during breaks and lunches.
- Payments for food should all be via ParentPay to avoid the use of cash in the autumn. New students will be given a card on arrival, and existing students should use their card issued for photocopying. If you have not received activation details, please contact the school office and these will be issued in September.
- Students will only be permitted to eat in the Hub or on the terrace.
- New sixth form students will be issued with a lanyard in September after which they will be able to leave the school site at break and lunch.

Communication

- Whilst we appreciate some matters are urgent (we will always try very hard to see parents/carers quickly if this is the case), parents and carers are encouraged to contact us in advance and make an appointment. In doing this, we will be able to ensure the correct colleagues are available to answer your queries. Please use our office email address office@blandfordschool.org.uk and the email addresses of heads of faculty and heads of year which are to be found on our website. For year 7 parents/carers, these are also in the Supplementary Information document you have received.
- Office hours are 08.30 – 17.00.

- We use email a lot for communicating. For all parents, your first point of contact if you have any concerns is your child's tutor. Please email the office and ask for the message to be forwarded.

Government guidance regarding the coronavirus pandemic

Our current plans are to return to normal operations in September and this will only change if we receive new guidance. A separate communication has been sent to you regarding lateral flow testing; face coverings will remain optional for students and staff.

Any individual experiencing COVID 19 symptoms, or anyone in their household, should follow the relevant government guidance.

Learning

As the summer holidays approach, it is an important time to consider how to make the most of the six weeks. Undoubtedly it is important for students to have a break and re-charge but when students return in September it can be a shock to the system. There are lots of things students can do over the summer which include learning something new (a new language, a musical instrument or a new skill); reviewing and recapping what they have done in the previous school year (using <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>, <https://senecalearning.com/en-GB/> or their exercise books); reviewing what they have been learning in Maths (using <https://hegartymaths.com/>) and reading for pleasure. The correlation between reading, language acquisition and subsequent school performance is strong and so continuing to develop this skill is vital. Our suggested reading list provides some ideas of books to read (<https://blandfordschool.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Book-List.pdf>).

Parents' Evenings

We have received exceptionally positive feedback about virtual parents' evenings last year so these will continue remotely. Dates are in the student diary and will also be posted on our website.

Safety

- There will continue to be an enhanced cleaning regime in school with extra cleaning being carried out during the course of the day.
- Students are asked to bring in some sanitising hand gel (in a small quantity) and adequate tissues. I appreciate this can be expensive, however if you are able to assist us then it would be really helpful to our community. For information, we have installed some sanitising units across the school (for example, in IT rooms), but we are unable to resource the whole school with these units. Students will be asked to wash their hands regularly during the day. If parent/carers could ask students to wash their hands before leaving home as well, this would be very helpful.
- There will continue to be an element of ventilation but not as extreme as this academic year. As a result, no coats will be allowed to be worn in classrooms.

- Practical lessons will re-commence across the school, as will extra-curricular clubs; trips and visits are also starting to be planned for 21/22.
- All year groups will once again have a weekly assembly in the Hall or the Well.
- The library will re-open.
- Peripatetic music lessons have already resumed.

Student Leaders

At the time of writing, we are interviewing for a new Head Boy, Head Girl, Deputy Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl. They, along with our new prefects, will re-ignite the Student Forum in September and ensure our student voice is heard. We will announce the successful candidates on our website.

Traffic Management

From September 2021 I would like to ask parents/carers where possible to drop students off and pick them up off-site rather than the car park we share with the leisure centre, which should be the last resort. I am afraid pre-covid we were also finding the road in front of reception was getting congested at the end of the day so, from September, this will only be available if you require access as a result of a recognised mobility issue.

Please also be aware there will be no vehicular access via the Milldown gate before 09.00 am and after 3.00 pm in order to ensure the safety of children attending The Milldown School and Panda Pre-School. Parents are also requested not to use the internal roadway between the leisure centre and Milldown gates unless requiring access to reception or because of a recognised mobility issue.

Privacy Notice

Our standard Privacy Notice and letter for parents/students regarding this are available on our website using the following link. <https://blandfordschool.org.uk/parents/policies/>

Final Words

I must say at this point how proud I am of our staff team who are immensely resilient, have a wonderful sense of humour and have been so positive about the changes we have needed to make to keep everyone safe. I must also thank them publicly for all their efforts with the teacher assessed grades for years 11 and 13.

I would like to say an enormous thank you to colleagues who are leaving us this summer. Ms Sinead Gallagher, Subject Leader Psychology/Sociology; Miss Sarah Massey, Dance/Drama Teacher; Mr Harry Hintze, Science Teacher; Mrs Kirsty Cowley, SENDCo; Miss Charlotte Pickett, Design Teacher; Mr Gareth Hughes, Science Teacher; Mrs Ailsa Ingram, Teaching Assistant; Mrs Kate Gordon Smith, Teaching Assistant. Whether having been promoted, retiring, moving area, or changing schools, we wish them well. A very special 'au revoir' to Mr Simon Gillett, our talented ex-Head of English who has more recently taught English part-time. So many students have benefited from his expertise and many have gone on to study English post 18 or followed a career path where his teaching has been incredibly beneficial. He will be missed.

The Full Governing Board chaired by Mr Mario Roncaglia has been extremely proactive during the pandemic. Meetings have continued virtually and there have been over 40 (socially distanced/virtual) visits to the school by the Board to meet students and staff and check how things are going. I am extremely grateful to them for their contribution.

Finally, I would like to thank you for the supportive messages my team and I have received over recent months. Many of you have taken the time to contact us and these messages have really helped, especially during the depths of the winter when we were all finding the requirement for ventilation rather wearing.

The entire TBS staff will very much look forward to welcoming our young people back to school in September. It will be fabulous to be back to normal and for children of all ages to enjoy the richness of our extra-curricular programme and the simple pleasure of walking across the site without being escorted!

Have a lovely summer; let us all hope the sun shines.

Yours sincerely



Sally Wilson
Headteacher

Enc. Equipment List